

## Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board

### Wednesday, 24 February 2016, County Hall, Worcester - 10.00 am

		<b>Minutes</b>
<b>Present:</b>		Mr R M Udall (Chairman), Mr C J Bloore, Ms L R Duffy, Mr A C Roberts, Mr P A Tuthill and Mr T A L Wells
<b>Also attended:</b>		Mr L C R Mallett Mr P M McDonald  Jodie Townsend (Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager) and Samantha Morris (Overview and Scrutiny Officer)
<b>Available Papers</b>		The members had before them:  A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated);  B. The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2016 (previously circulated).  Copies of documents A and B will be attached to the signed Minutes.
<b>900</b>	<b>Apologies and Welcome</b>	Apologies were received from Liz Eyre.  Councillor Paul Tuthill was welcomed to Board following his appointment as Chairman of the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 11 February 2016 in place of Dr Ken Pollock who had been appointed as a Cabinet Member.
<b>901</b>	<b>Declaration of Interest and of any Party Whip</b>	None.
<b>902</b>	<b>Public Participation</b>	None.
<b>903</b>	<b>Confirmation of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting</b>	The Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 January 2016 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**904 Request from  
Audit and  
Governance  
Committee: Use  
of Consultants**

The Board was asked to consider the Audit and Governance Committee's (A & G Committee) request to include the Use of Consultants as an item on its Work Programme.

At its meeting on 28 January, the Board was asked to consider this issue but had agreed to defer the discussion to give the opportunity for the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the A & G Committee to attend the meeting to present the request.

Councillor Luke Mallet, Vice Chairman of the A & G Committee attended the Meeting to outline the reasons for the request:

- The A & G Committee had commissioned a Report on the Use of External Consultants, which it considered in June 2014. A further Report was subsequently requested and included in the agreed 2015/16 Internal Audit Plan - this was considered in December 2015.
- The Reports had provided the Committee with limited assurance and had highlighted significant concerns. Although the County Council had very good clear documented and detailed processes relating to the engagement and management of consultants, it had found a continued non-compliance with the framework by managers across the organisation. There also remained some ambiguity over the Council's definition of consultancy and hence a lack of consistency in interpretation.
- A further Audit Report had been commissioned during 2016/17 and concerns had been raised at full Council.
- It was suggested that specifically, the areas of concern that scrutiny should consider were:
  - Ambiguity about what was the definition of a consultant and the purposes for which consultants were being used.
  - Legal jeopardy arising from the Council not following its Standing Orders or Procurement Code.
  - Reputational impact.
  - Value for money.

During the discussion, the following points were made:

- The Audit Report was very thorough and any agreed scrutiny should be very specific.

- Scrutiny should ensure that it avoided any duplication of work.
- The changing culture of the County Council had resulted in changes in the way that services were delivered and as a result the Council had lost some of its in-house knowledge. Consultants may be needed more in the future. Consideration should therefore be given to appropriateness of the use of consultants in the new model of service provision.
- The definition of a consultant was key.
- There were concerns that officers were willfully ignoring the policy.
- The Scrutiny should be dealt with quickly.

It was agreed that this issue should be referred to the Corporate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel to examine the Use of Consultants Policy, how it could be enforced and how the Cabinet could be held to account.

**905 Developing a Scrutiny Approach to Quality Assurance**

It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

The Board were encouraged to feed back any interim comments to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman on the work to date.

**906 Scrutiny Work Programme**

The OSPB was asked to:

- review the updated Work Programme and consider the need for any further amendments;
- discuss and consider its approach for developing its Work Programme for 2016/17 and in doing so
- consider how it would like to consult with the Public in developing its Work Programme for 2016/17.

**Additions to the existing 2015/16 Work Programme**

OSPB

- Sexual Violence and Rape
- Climate Change

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel

- Outcomes for disadvantaged young people - social mobility
- West Mercia Police - Safeguarding Children and

## Child Sexual Exploitation

### Adult Care and Well-Being Overview and Scrutiny Panel

- Stand Up For Care Campaign
- Supporting people with substance abuse taking into account that 95% of those supported recommitted offences

### Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- Review the terms of reference of Integrated Health and Social Care Scrutiny in light of Lord Carter's Report – Productivity in NHS Hospitals
- Lord Crisp's Independent Commission on Adult Acute Mental Healthcare Report

### Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- Transport Planning (including access to hospital sites)
- The potential impact of bus contracts being re-tendered in April – it was agreed that this issue was urgent and would be investigated by the Chairman of OSPB, Adult Care and Well-being Overview and Scrutiny Panel and Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the findings reported back to the next OSPB.

### Corporate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

- Citizen's Advice Bureau – this issue was reiterated as an important area for scrutiny.

### **Developing the 2016/17 Work Programme**

The Board acknowledged the importance of involving Members at every stage of development of the Work Programme.

It was agreed that the Work Programme for 2016/17 would be developed by considering the:

- Items from 2015/16 Work Programme that were not completed or require follow up
- outcomes of the Budget Scrutiny 2015/16 process
- views of Scrutiny Panels Policy ensuring that some of the suggestions were policy development

- views of Members as community champions
- views of the Executive
- views of officers
- views of stakeholders and partners
- views of the public.

### Consulting the Public

The Board acknowledged the importance of the voice of the public in developing its Work Programme for 2016/17. It was hoped that increasing the amount of consultation with the public, would result in more public engagement with scrutiny.

In response to the suggestion to issue press releases in advance of scrutiny meetings to alert the public to the issues being discussed, the interim Democratic, Governance and Scrutiny Manager advised that he was already liaising with Corporate and Communications to arrange this.

The interim Democratic, Governance and Scrutiny Manager was asked to consider the process for engaging with the public and report back to the next OSPB.

## **907 Member Update and Cabinet Forward Plan**

The Board was asked to:

- a) Receive an update on emerging issues and developments not covered in the previous discussion within the particular remit of each member of the OSPB, including an update on each Overview and Scrutiny Panel;
- b) Consider the Council's latest Forward Plan in order to identify:
  - Any items it would wish to consider further at a future meeting; and
  - Any items it would wish to refer to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel for further consideration.

### Crime and Disorder

Cllr Bloor advised that due to resourcing issues, the start date of the Effectiveness of the Prevention and Recovery Drug and Alcohol Misuse Service Scrutiny Task Group had been delayed but that he had been carrying out some background investigation in the meantime.

It was suggested that reviewing recommendations from previous Scrutiny Reports was important and should

happen routinely. A process to facilitate this would be considered at the next OSPB.

Forward Plan

No issues were identified from the Cabinet Forward Plan for future scrutiny.

The meeting ended at 11.10 am

Chairman .....