

ISSUES ARISING FROM FINANCE & PROCEDURES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1 REVIEW OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IN ROCHFORD

- 1.1 This item of business was referred to the Policy & Finance Committee by the Finance & Procedures Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 17 November 2005 with the recommendation that a number of performance indicators be used to evaluate the Council's overview and scrutiny process from 2006/2007.
- 1.2 The Finance & Procedures Overview & Scrutiny Committee had considered a report on benchmarking for Overview and Scrutiny, compiled by Andrea Staltmeier Consulting. A copy of the report is attached.
- 1.3 Members of the Committee had noted that as very little work had been undertaken across the country on benchmarking overview and scrutiny between authorities, it had been difficult to draw any conclusions in terms of outputs and outcomes from other authorities.
- 1.4 However, it was noted that Rochford could take the lead in developing benchmarking for outputs and outcomes and providing innovative forms of overview and scrutiny.
- 1.5 Once the Council had taken a final decision on the proposed new committee structure in December, initial dialogue with other local authorities around benchmarking could be undertaken to ensure that any benchmarking system would be in place at the outset of the new municipal year.
- 1.6 In considering the performance indicators outlined in Appendix 2 of the report, Members of the Finance & Procedures Overview & Scrutiny Committee reached the following conclusions:-
 - 1.2 – replacing the word 'corporate' with the word 'organisational' provided a broader indicator.
 - 2.2 – this was dependent on the willingness of a newspaper editor to publish an article and as such was not an accurate indicator.
 - 3.1 – the term 'greater accountability' was more relevant to a cabinet system of local government.
 - 4.1 – the specific reference to policy committee chairmen should be withdrawn.

5.1 – this item could be introduced at a later stage, once the new process was well underway.

5.2 – the wording ‘sufficient opportunity for public to take part’ should be removed at this stage and be re-considered at a later date.

5.3 – this did not add any extra value.

7.1 – 7.5 – these indicators did not provide real value; in particular 7.3 could be addressed within 5.2 and 7.5 was already covered by the Council's Member training programme.

2 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is proposed that the Committee RESOLVES

That the following performance indicators be used to evaluate the Council's overview and scrutiny process from the municipal year 2006/2007:-

- (1) Completion of Overview and Scrutiny work programme on time.
- (2) Number of occasions when Overview and Scrutiny comments/recommendations on organisational performance are acted upon.
- (3) Whether sufficient information is provided to witnesses about the Overview and Scrutiny process.
- (4) View of policy committee members as to whether Overview and Scrutiny adds value; and what improvements could be made to the relationship.
- (5) Views of public on aspects of meetings: accessibility of venue; ability to see, hear and follow the proceedings; interest and relevance of topics; clarity of reports.
- (6) Witnesses' views of value added by Overview and Scrutiny meetings.
- (7) Percentage of Overview and Scrutiny recommendations accepted.
- (8) Percentage of Overview and Scrutiny recommendations implemented.

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Background Papers:-

None

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