CITY COUNCIL **09 JULY 2013**

REPORT OF THE GOVERNANCE, RESOURCES AND CUSTOMER SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2013/14

1. OVERVIEW OF THE YEAR

1.1 Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) is a major arena in which two thirds of the City Council's membership play a part in the governance of Birmingham, influencing improvements in services and the plans to enhance conditions for our citizens. In October 2012, the Governance, Resources and Member Development O&S Committee presented a report to City Council setting out a new approach to Scrutiny that would seek to maximise these outcomes. In particular the objective was to increase the focus on policy development and cross cutting inquiries.

1.2 The resulting work programme demonstrates scrutiny's value in providing members with the means to make a difference and drive improvement in council services. The O&S Committees have shown how they can represent the views and needs of Birmingham's people, businesses and community organisations, and help the city through economic and financial difficulties. The year's work, although sometimes critical, has assisted the Executive and demonstrated the key role O&S plays in drawing together service silos and making connections across organisations.

2. WHAT WE DID

2.1 The key pieces of work undertaken over the last 12 months broadly divided into either major Reviews (significant pieces of detailed project work undertaken over a longer timescale) or Inquiries (short, sharp pieces of focussed work looking into current issues or taking a policy overview).

2.2 The approach in both cases focused on maximising public and partner involvement. Both involved an initial call for evidence, whereby witnesses, all Members of the Council and the general public were invited to send in written evidence to enable Members to prepare more fully for the session(s). The focus on inquiry-style meetings has enabled more external experts and local people to feed into Scrutiny work. This was complemented by increased visibility with a Twitter account (@bhamscrutiny).

2.3 Feedback from Members, officers and external witnesses about the new ways of working was very positive. In addition there was a noticeable increase in the public presence at the meetings, demonstrating the impact of holding the call for evidence and publicising the meetings more widely.

2.4 This showed in the data collected after each meeting, with the percentage of scrutiny reviews/inquiries reports including the direct input of customers/ public increasing from 53% in 2011/12 to 77% in 2012/13. The percentage of meetings where there was a member of the public present for any part of the meeting increased from 49% to 69%.

2.5 The inquiry style of working enabled the executive to utilise scrutiny to examine issues where major policy changes and reforms are known about in advance. This form of working entailed short (usually single) evidence gathering sessions, which resulted in feedback to the relevant Cabinet Member or other external partner agencies. Scrutiny members particularly appreciated the ability to influence debate or decision making in a timely

2.6

-

-

2.7

2.8

-

-

2.9 The major review approach facilitated exploration of topics requiring a more detailed or wider consideration. These generally resulted in a major evidence based report containing deliberation and a series of longer term recommendations to the Executive. This work supported on-going Council policy development in a number of ways including:

- ***Devolution – Making it Real*** (Districts & Public Engagement): following the renewed focus on devolution and localisation, this inquiry set out to support the transition to a new set of structures, outcomes and relationships. The report recognised and sought to facilitate opportunities to make a difference, shaping places, recognising the powers that districts have, focusing on the outcomes for citizens and ensuring there is clarity about accountability for services and decision-making.
- ***Autism and Criminal Justice*** (Health & Social Care): Autistic people are very vulnerable and difficulties in working out other peoples' motives can lead to them becoming involved in crime by 'false friends' without them realising. Autistic people are seven times more likely to encounter the police and at least three times more likely to be imprisoned than the average non-autistic person. The report identified a need to raise autism awareness and for better data as a basis for better commissioning and better services for autistic people.
-
-
-

2.10

2.11

priorities for Health scrutiny work and to build positive relationships with public health, local Healthwatch, Health and Wellbeing Boards, Clinical Commissioning Groups and other stakeholders involved in the new structures to create an accountable system. The work resulted in the production of the CfPS publication 'Spanning the System'.

2.12 In November, the Social Cohesion & Community Safety O&S Committee reported on the set up of the Police and Crime Panel (PCP). That month, a Police and Crime Commissioner for the West Midlands was elected. A Police and Crime Panel (PCP), supported by the Scrutiny Office and Committee Services, was introduced to undertake important monitoring functions. During 2012/13 work included: scrutinising the precept and budget and the Police and Crime Plan; undertaking the first confirmation hearing in the country prior to the formal appointment of the Deputy PCC; and setting up a process for dealing with complaints against the PCC and Deputy Commissioner.

2.13 Members also welcomed the attendance of Cabinet Members at many meetings, reinforcing the important role of O&S in holding the Executive to account. In addition, the call-in procedure was used nine times in the last municipal year, and on one occasion the Executive was asked to re-consider a decic 0,71

3.

3.1

3.2

3.3

3.4

3.5 In addition the Chair of the Governance, Resources & Customer Services O&S Committee meets with each O&S Chair individually which gives a chance to discuss any issues or problems and enables the Chair to take an overview of the work in order to facilitate the smooth running of the function.

3.6 The emerging priorities for each Committee are set out below and summarised in Appendix 3. In addition, O&S Chairs are exploring taking the theme of child poverty as a strand through a number of committees.

Governance, Resources and Customer Services

3.7 The Governance, Resources and Customer Services O&S Committee will be renewing its focus on Customer Services, in particular focusing on monitoring all elements of customer service from first contact through to delivery of the service or resolution of the problem with the aim of ensuring maximum improvement in customer services and end-to end service delivery. A series of quarterly reports will be brought to committee to include:

- How ongoing problems/concerns are raised and being dealt with;
- Performance information: how it's used and the impact it has; and
- Progress towards channel shift.

