

Wiltshire Council

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

6 June 2017

The Work of Overview and Scrutiny (OS) in the Previous Council

Purpose

1. To report to the new OS Management Committee:
 - a) ongoing work recommended for inclusion in the new OS work programme by the former Management Committee, including through task groups;
 - b) that an extraordinary meeting of the Management Committee will be held on 21 June to consider draft versions of the council's new Business Plan and Digital Strategy, and the implications for the OS work programme;
 - c) the referral by Full Council of Notice of Motion 40 – "Reducing Single Use Plastics" for the Management Committee's consideration;
 - d) the potential OS development areas identified by OS under the previous council, including the OS councillor learning and development programme;

Background

2. An opportunity for OS to review its activity during the outgoing council is now an established part of its learning and improvement journey. This "legacy process" allows for consideration of OS's successes and challenges, including the key scrutiny reviews undertaken. The outcome from this process is suggestions for OS under the incoming council to consider in order to maximise the impact of its activity.
3. In the run up to council elections in May, the Management Committee asked each of the select committees to produce a brief "end of term" style report highlighting some of the key pieces of work undertaken. The reports also allowed select committees to review their respective parts of the work programme and recommend ongoing activities for inclusion in the OS work programme under the new council.
4. The select committees had been planning for this situation and had sought final reports from many of their task groups for consideration at the last meetings of the select committees. However, inevitably some activities relate to ongoing projects and as such have been recommended to continue in the new council.

OS Work Programme

5. **Appendix A** lists the topics recommended for further work and the new Management Committee is invited to consider their inclusion within a new OS work programme. Agreed work areas will then be referred to the relevant select committees for acceptance at their first meetings.
6. In order to use OS's resources most effectively, the OS work programme should primarily be aligned to the council's agreed strategic priorities. It is therefore timely that a new council Business Plan is being produced and a draft version will be launched for consultation at Cabinet on 20 June and presented to the Management Committee for input at an extraordinary meeting on 21 June. A draft council Digital Strategy will also be presented at this meeting for OS's comments. The final versions of both documents will then be presented for approval by Cabinet on 3 July and adoption by Full Council on 21 July.
7. As well as being an important subject of OS input itself, the new Business Plan will set out the council's priorities for the next four years and will therefore be very influential in developing an OS work programme that delivers maximum value for the people of Wiltshire. To facilitate this further, Management Committee is asked to support discussions between OS chairmen and vice-chairmen with the Executive and directors to gain a more informed understanding about priorities and plans. These will be arranged following Full Council's agreement of the new Business Plan. It is likely that further scrutiny of the implementation of the Digital Strategy will be needed at future meetings.
8. The OS work programme should also provide space for topics raised by the Management Committee, select committees and non-executive councillor requests. It is also important that OS is outward-facing in the work it does in terms of seeking and understanding the views of customers, partners and stakeholders. Getting to the cause of issues and encouraging improvements in processes are important components.
9. The OS work programme should be viewed as a live document that is constantly reviewed and updated. It will be reported to every meeting of the Management Committee and relevant parts to the respective select committees. The Management Committee will need to be mindful of the capacity of councillors and officer resource when determining its work programme.
10. These matters have been explored to a degree during the councillor induction programme and the new council may decide to give further direction or review how OS undertakes its responsibilities.

Management Committee task groups

11. Within the work recommended for continued OS under the new council are a number of Management Committee task groups. These are:
 - Financial Planning Task Group
 - Military-Civilian Integration (MCIP) Task Group

- My Wiltshire System Task Group
- Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Task Group.
NB. A legacy report from this joint task group is included elsewhere on the agenda, recommending its continuance.

12. The task groups, their terms of reference and remaining members are set out in **Appendix B**. The appendix also includes all ongoing task groups appointed by the select committees in recognition of Management Committee's overall responsibility for the function and co-ordination of the OS work programme.
13. The membership of the Management Committee itself has changed significantly following appointments at Council and its chairman and vice-chairman will only be elected at today's meeting. It will therefore need to decide whether it feels it is sufficiently well-informed at its first meeting to finalise its task group structure and make all/some of these appointments.
14. Where it is decided to re-establish Management Committee task groups, the Committee has the option to re-appoint those members who remain Wiltshire councillors following the elections (subject to their wishes) for the benefit of continuity. In cases where vacancies have arisen it may authorise the Chairman and Vice-chairman to name councillors to fill vacancies as and when appropriate.
15. To assist in the appointment of members to task groups in future (across all the select committees) the Scrutiny team has contacted all non-executive members by email to survey their particular areas of interest and expertise. General invitations to enable councillors to express interest are also made when new task groups are identified.
16. Having received Management Committee's recommendations regarding the OS work programme, the other three select committees will also consider their task group structures and memberships at their first meetings.

