

# Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee

3 April 2017

By the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee

## INFORMATION REPORT



**Horsham  
District  
Council**

Not Exempt

## Overview and Scrutiny Self-Evaluation

### Executive Summary

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolved at its meeting on 30 January 2017 to undertake a Self-Evaluation of the Overview and Scrutiny function using the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) Self-Evaluation Framework. Minute SO/53 refers. This report sets out the progress of the self-evaluation and the next steps.

### Recommendations

That the Committee is recommended:

- i) **to endorse and support the progress of the self-evaluation project group**
- ii) **to note the next steps identified in 4) and participate in a member seminar in April**

### Reasons for Recommendations

To enact Overview and Scrutiny Committee minute reference SO/53 by participating in the nationally recognised self-evaluation framework for overview and scrutiny, in order to prepare for the function for the forthcoming municipal year.

### Background Papers

None.

**Wards affected:** All Wards

**Contact:** Ben Bix, Governance Project Manager.

## **Background Information**

### **1 Introduction and Background**

- 1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolved at its meeting on 30 January 2017 to undertake a Self-Evaluation of the Overview and Scrutiny function using the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) Self-Evaluation Framework. Minute SO/53 refers and the framework can be found on the CfPS website.
- 1.2 The Committee emphasised that the self-evaluation be undertaken as soon as possible. This report therefore sets out the progress on the self-evaluation and provides the Committee with the opportunity to be involved in a member seminar in April.

### **2 Relevant Council policy**

- 2.1 All corporate plan priorities would benefit from an effective overview and scrutiny function in 2017/18.

### **3 Details**

- 3.1 The Committee urged that the self-evaluation be undertaken as soon as possible. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee examined the CfPS framework and discussed how best to undertake the self-evaluation in a thorough but timely manner so that the findings of the self-evaluation could be enacted for municipal year 2017/18.
- 3.2 The self-evaluation framework provides a series of steps to guide participants through the framework. The framework suggests that a 'project group' of Overview and Scrutiny members be formed and that one officer supports the group. The Chairman and Vice Chairman felt that a group of experienced scrutiny members and members new to scrutiny would be appropriate.
- 3.3 The evaluation project group was selected by the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee accordingly:
  - Councillor Coldwell (Chairman of the Self-Evaluation Project Group)
  - Councillor Crosbie (Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee)
  - Councillor Jupp (Chairman of Finance and Performance Sub-Committee)
  - Councillor O'Connell (Chairman of Business Improvement Sub-Committee)
  - Councillor Skipp (Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group and Chairman of Health and Social Inclusion Sub-Committee)
  - Councillors Bradnum, Dancer and Willett (Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2016/17)
- 3.4 The group has worked through around 55% of the self-evaluation framework in three informal meetings at Parkside supported by the Governance Project Manager.

The group has:

- a) Agreed the design principles to tackle the self-evaluation framework
- b) Taken stock of the current process including 'looking in' and 'looking out'
- c) Used a, and b, to consider the future role of overview and scrutiny, and the role of others
- d) Considered a future role and focus areas for the future
- e) productive ways of working

## **4 Next Steps**

- 4.1 The self-evaluation group is now at the stage when it would like to involve all Overview and Scrutiny members with the self-evaluation. The self-evaluation group propose that this involvement takes place in the form of a workshop or seminar with all the members involved in the overview and scrutiny function during April.
- 4.2 The group will continue to work on the self-evaluation as follows:
  - f) less productive ways of working
  - g) Accessing information
  - h) Considering a structural model, including the number of Overview and Scrutiny committees, and the role of task and finish groups
  - i) Chairing arrangements
  - j) how to undertake ongoing review and evaluation
- 4.3 The self-evaluation group would like to present their initial findings in a) to j) above for discussion and consideration by a wider group of members at an April member seminar.
- 4.4 The self-evaluation group will then collate and consider the views of the member seminar in April.
- 4.5 A report of the findings and recommendations of the self-evaluation will be made to the first meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2017/18 (5 June 2017).

## **5 Views of the Policy Development Advisory Group and Outcome of Consultations**

- 5.1 Overview and Scrutiny is not a Cabinet function. The constitutional provisions relating to Policy Development Advisory Groups do not apply. The consultees are therefore:
  - a) the Self-Evaluation Group described in 3.3
  - b) all members undertaking the Overview and Scrutiny function by seminar in April
  - c) the Senior Leadership Team as required by the framework

## **6 Other Courses of Action Considered but Rejected**

- 6.1 The group considered issuing an electronic questionnaire to gather the views of members, but it was felt that a workshop or seminar during April would be better as it would encourage participation and discussion.

## **7 Resource Consequences**

- 7.1 The Self-Evaluation is being undertaken within existing resources. Any resource consequences flowing from the findings of the review will be reported to the first meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2017/18.

## **8 Legal Consequences**

- 8.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolved to undertake the self-evaluation as soon as possible. In the absence of the Committee appointing a group of members to undertake the task at its meeting in January, it was appropriate that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman met the intention of the committee by selecting members to participate in the self-evaluation group.

## **9 Risk Assessment**

- 9.1 The timely self-evaluation of the function mitigates any risk.

## **10 Other Considerations**

- 10.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee remain responsible for discharging the Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny regulations 2009. This report does not have any other materially relevant considerations.