

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

Wednesday 26th February, 2014 at 6.00 p.m.
at the Council House, Priory Road, Dudley

PRESENT:

Councillor Ridley (Chair)
Councillor Tyler (Vice-Chair)
Councillors A Ahmed, Blood, Boleyn, Caunt, Hale, Islam, James, Kettle and Marrey.

OFFICERS:

R Sims, Assistant Director (Housing Strategy and Private Sector - Lead Officer to the Board) and S Griffiths (Democratic Services Manager - Directorate of Corporate Resources)

18. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No Member declared an interest in any matter to be considered at this meeting.

19. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 20th January, 2014, be approved as a correct record and signed.

20. **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD 2013/14**

The Director of Corporate Resources and the Lead Officer submitted the draft annual report of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board for 2013/14. The report included issues identified in the interim review submitted to the Board on 26th November, 2013 and identified further work to improve the Council's overview and scrutiny arrangements based on comments and views expressed by Members of the Council. A summary of the comments received from Members was circulated for consideration.

An issue raised during the consultation had been the possible opportunities for formalised joint scrutiny arrangements with other local authorities. Although some joint working had taken place it was considered that this had been problematic in the past.

The Board discussed the process for developing the Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2014/15. Consultation would take place in March/April, with a view to a further report being submitted to the next meeting of the Board on 29th April, 2014. This would include consideration of any items to be rolled-forward from the 2013/14 Plan and draft items for inclusion in the future work programmes of individual Scrutiny Committees and the Board itself. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board would meet early in the new municipal year to finalise the Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2014/15.

Members commented on the importance of the timing of a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board in the calendar of meetings for 2014/15 to ensure that Members had the opportunity to scrutinise the overall budget proposals on a strategic basis. This would take place following the cycle of meetings at which each individual Scrutiny Committee examined the service-specific implications of the budget proposals.

In relation to the scrutiny of decisions taken by external bodies, it was reported that this issue would be raised with the Leader and considered as part of the annual review process.

Reference was made to the Corporate Performance Management, Efficiency and Effectiveness Scrutiny Committee undertaking detailed scrutiny of the quarterly corporate performance management report. The view was repeated that a relevant senior officer from each Directorate should attend meetings of that Committee to respond to questions raised by Members.

The Chair of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee raised the need for a review of the composition of that Scrutiny Committee, in particular the appointment of co-opted members. There was a need to ensure that the composition of the Committee remained fit for purpose moving forward with a wider focus than just educational issues. A report would be presented to the next meeting of the Board.

Members raised general issues concerning the lighting and acoustics in Committee Room 2 of the Council House and the need to maintain the quality standards of reports to scrutiny meetings. In particular, Members asked that reports were circulated with sufficient notice; that late reports should not be tabled at meetings and that reports should be presented without 'small print', making them difficult to read.

It was also noted that on 4th March, 2014, the Adult, Community and Housing Scrutiny Committee would be considering a report concerning New Bradley Hall. The Board discussed the process whereby individual items were referred to Scrutiny Committees outside the agreed Annual Scrutiny Programme. It was suggested that in future, requests for the referral of specific items for scrutiny should be channelled through the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board. The Board would decide whether to undertake the scrutiny review itself or refer the matter to a specific Scrutiny Committee. The Chair undertook to discuss this matter with the Director of Corporate Resources for clarification of the position concerning the protocols set out in the Constitution.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the comments received from the consultation with all Members of the Council be noted.
 - (2) That, subject to any necessary amendments as a result of the comments made at this meeting, the annual report of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board for 2013/14 be received and referred to the Council at its meeting on 14th April, 2014.
 - (3) That the Lead Officer and the Director of Corporate Resources, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair, be authorised to make any necessary amendments to update the annual report prior to its submission to the Council.
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21. REVIEW OF COMMUNITY FORUMS

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board would be held on 29th April, 2014 to discuss a review of the operation of the Council's Community Forums. The meeting would also receive a report on draft items for the Annual Scrutiny Plan 2014/15.

22. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

The Board noted the forward plan of key decisions for the four-month period commencing 1st March, 2014.

The meeting ended at 7.15 p.m.

CHAIR