

Contact Officer: Penny Bunker

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Monday 3rd July 2017

Present: Councillor Julie Stewart-Turner (Chair)
Councillor Gulfam Asif
Councillor Cahal Burke
Councillor Rob Walker

Apologies: Councillor Elizabeth Smaje

3 Membership of Committee

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Elizabeth Smaje.

4 Minutes of Previous Meetings

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24 April and 24 May 2017 were proved as correct records.

5 Interests

No interests were declared.

6 Admission of the Public

The Committee determined that all agenda items would be considered in public session.

7 Appointment of Co-optees for 2017/18

The Management Committee considered a report which set out the proposed allocation of Scrutiny Co-optees within the Scrutiny Panel structure for the 2017/18 municipal year.

The Management Committee noted that during the previous municipal year a number of Scrutiny Co-optees had stepped down for a range of personal reasons. The Management Committee formally thanked John Briggs, Christopher Horner and the Rev. Richard Burge for their significant contributions as Scrutiny Co-optees. It was noted that the Rev. Richard Burge had served as a statutory education co-

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optee for the Diocese, for 10 years. The Diocese was currently considering a new nomination for the role.

The Committee noted the proposed allocation of places across the four standing Scrutiny Panels, as set out in section 2.1 of the report. The report highlighted that due to the retirement of some Co-optees there were insufficient Co-optees to allocate people with appropriate experience to the Corporate Scrutiny Panel. It was suggested that 2 former Co-optees, Linda Summers and Jeff Peers had indicated that they would be willing to serve for an additional year until such time as new Co-optees could be appointed and trained for the role.

RESOLVED -

(1) That the Scrutiny Co-optees be reappointed for the 2017/18 municipal year and allocated to panels as set out in the report.

(2) That a formal letter of thanks be sent by the OSMC to those Co-optees who had stepped down.

(3) That consideration be given to a Co-optee recruitment exercise later in the municipal year.

8 Overview and Scrutiny 2017/18

The Management Committee considered information on the arrangements for Overview and Scrutiny in the 2017/18 municipal year, including the approach, developing the work programme and the role of panel lead members. Jacqui Gedman, Chief Executive attended for this item.

Councillor Stewart-Turner discussed a brief guide to overview and scrutiny with Committee Members to reiterate the approach to scrutiny and the underpinning principles of scrutiny in Kirklees. The guide referenced the outcomes of the work of the Kirklees Democracy Commission that had concluded that the scrutiny function needed changes to approach, culture, and profile within the Council. It was suggested there should be greater focus on the scrutiny of strategic priorities, early dialogue as part of the decision making process and much greater citizen involvement in the scrutiny process. It further acknowledged that there was a responsibility on decision makers to share information as early and openly as possible. The guide indicated that a more detailed note and checklist would be made available to standing scrutiny panels to help prioritise issues for the work programme.

In discussing the report it was noted that some members were concerned that information that had been requested was not always forthcoming to scrutiny members. Councillor Stewart-Turner encouraged members to bring issues back to the Management Committee for discussion where there were concerns about a lack of response.

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Jacqui Gedman, Chief Executive emphasised that Cabinet Members were keen to engage with Scrutiny. The Leader of the Council was keen that scrutiny meetings should be webcast to try to ensure a more accessible scrutiny function and a transparent holding to account.

Ms Gedman circulated a draft list of policy reviews planned for 2017/18. These included early reviews on air quality, waste management and housing. There was an opportunity for scrutiny to play a more visible role in policy development work in providing challenge as policies were being formulated.

Ms Gedman also circulated to the Committee a suggested approach to Cabinet Portfolio Holders attendance at Scrutiny Panel meetings. It was suggested that sessions focus on a discussion about a particular subject area within the portfolio and an update on policy development work from portfolio holders. Officers would be in attendance with portfolio holders and where appropriate, contribute to the discussion. It was further suggested that written responses to questions put at meetings, including providing supplementary information could, where appropriate be provided through written responses.

The Management Committee was broadly in agreement with the proposals however it was felt that there needed to be flexibility. The comment regarding Cabinet and Scrutiny liaison sessions being webcast was not agreed as it was felt these liaison (briefing) sessions were better considered informally due to the nature of the developmental work under discussion.

Ms Gedman emphasised that each standing panel would have a Director lead who would help panels to filter information and help in identifying issues for scrutiny. It was also noted that a strategic agenda plan was being prepared and would be shared with Overview & Scrutiny.

It was suggested that briefing sessions could be used to help identify areas for scrutiny and planning appropriate areas of focus, which would provide a better webcast meeting.

The Committee continued to discuss scrutiny training available for members and it was agreed that charring scrutiny training should be investigated. It was emphasised that the Local Government Association provided training including particular emphasis on children's services portfolios.

The Management Committee thanked Jacqui Gedman, Chief Executive for attending the meeting.

RESOLVED -

(1) That the guidance note on the principles of the approach to Overview and Scrutiny in 2017 be noted.

(2) That the paper on Cabinet Portfolio Holders attendance at Overview and Scrutiny, and the draft policy development work programme, be noted.

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(3) That Jacqui Gedman be thanked for attending the Committee meeting and discussing how Scrutiny might work in the new municipal year, including LGA training and the important work of the Children's Scrutiny Panel.

9 Schedule of Meetings 2017/18

The Management Committee considered arrangements for meetings in the 2017/18 municipal year. It was agreed that the Management Committee would schedule a meeting every two months, with scrutiny panel meetings meeting every four to six weeks. It was agreed that OSMC meetings would take place on Monday mornings.

RESOLVED –

That meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee be held every two months on a Monday, commencing in September 2017.