

Engagement of Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group
28 AUGUST 2018

Present: Councillors: Paul Clarke, David Coldwell, Leonard Crosbie,
Jonathan Dancer, Nigel Jupp, Lynn Lambert and Brian O'Connell
(Chairman)

Apologies: Councillors: Michael Willett

1 **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN**

Councillor Brian O'Connell was appointed as Chairman of the Task and Finish Group.

2 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

3 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

4 **DETERMINATION OF TERMS OF REFERENCE IN THE CONTEXT OF GUIDELINES PRESENTED TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IN THE TRAINING SESSION**

The Chairman reminded the Group of the three factors which were agreed at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4th June 2018, which agreed to form the basis of this review: 1) How Scrutiny has worked over the past 12 months and confirm whether this formula should be continued until the end of the year, 2) Consider any other options in relation to major items on the Cabinet Forward Plan or work of the Council i.e. the Budget or major schemes such as the Hurst Road development, and 3) Recommendations for a future structure of Overview and Scrutiny for the new Council year.

These would form the terms of reference for the review.

5 **SCOPE THE REVIEW AND AGREE A TIMESCALE**

The Group discussed the scope of the review and the terms of reference, it was suggested by a Member that the review should include examining the S106 process and commercial viability. The Chairman asked that the Council's policy on viability statements, the guidelines on S106 and the revised National

Planning Framework, be circulated to the Group and this aspect would be discussed at the next meeting.

The Group addressed the terms of reference. Firstly discussing how Overview and Scrutiny had worked over the past 12 months under its new structure.

Members felt that the Committee was restricted in relation to examining some items such as crime and disorder. Currently the Overview and Scrutiny Committee receives an annual update on crime and disorder matters and the Horsham District Community Safety Partnership, whereas previously the Crime and Disorder Sub-Committee used to receive presentations from partners such as the Police and West Sussex Fire and Rescue twice a year.

The Group agreed that other areas such as business improvement and finance and performance were all areas where the Committee had lost the ability to look at these subjects in detail. The Group suggested a balance somewhere between the new system and the old.

It was agreed that under the new structure of Scrutiny, there had been an improvement in terms of the volume and length of meetings and councillor and officer time. However, it was the outcomes which were more important and these were considered not to have been so satisfactory over the past year. For example, the Group felt that now the monitoring of finance and performance was a function of the main Committee, the Members do not have the ability to drill down to the details. They also felt that the old system of working groups and sub-committees allowed a build up of expertise and knowledge of the subject. But agreed that the meetings had been too long in the past.

Any changes to the current Overview and Scrutiny structure would require a change to the Constitution and need form a recommendation to the Governance Committee.

The Chairman summarised that he would like to see the reinstatement of three sub-committees or working groups: 1. Business Improvement, 2. Finance and Performance and 3. Community – which would encompass health, leisure services, community safety partnership, crime and disorder. It was suggested that these standing groups meet quarterly In addition, he would like to see the ability to set up task and finish groups for specific reviews, continue. The Chairman of these groups would then summarise and feedback at meetings of the Scrutiny Committee. The Group agreed with this initial proposal.

The Members suggested that the group covering finance and performance should be broadened to include the Medium Term Financial Strategy and budget setting and the Corporate Plan. Members agreed that the mechanics of how Scrutiny engages with the MTFs and the Corporate Plan was very important and if this could not be done through the group, it should perhaps form a task and finish group.

Standing working groups would be open to all Councillors, not only Members of Overview and Scrutiny.

The Chairman would work with the officer to draw up the proposals and the formation of the new structure of Overview and Scrutiny and bring this back to the Group for discussion.

At the next meeting the Group would consider in more depth how Scrutiny engages with the Cabinet Forward Plan and discussed the proposed new format.

6 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Group would be held on Tuesday 25th September 2018 at 5.30pm.

The meeting closed at 6.57 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm

CHAIRMAN