

SCRUTINY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 JUNE 2018 AT 6.00 P.M. AT THE COUNCIL HOUSE

Panel Members Present

Councillor Murray (Chair)
Councillor Hussain
Councillor A. Ditta
Councillor Ferguson
Councillor James
Councillor Rasab
Councillor Samra
Councillor Shires
Councillor Singh Sohal

Officers Present:

Tony Cox – Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Paul Gordon – Head of Business Change
Helen Dudson – Corporate Assurance Manager
Craig Goodall – Senior Democratic Services Officer

Portfolio Holders

Councillor Bird – Leader
Councillor Harris – Personnel and Business Support
Councillor Towe – Education and Skills

105/18 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Kudhail and Nawaz.

106/18 SUBSTITUTIONS

There were no substitutions for the duration of the meeting.

107/18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest or party whip identified at this meeting.

108/18 MINUTES

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 June, 2018 a copy having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

109/18 CORPORATE PLAN MONITORING – 6 MONTH PERFORMANCE/PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee considered

Resolved:

102/18 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PRIORITIES 2018/19

The Committee discussed priorities for each OSC for the year ahead.

Children's Services OSC

On behalf of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, Councillor Nawaz, reported that the Committee would be concentrating on the response to the Ofsted inspection, looked after children, private fostering, child sexual exploitation and social worker recruitment and retention.

Education OSC

The Chair of the Education OSC, Councillor Nawaz, reported the Committee would be focussing on Academies, colleges, skills and educational attainment.

Social Care and Health OSC

The Chair of the Social Care and Health OSC, Councillor James, reported that the Committee would be taking a thematic approach during the year ahead. Themes would include partnerships, the voluntary and community sector, mental health, social care, health and social care integration and finances.

Economy and Environment OSC

The Chair reported that Councillor Shies had provided a note that the Economy and Environment OSC would be considering transport, the Development Corridor and wished to establish a working group to examine the economic impact of the private rented sector.

Resolved:

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee priorities for 2018/19 be noted.

103/18 LESSONS FOR SCRUTINY FROM NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

The Executive Director (Resources and Transformation) gave a presentation (annexed) on lessons to be learned from the recent financial failings at Northamptonshire County Council (NCC). He explained how the problems arose and the early warning signs that were visible. He highlighted the frequent use of reserves and the transfer of transformation capital into the revenue budget. This was combined with delays in reporting and no scrutiny. Further to this he highlighted the assurances available in Walsall and encouraged Members to make use of the resources available to them.

Members recognised the importance of asking challenging questions and the importance of listening to the views of external auditors. A question was asked how

the Council ensured it had the right mix of skills and experience to be able to make informed commercial decisions. The Executive Director explained that if the Council did not have the right experience in-house then external consultants would be appointed. Particularly if it was for a one-off need. If the need for certain skills was long term then consideration would be given to employing in-house.

Resolved:

That the feedback from Overview and Scrutiny Committees be noted.

104/18 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date of the next meeting would be 27 September 2018.

The meeting terminated at 7.29 p.m.

Chair:

Date:.....