3.8 In addition, Members have indicated a wish to look at how complaints are managed and whether there is consistency across Directorates.

3.9 The Leader will be attending the Committee later in the year to explain the new "zero Budgeting" process and how Members will be involved; and to discuss the "Green Paper: The Future City Council". Members will also examine particular areas of budget pressures in depth including Children Young People and Families and Adults and Communities.

Districts & Public Engagement

3.10 The work of the Districts and Public Engagement O&S Committee will relate to the following issues

- Engagement – The first focus for the committee will be undertaking an inquiry into citizen engagement;
- Devolution – following the 2013 report to Council on Devolution: Making it Real the Committee will continue to support the ongoing transition to create a devolved organisation by tracking this scrutinising the role of the Executive and Directorates in developing this;
- The Committee will examine some of the services Districts are providing directly; the partnership and engagement structures being put in place; and the approach to prioritising and planning. There will be discussion about the role that the Committee should play in scrutinising performance of individual committees;
- Districts' role in place shaping – how are districts developing distinctive identities and what role can they / should they play for growth and economy and health and well-being?
- Housing – the responsibilities which ensure that all households in Birmingham have access to adequate housing in the city are now with a number of Cabinet Members and

Partnership, Contract Performance and Third Sector

3.17 At its heart, this year's work programme will reinforce the Council's and the Executive's priorities for improved contracting and commissioning. Alongside Governance, Resources and Customer Services O&S Committee, Members will continue to consider major city council contracts, in terms of spend, strategic importance, interest and potential risk linked dy]TJ0.001

3.18

3.19

3.20

3.21

3.22

3.23

3.24

3.25 In addition, the Committee will undertake a joint review with the Transport, Connectivity & Sustainability O&S Committee into how the city ensures that maximum benefit is obtained from the forthcoming High Speed 2 line. The Committee's focus will be on taking full advantage of the economic benefits, particularly with regard to jobs and skills.

Transport, Connectivity & Sustainability

3.26 The first objective of the Transport, Connectivity & Sustainability O&S Committee is to complete the major review into our waste disposal arrangements: "From Waste to Resource". As the Council's current contract with Veolia ends in 2019, the key question is: what do we need to do to ensure Birmingham has the most sustainable and efficient waste/recycling strategy post-2018? The emphasis is on what could and should be included in a 30 year vision, and how we shift perceptions from "waste" to using our rubbish as a resource. The Committee will also keep a close eye on the development of Birmingham Energy Savers (BES) and the city's energy strategy as part of wider work on waste to resource.

3.27 Related to that will be on-going monitoring of the Weekly Waste Collection Scheme, examining the implementation of the scheme and its impact. Members are also keen to look at our Household Recycling Centres and ways in which the effectiveness of these can be maximised.

3.28 Members will continue to examine the challenge the City Council faces in order to ensure a safe, welcoming and sustainable transport system with a choice of safe, affordable, quality transport options that would also support our visitor economy. The biggest opportunity for the city lies with the introduction of High Speed 2 (HS2), and it is a good time for O&S to examine this in terms of what needs to be done to maximise the benefits for Birmingham.

3.29 This would be a joint review with the Birmingham Economy & Jobs O&S Committee. The committee's focus will be on how connectivity and sustainability agendas need to be at the heart of HS2 proposals.

3.30 Taking a more local focus, Members will continue the work on road safety, started as part of last year's "Changing Gear" report. In particular, the committee will follow up on the City Council motion calling for the introduction of 20 mile per hour limits across the city.

3.31 The third strand of the Committee's work concerns digital connectivity and the Council's plans for high speed wireless.

MOTION

That the City Council agrees the approach adopted by Overview and Scrutiny and the scrutiny work programme for the year 2013/14.

Appendix 2: Scrutiny Reports to Cabinet Members 2012 -13

O&S Committee	Report	Date
Governance, Resources and Member Development	Council Tax Localisation	July 2012
Education & Vulnerable Children	Improvements in Children's Social Care	September 2012
Governance, Resources and Member Development	Wholesale markets	November 2012
Transport, Connectivity & Sustainability	Response to draft policy on Biomass	March 2013
Social Cohesion & Community Safety	Community Contribution in Housing Allocation Scheme	April 2013
Social Cohesion & Community Safety	Reducing Reoffending	April 2013

Appendix 3: Emerging Priorities (and proposed Council date) for 2013/14

O&S Committee	Topic	Proposed date to Council (if applicable)
Governance Resources & Customer Services	• Customer Services • The Future City Council	
Health & Social Care	• Falls Prevention • Childhood Obesity	• Jul 2013 • Jan 2014
Social Cohesion & Community Safety	• Mental Health & Criminal Justice • Neighbourhood Tasking	• Feb 2014
Education & Vulnerable Children	• Child Sex Exploitation • Children's commissioning • Adoption and fostering	• Apr 2014
Partnership, Contract Performance & Third Sector	• Major Contracts including new contracting (housing/gas repairs) • Major Events	• Apr 2014
Districts & Public Engagement	• Citizen Engagement • Devolution • Housing	• Apr 2014
Birmingham Economy & Jobs	• Support to Micro and Small Businesses • HS2 (joint report)	• Oct 2013
Transport, Connectivity & Sustainability	• From Waste to Resource • HS2 (joint report)	• Dec 2013/ Jan 2014 • Feb 2014