

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 25 MAY 2021 AT ONLINE MEETING.

Present:

Cllr Ruth Hopkinson, Cllr Jon Hubbard, Cllr Tony Jackson, Cllr Bob Jones MBE, Cllr Johnny Kidney, Cllr Gordon King, Cllr Bill Parks, Cllr Jerry Kunkler, Cllr Tony Pickernell, Cllr Elizabeth Threlfall, Cllr Jo Trigg, Cllr Tony Trotman, Cllr Iain Wallis, Cllr Graham Wright (Chairman) and Cllr Christopher Williams (Vice-Chairman)

Also Present:

Cllr Pip Ridout and Cllr Richard Clewer

1 Apologies

There were no apologies or substitutions for the meeting.

2 Election of Chairman 2021/22

Nominations were sought for a Chairman for the forthcoming year. On the nomination of Councillor Christopher Williams, seconded by Councillor Tony Pickernell, it was,

Resolved:

To elect Councillor Graham Wright as Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee for the forthcoming year.

3 Election of Vice-Chairman 2021/22

Nominations were sought for a Vice-Chairman for the forthcoming year. On the nomination of Councillor Graham Wright, seconded by Councillor Tony Trotman, it was,

Resolved:

To elect Councillor Christopher Williams as Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee for the forthcoming year.

4 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2021 were presented for consideration, and it was,

Resolved:

To approve and sign the minutes as a true and correct record.

5 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations.

6 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman welcomed new Members to the Committee and thanked previous Members for their service.

7 **Public Participation**

No questions or statements were submitted.

8 **Covid-19 Update**

A report was presented in Agenda Supplement 1 in relation to activity to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 in Wiltshire since the last update to Cabinet on 16 March 2021. The other Select Committees would receive the report to scrutinise the Covid-19 response and latest information as it related to their specific remits.

Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council, introduced the report, which might be the final report ahead of the end of the current lockdown processes. He drew attention to the great work that had been undertaken by the council during the latest and previous lockdowns.

Terence Herbert, Chief Executive, supported by other officers of the Corporate Leadership Team, then provided further information. It was stated that the current focus relevant to the Committee was in relation to internal council organisational recovery, and that the Local Resilience Forum would be transferring remaining responsibility back to the Council in June 2021, while work with partners was ongoing.

Details were provided from the report on the internal recovery, including of a pilot scheme for staff to return to council offices which would run until September 2021, and the use of hybrid meetings and collaboration spaces.

Other workstreams included looking at customer experiences and continued alignment to the business plan objectives.

The Committee discussed the report and updates provided. Details were sought on the return of elected Members to council buildings for those meetings now once again legally required to meet in person, and it was confirmed lateral flow testing beforehand would not be a requirement, but other measures would be in place on the advice of Public Health. The level of engagement with staff on forthcoming measures was queried, and how it might address issues of team disengagement as a result of the physical separation of many teams from the wider organisation and within themselves.

Options for hybrid meetings were raised, along with service delivery and how some Covid-19 instigated measures might continue as still useful such as the Wellbeing Hub, but that some of the online engagement including with young people was becoming less effective over time.

It was confirmed grants were still being provided to businesses, and that long-term recovery was a key focus with reports able to be made to Overview and Scrutiny as various Covid-19 measures came to an end.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

To note the update on the council's ongoing response to Covid-19.

9 **Overview and Scrutiny work priorities and approach**

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee has overall responsibility for the Overview and Scrutiny work programme. A report was presented of the legacy report from the Committee at the end of the 2017-2021 council cycle, on key pieces of work that had been undertaken by all Select Committees, Task Groups and other bodies, work priorities to be recommended for inclusion on the initial work programme for 2021-25, as well as key strengths and improvement areas to be considered.

The Committee discussed the report, confirming that each Select Committee would consider the proposed work priorities and liaise with the relevant officers and Members of the Executive with an emphasis on ongoing dialogue, as well as the possibility of coordinated communication with Members of Parliament as related to Overview and Scrutiny activity.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

- 1) **To note this council's agreed core values for its Overview and Scrutiny function.**

- 2) To approve the legacy topics listed in Appendix A for inclusion in the new Overview and Scrutiny work programme – subject to further discussion at future meetings – and to advise the select committees accordingly.
- 3) To note this committee’s task group structure at the conclusion of the previous Management Committee as follows:

Financial Planning Task Group

Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Scrutiny Panel

- 4) To approve continuation of the above task groups and memberships, and to authorise the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to name Members to fill vacancies on task groups and other ad hoc activities following an opportunity for expressions of interest.
- 5) To authorise the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to appoint Overview and Scrutiny councillor representatives to the following council boards, with further appointments to be considered as appropriate once current programme board activity is confirmed:

Gigaclear Contract Project Board

Constitution Focus Group (if re-established by the Standards Committee on 3 June 2021)

- 6) To support early discussion between the Chairman and Vice-Chairman with Cabinet members, portfolio-holders and directors to gain a more informed understanding about Executive priorities, with outcomes reported back to Committee.
- 7) To ask the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to undertake further work on the forward work programme presented, with outcomes reported back to Committee.
- 8) To note Overview and Scrutiny’s key strengths and development areas as highlighted by the previous council and to include these in any review of the function’s approach and effectiveness in the new council.

10 **Review of the Overview and Scrutiny Member Induction 2021**

Following the local elections in May 2021 the council provided several weeks of information and training sessions to help equip Members to undertake their various roles. Two sessions were provided specifically on Overview and Scrutiny, primarily aimed at non-executive Members. A survey had been

circulated to seek feedback from Members, and the Committee was invited to provide further comment to help assess the effectiveness of the post-election Member induction and development programme.

The Committee discussed the induction programme, with the Overview and Scrutiny training praised for its content as well the delivery of the overall induction programme. It was noted that primarily as a result of Covid-19 restrictions the entire programme had been delivered through online sessions, and whilst these were useful some considered that solely online training for an entire day could make holding attention and absorbing information difficult. The possibility of spacing out sessions, or in future when restrictions allowed a mixture of online and physical sessions, was proposed.

The Chairman also confirmed there would be exploration of further opportunities for specific training and development moving forward.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

- 1) To note the feedback provided on the Overview and Scrutiny induction sessions for Members and to use this to inform future inductions;**
- 2) To note the suggestions for further Overview and Scrutiny Member training sessions, with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman bringing specific proposals back to Committee.**

11 Overview and Scrutiny Member Remuneration 2020/21

A report was presented with proposals for Overview and Scrutiny Remuneration for the year 2020/21. This was to allocate the £15,000 Overview and Scrutiny Fund provided within the Members' Allowances Scheme to recognise the significant additional responsibilities undertaken as part of Overview and Scrutiny activities. The Committee was required to annually approve a scheme for allocation of that fund.

The methodology for allocation had been agreed by the Committee in 2018, to recognise activities such as being Vice-Chairman of Select Committees, or chairing task groups. As detailed in the report, it was proposed that the share per meeting should be the same as 2019/20 plus 1% inflation, to avoid higher than normal amounts being paid as a result of the lower than average activity as a result of Covid-19 restrictions.

The Committee received the report, and it was then,

Resolved:

To approve the allocation of the Overview and Scrutiny Remuneration Fund for 2020/21 as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

12 **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 15 July 2021.

13 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 2.30 - 3.40 pm)

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