
EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON 24 MARCH 2011

COSP.32/11 DRAFT SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

The Scrutiny Officer (Mrs Edwards) presented the Draft Scrutiny Annual Report (report OS.07/11).

Mrs Edwards explained that the Report aimed to summarise the work carried out in the Civic year and to discuss issues for the future. Comments made by the three Overview and Scrutiny Panels will be used to amend the draft before it is considered by the Scrutiny Chairs Group. Following the Chairs Group the report will then be submitted to Council for consideration.

Mrs Edwards outlined the layout of the report and drew Members attention to part 2 of the report which gave a summary of the progress made with regard to the recommendations which arose from the review of the scrutiny process. Mrs Edwards asked the Panel for their opinion on the implementation of the recommendations and asked them to give their comments for insertion into the 2010/11 update.

The Panel discussed the recommendations that had been made in the 2009 review of scrutiny and the progress made on each one. The Panel agreed an update for each of the thirteen recommendations:

Recommendation 1 – The Panel agreed that there needed to be some improvement to the way items were scheduled for Overview and Scrutiny. The Panel wanted earlier notice of items that the Executive would be considering in the future.

Recommendation 2 – The selection of Chairs had been successful and should continue as set out in the recommendation

Recommendation 3 – The Panel names had been changed

Recommendation 4 – Briefing meetings began at 9.15am and had proved to be successful. Members commented that they would like to see some changes to the way reports were prepared and presented at meetings. The Panel felt that reports should be prepared and presented by Portfolio Holders supported by the relevant officers, especially for contentious or political matters.

Mrs Edwards confirmed that this issue would also be considered as part of the protocol for the relationship between Scrutiny and Executive.

Recommendation 5 – Members felt that there had been some improvement with regard to resolutions and responses but wanted more reasons from the Executive for accepting or rejecting references from Scrutiny.

Recommendation 6 – It was proposed that the meetings would be formalised as part of the protocol with quarterly diarised meetings.

Recommendation 7 – Task and Finish Groups were working well for the Panel.

Recommendation 8 – In consideration of the 2011/12 – 2015/16 budget there had been little input from this Panel due to the nature of the budget.

Recommendation 9 – Members felt that there was a risk that the Council could become ‘inward looking’ if it did not take the opportunity to involve more public and other representatives in the Panel’s work. Members felt that the opportunity was limited with Task and Finish Groups as each Panel had only carried out one piece of Task and Finish Group work in 2010/11. Members agreed that there should be some further exploration of the possibility of co-opting other Members or representatives from outside organisations onto the Panel for specific issues.

Recommendation 10 - The use of Lead Members had been more successful when Lead Members were appointed to a time limited specific piece of work that the Member had experience, knowledge or an interest in and agreed that this should continue.

Recommendation 11 – The Development Sessions worked well and should be continued. Portfolio Holders and Senior Officers should be invited to attend the Sessions.

Recommendation 12 – The Informal sessions had proved useful and should continue in the same format.

Recommendation 13 - The training for new Members had been formalised by the Member Learning Development Group. It was identified that Chairs Training was required in 2011/12.

RESOLVED – That the comments and resolutions as set out above be incorporated into the Annual Scrutiny Report in conjunction with recommendations made by the Resources and Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panels.