

## **SCRUTINY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**28 September 2017 AT 6.00 P.M. AT THE COUNCIL HOUSE**

### **Panel Members Present**

Councillor Hussain (Chair)  
Councillor Murray (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor M. Bird  
Councillor P. Bott  
Councillor A. Ditta  
Councillor S. Ditta  
Councillor A. Nazir  
Councillor Towe

### **Officers Present:**

Julie Alderson - Interim Executive Director  
(Change & Governance)  
Tony Cox – Head of Legal and Democratic  
Services  
Craig Goodall – Senior Democratic Services  
Officer

### **Portfolio Holders**

Councillor K. Chambers (Personnel and Business  
Support /Agenda for Change)  
Councillor A. Nawaz – Children's Services  
Councillor I. Shires – Community, Leisure and Culture

### **68/17 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Burley, Hazell and Longhi.

### **69/17 SUBSTITUTIONS**

There were no substitutions.

### **70/17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP**

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

### **71/17 MINUTES**

#### **Resolved:**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 June, 2017, a copy having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.**

## 72/17      **LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT FOR ELECTED MEMBERS**

The Committee considered a draft learning and development programme for Members (annexed).

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services reported on the draft programme to the Committee. He explained the background to its development and the role of member focus groups in shaping its content. The programme was layered to assist new and experienced Members. E-Learning was at the heart of the programme supported by periodical events from external speakers. It was proposed that the Standards Committee would oversee the programme and Member participation.

The Committee were supportive of the proposed programme and enthusiastic for Members to be offered development opportunities. Some Members felt that attending development sessions should be mandatory. The Committee discussed methods of ensuring Member attendance at development sessions and noted that it would have to be managed through political groups as there were limited formal methods available to enforce this. To add weight to the need to attend development the Committee suggested amending the Code of Conduct and/or producing a personal concordat for Members.

### **Resolved:**

#### **That:**

- 1. The Learning and Development Programme be noted;**
- 2. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services consider amending the Member Code of Conduct and/or developing a personal concordat for Member development.**

## 73/17      **SCRUTINY REPORTS – THE APPROACH OF THE EDUCATION AND CHILDREN’S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Committee considered a report explaining to them the approach taken with reports by the Education and Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee (E&CSOSC).

Councillor Towe, Chairman of the E&CSOSC, highlighted the pilot approach to reports taken by the committee. He highlighted that reports are restricted to no more than 6 pages and no formal presentation of them by officers took place at meetings with items moving straight to discussion and questions. The approach had been used at the last meeting and had been successful.

Members were supportive of the approach being taken but recognised the need for flexibility and that it would not be suitable for decision making committees. Similar views regarding presentations were expressed with a desire to limit the number of slides.

**Resolved:**

**That the Education and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny continue the pilot on the described approach to the production and presentation of reports and provide further feedback to the Scrutiny Overview Committee on 13 March 2018.**

**74/17      FEEDBACK FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

The meeting received feedback from all Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

*Corporate and Public Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee*

Members were informed that the Committee had been considering proposed changes to garden waste collections and made recommendations to Cabinet on the topic. Other key items included CCTV and an item on Walsall Market which asked the questions about its current location.

*Education and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee*

Members were informed that the Committee had held two meetings. The first had dealt with preparation for the forthcoming Ofsted inspection and the second had heard representations from Senior Management from the E-Act Academy chain following the inadequate Ofsted inspection at Willenhall E-Act Academy. It was planned to invite the Academy representatives back to the Committee in 2018 to ensure the proposed improvements at the school had gone ahead and were having an impact.

It was also reported that the Committee had been mentioned in the recent Ofsted report with inspectors stating the Committee needed to improve its scrutiny of the quality of services.

*Social Care and Inclusion Overview and Scrutiny Committee*

Members were informed that the Committee had been considering action to tackle problems in maternity services at the local hospital. Consideration had also been given to mental health services, in particular, how could partnership working be improved and addressing the gap between young persons and adult services.

*West Midlands Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee*

Members were informed about the work of the committee and the working groups which it had established to consider land, mental health, budget and skills. It was also highlighted that the committee had had one meeting where it was inquorate.

A Member queried whether it was appropriate for Councillor Shires to lead the Land Working Group when Councillor S. Coughlan was the Combined Authority Lead for Land.

A Member noted that there were challenges with delivering suitable levels of housing in the West Midlands and expressed the view that Walsall's green belt needed protecting. It was important that brownfield sites were brought forward for development as it was likely that Birmingham would look to its neighbours to address its own housing shortages.

**Resolved:**

**That the feedback from Overview and Scrutiny Committees be noted.**

**75/17 FORWARD PLANS**

Members considered the forward plan of key decisions from Cabinet and the Black Country Joint Executive (annexed).

**Resolved:**

**That the forward plans be noted.**

**76/17 AREAS OF FOCUS 2017/18**

**Resolved:**

**That the Committees areas of focus for 2017/18 be noted.**

**77/17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was noted as 19 December 2017.

The meeting terminated at 7.31p.m.

Chair: .....

Date:.....