OS representation on boards

17. In addition to task groups, OS does from time-to-time receive an invitation to appoint a representative to specific activities or projects. The Committee may therefore take the opportunity to re-appoint a representative to each. Those that are the direct responsibility of the Management Committee are listed below, together with the OS representative under the previous council:

Board	Current OS rep
Wiltshire Online Project	Cllr George Jeans
Constitution Focus Group (if re-established by the Standards Committee on 7 June)	Cllr Jon Hubbard

Notice of Motion 40 – Reducing Single Use Plastics

18. On 21 February 2017, Full Council considered a notice of motion submitted by Councillors Terry Chivers and Ernie Clark on the use of 'single-use' plastics in Wiltshire. The motion, together with an officer briefing note provided to Full Council, are included at **Appendix C** to this report.
19. The motion was not debated at Full Council and, having been put to the vote, it was resolved to refer it to the Management Committee. Members are therefore asked to consider the motion, the officer's briefing note provided and, on the basis of the information presented, determine whether scrutiny input on this matter is appropriate.

Continuing to develop OS

20. As part of OS's councillor learning and development programme, a workshop was held on 17 January 2017 at which executive and non-executive councillors were invited to discuss:
 - a) The key areas of success and challenge in the OS arena in the then current council
 - b) The key outcomes and learning points to refer to OS in the next Council, in the light of coming local and national developments.
21. On the basis of their experiences during the previous four years, attendees identified the following as being strengths of OS at Wiltshire Council:
 - Positive OS-Executive working relationships, including constructive liaison with the Executive on the OS work programme
 - Opportunities to influence policy at an early stage
 - An apolitical and collaborative culture
 - Focus on priorities in the council's Business Plan
 - Appropriate balance of proactive-reactive OS (with few "call-ins")
 - Willingness and support of officers across the council
 - Dedicated scrutiny officer resource
 - Diversity of councillor knowledge and experience
 - Information briefings before OS committee meetings
 - Contribution of co-opted members on Children's Select Committee and stakeholders on Health Select Committee
 - Particularly valuable work undertaken by OS task groups
 - Positive engagement with a variety of partners.
22. The following were identified as topics OS at Wiltshire Council could develop further:
 - Shorter OS committee agendas to enable greater focus on priorities
 - Greater focus on in-depth OS work through task groups
 - More innovative approaches to evidence gathering
 - Greater engagement with service user groups and the public
 - More emphasis on meeting "witnesses" in their own environments e.g. site visits
 - Supporting young people to influence policy through OS

- Encouraging broader non-executive member participation in OS
 - Avoiding parochialism
 - Demonstrating OS's impact more effectively and seeking officers' feedback on its value and effectiveness.
23. The new Management Committee will naturally want to consider the areas highlighted above alongside its own experiences of OS as it begins work in the new council. There will be ongoing opportunities to evaluate OS's approach and impact, including discussions with the Executive and key partners (reflecting the two-way nature of OS), with this process being led by the Chairman and Vice-chairman of the Management Committee.
24. An important aspect of ensuring OS continues to develop is ensuring OS councillors have the skills and knowledge to undertake their role effectively. During the previous council the Management Committee endorsed a 4-year councillor learning and development programme, subject to annual evaluation and budget availability. With the 4-year programme having been implemented partway through a council term, around half of the programme had been delivered by May 2017, including the two OS councillor induction sessions discussed under a separate item.
25. As recommended by OS under the previous council, Management Committee may wish to re-visit the 4-year L&D programme to ensure it remains fit for purpose, reflects identified needs (such as those highlighted under paragraph 22) and is deliverable with the available resources.

Next Steps

26. The Management Committee will have appointed its Chairman and Vice-chairman at today's meeting, as will the select committees in the forthcoming weeks. This will provide leadership of the function and, as outlined above, allow for informal meetings to be arranged with Executive members and directors in order to gain common understanding and support over priorities in the work programme.

Recommendations

1. To approve the legacy topics listed in Appendix A for inclusion in the new OS work programme and to advise the select committees accordingly.
2. To note the development of a new council Business Plan, the implications for the OS work programme and that an extraordinary meeting of the Management Committee will be held on 21 June to consider draft versions of the new Business Plan and a council Digital Strategy.
3. To support early discussions between select committee chairmen / vice-chairmen with the Executive and directors to gain a more informed understanding about key priorities and projects following council agreement of the new Business Plan.

4. To note the task group structure at the conclusion of the previous Management Committee as follows (Appendix B):
 - Financial Planning Task Group
 - Military-Civilian Integration (MCIP) Task Group
 - Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Task Group
 - My Wiltshire System Task Groupand, if appropriate, consider continuation of the above task groups and membership.
5. If appropriate, to authorise the Chairman and Vice-chairman to name councillors to fill vacancies on task groups following expressions of interest.
6. To appoint OS councillor representatives to the following boards:
 - Wiltshire Online Project Board
 - Constitution Focus Group (if re-established by the Standards Committee on 7 June)
7. To note the referral to Management Committee of a Notice of Motion on Single-Use Plastics by Full Council, plus the relevant officer briefing note, and to determine whether this matter is appropriate for inclusion in the OS work programme.
8. To note the areas for OS's development highlighted under the previous council and to include these in any review of OS's approach and effectiveness in the new council.
9. To authorise the Chairman and Vice-chairman to re-visit the 4-year OS L&D programme to ensure it remains fit for purpose, reflects identified needs and is deliverable with the available resources, with proposals brought back to Committee as appropriate.

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Appendices

- Appendix A Work areas recommended for further scrutiny by Management Committee under the previous council
- Appendix B Task Groups recommended for continuance by Management Committee under the previous council
- Appendix C Notice of Motion 40 – Reducing Single Use Plastics plus Officer Briefing Note