

PROSPERITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

FUTURE OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY - FEEDBACK

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

20 OCTOBER 2010

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To receive feedback on a conference organised by the Local Government Chronicle (LGC) on the Future of Overview and Scrutiny.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Handbook contains a protocol for use of the Scrutiny Committees budget by members to attend training and conferences relevant to the remit of the Committee.

- 2.2 On 14 July 2010, the Committee agreed to send representatives to a LGC Conference on the Future of Overview and Scrutiny which was being held on 5 October 2010 at the America Square Conference Centre, London. The Conference was attended by Councillor Michael Mordey, Chairman of the Committee.

3. Conference Feedback

- 3.1 The conference focused on the following key questions:-

- What are the challenges facing scrutiny and how can we prepare to overcome them;
- How can scrutiny be used to improve efficiency in localities;
- How can scrutiny be used as an integral part of partnership working;
- In what ways can you engage with your community and involve them in your scrutiny process.

- 3.2 The opening address of the Conference was delivered by Jon Hunt from Birmingham City Council and presentations and workshops were provided from a range of representatives from the public and private sectors.

- 3.3 The Conference explored a number of themes including:-

- (i) *The future of overview and scrutiny: Looking beyond the 2010 general election and preparing for new legislation*

This session provided an update on scrutiny legislation under a new government and the future for accountability. It considered the challenges facing the scrutiny function in the future and the likely changes that will result.

(ii) *Overview and scrutiny and its relationship with external challenge and assurance*

This session examined the ways in which members can be effectively engaged in the scrutiny process. It also considered the challenges of effectively using evidence based scrutiny and the use of scrutiny to ensure performance improvement.

(iii) *Overview and scrutiny at a sub regional level: What are the advantages of these sub regional collaborative groups and how can they be scrutinised effectively?*

This session focused on the following themes:-

- The advantages to local authorities of taking a wider area approach
- Avoiding duplication of effort by identifying issues of significance for the wider area that complement priorities for your locality
- Using scrutiny to achieve greater accountability over decisions made and services delivered

(iv) *Understanding and improving scrutiny and accountability of Local Strategic Partnerships*

This session examined potential methods for scrutinising Local Strategic Partnerships and the importance of establishing a formal process while still maintaining a healthy working relationship.

(v) *Successfully using Crime & Disorder Partnerships (CDRPs) in your community*

This session looked at the ingredients of a successful Crime and Disorder Partnership and the use of scrutiny to help improve community safety. In particular, it considered the ways in which we can consult effectively with the local community to identify and prioritise crime and disorder issues.

(vi) *The future of the NHS and what this will mean for health and social care scrutiny*

This session focused on the following themes:-

- The role and structure of commissioning organisations in a changing NHS
- Doing more with less: Financial pressures on the system and new government policy
- Solutions: What do changes mean for overview and scrutiny decision making and planning and how can you prepare for them?

(vii) *How scrutiny can be used to promote Practice Based Commissioning (PBC) and improve health and wellbeing in the community*

This session focused on the following themes:-

- Using support from the PCT in the scrutiny process
- Using scrutiny to make conclusions and recommendations to the PCT
- Improving health services as a result of the scrutiny process

3.4 Councillor Mordey will expand upon the issues raised during the Conference at the meeting of the Committee.

4 Recommendation

4.1 It is recommended that:-

- (i) That the report of Councillor Mordey be noted;
- (ii) That the feedback report be referred to the Management Committee for information.

5. Background Papers

Conference Papers

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