

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL BRIEFING 2016/17

Well another year has flown by and Overview and Scrutiny have been exceptionally busy this year.

Away Day 2016

At our Away Day on 7 July 2016 in the Andover Guildhall we decided it was time to go back to the beginning and look at how we work and how we could do better. The day was entitled 'Crossing the River' which was a very useful day facilitated by Laura Murphy from the Centre of Public Scrutiny.

The day started off by us writing sticky notes for all the items we identified within Overview and Scrutiny both good and bad. We then stuck them on the board on the 'river bank'. The next task was to take across the 'river' those items we felt were important and leave behind those that were felt unnecessary.

Once we had 'crossed the river' we needed to prioritise the various items. This then gave us a list of over 100 items many of which were already being carried out by the Committee. We then had a second event to look at prioritising which produced a shorter list that fell into six areas.

- New Form - The Chairman had already started looking at a new work allocation form, and this was taken over by Councillor Baverstock who looked at how to get items on the agenda, scoping and keeping track throughout the process. This gave us a far better overall form encompassing all the above but also reporting on our progress.
- Call In – This was led by Councillor C Dowden and resulted in a small change to the Call In process and the introduction of a Call In form. Four recommendations were submitted to Cabinet on 19 April 2017.
- Panel Scoping – This was incorporated into the new form to add items to the work programme.
- Training – Councillor Finlay looked at Training within Overview and Scrutiny and came up with a list of required training. Enforcement training was held by the Head of Planning and Building and a session on Return on Interest was carried out by John Cade from the University of Birmingham. Other training identified will be looked at in conjunction with other member training requirements.
- Public Participation – Councillor Drew had started looking at public participation and this has now been taken over by Councillor Baverstock
- Job Description – This was looked at by Councillor Jeffrey in conjunction with revising the Overview and Scrutiny Handbook.

The new handbook has been completed and I am delighted to say the new form for putting any item on the Agenda is now available to any Councillor or member of the Public on the website. These forms are then considered by the Chairman and Vice Chairman and brought to the Committee for approval.

This has been a huge amount of work and I would like to thank all the members of the six groups for their hard work and coming up with such good results.

The next stage was to update the FOUR YEAR plan. This has nearly been completed and comprises a full year's list of items that need to be phased in over the coming four years. These items are looked at every one to four years depending on their value or need.

We have also increased the number of 'briefing notes' that we ask for on items that do not require a full agenda item. We do need to make sure the various items are being considered and where necessary being implemented.

As I said this has been a busy year and one of our new innovations is to give up having 'Lead Members' but instead we are going to have more panels lead by more members of the committee. Everyone should have the chance to run a panel and this will give them valuable experience in both the running of the committee and the various Council areas.

The Committee had met 11 times during the year and considered 37 reports covering Communications, Andover Vision, Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults, Business Risks, Complaints, Andover Economic Update, Romsey Future, Council Tax Support and Review of procurement process for the tendering of the Leisure Centre Management Contract

Councillor Role Definition – Overview and Scrutiny considered the revisions to The Councillor Role Definition which was updated to more accurately reflect this diverse role with particular reference to the work being undertaken by Councillors within their communities.

Presentations

The Committee continued to invite Portfolio Holders in to give an overview of their Portfolio's and Councillor Stallard, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Councillor Bundy, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Building attended to give a presentation on their Portfolios.

Presentations were also held on a number of issues including Heather Hauschild, Chief Officer of the West Hampshire Clinical Commission Group on the Commissions's position on the Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust's proposals for a critical treatment hospital and Mary Edwards, Chief Executive Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust on the Minor Injuries Unit at Andover War Memorial Hospital.

Mark Edgerley, Romsey Town Centre Manager gave a presentation in April 2016 on the projects in Romsey that he was involved in and future challenges. The Andover Town Centre Manager, Chris Gregory attended in February 2017 to update the Committee on the achievements and successes of the Town Centre Partnership since its inception 2 ½ years ago.

Task and Finish Panels

Community Safety Panel led by Councillor Baverstock which reviewed the effectiveness of the Council's Community Safety responsibilities and in particular the role of Neighbourhood Wardens. 5 Recommendations were considered by Cabinet and agreed without change.

Plans and Process Panel led by Councillor Adams King which reviewed the Plans Panel, the Area Planning Committees and the Planning Control Committee and also considered continuing its work to enable the Planning Advisory Service to undertake a review of the various options for how the Area Planning Committees might operate in future. 10 Recommendations were considered by Cabinet and 3 Recommendations were recommended to Council which were agreed.

The Public Participation Panel led by Councillor Drew is ongoing and will also revolve around the role of the Councillor in the Community.

Budget and Audit panels have continued to be held regularly with a number of items discussed including Audit Charter and Strategy, Internal Audit Annual Reports, Annual Governance Statements, Audit Panel Self Assessments, Internal Audit Progress Reports, External Audit Reports, Annual Audit and Certification Fees, External Audit Annual Audit letter, External Audit Plan, Fees and Charges, Medium Term Financial Strategy as well as the management and forward planning of their work programmes.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone on the committee for their lively debate, interest in the various items and most of all for usually reading the agenda before coming to the meeting.

I believe we are getting to the area where we can now take items from all areas, make sure they are suitable (New form) make sure they are scoped correctly and are small enough to delve deeper and not too large to cause a scatter gun approach.

The Chairman of the committee is decided by all members and if possible I would like another year to make sure all our new ideas are working well and our aim of being a scrutiny committee and a critical friend is working well.

Thank you