



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group

Minutes of a meeting of the Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group held as a Virtual Meeting Via Zoom on Wednesday 25 May 2022 at 4.30 pm.

Present Councillor Dermot Bambridge (Chair)
 Councillor Jo Gilford
 Councillor Andrew Grant
 Councillor Ian McCord

Apologies Councillor Karen Cooper
for
Absence: Councillor Rosie Herring

Officers James Edmunds, Democratic Services Assistant Manager
 Tracy Tiff, Deputy Democratic Services Manager
 Richard Woods, Democratic Services Officer

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Group held on 22 March 2022 were agreed as a correct record to be signed in due course.

4. Chair's Announcements

There were no announcements from the Chair.

5. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

6. Format of the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Reports

In discussing the format of the respective Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Reports, the Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group agreed that there would be no changes to the format of the reports following on from the previous municipal year (the format used for the annual report of the Shadow Overview and Scrutiny

Committee) and commented that the existing format allowed for clarity in presentation and was in an accessible and acceptable format for the public.

Members of the Group agreed that the Annual Reports should highlight the key achievements of each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, along with an overview of the scrutiny activities undertaken by each Committee during the 2021-22 municipal year.

Resolved

- (1) That it be agreed that the Annual Reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees are produced in the same format to that of the annual report that was produced for the shadow O&S Committee in March 2021.

7. Work Programming Consultation Process 2022-2023

The Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group considered a report from the Deputy Democratic Services Manager which recommended that the group considers the draft consultation for the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programming process.

In introducing the report, the Deputy Democratic Services Manager explained that one of Overview and Scrutiny's key roles was to undertake focussed work programming to ensure that Scrutiny contributes actively to the Council's objectives. In order for this to be achieved, the Deputy Democratic Services Manager explained that each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees could hold individual work programming events, as they had done in the previous municipal year, in order to maximise inclusivity in the work programming process.

In response to questions from Members regarding how potential areas of future scrutiny activity could be identified in the work programming process, the Deputy Democratic Services Manager advised that Executive Directors and Assistant Directors could be invited to attend the work programming events and advise on suggestions for future areas of scrutiny activity, and whether such areas were already under review within service areas.

The Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group discussed the Overview and Scrutiny work programmes and the work programming consultation process for 2022. The Group agreed that rather than go out to public consultation regarding suggestions for scrutiny topics as was done last year, it may be more useful to consider a survey that measures what the residents think about the services of the Council and where any potential areas for improvement have been recognised. From such a survey, areas could be identified where the Overview and Scrutiny function could help alleviate any issues, for example measurement on performance of the Council as a whole. The Group agreed that it be suggested to the Leader of the Council that an IPSOS-style survey is undertaken, however, there have been other surveys undertaken recently, such as the "Big Conversation", and upon reflection the results of this survey could be useful in informing the work programmes of the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Last year, Cabinet Members attended informal meetings of the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees and provided information on their priorities for the year. The Group acknowledged the importance of receiving input on the Cabinet's priorities for the year to inform the work programmes and potential pre decision scrutiny. It was agreed that the Leader is asked if he could provide details of any forthcoming issues that are due to be received by Cabinet, that may perhaps not be listed as yet on the Council's forward plan that could be suggested to Overview and Scrutiny for pre-decision scrutiny.

Members of the Group requested that the minutes of the Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group be circulated to all Councillors to ensure that all Members could be kept apprised of the ongoing oversight and management of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny functions.

Resolved

- (1) That, as part of the draft consultation for the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programming Process, the Overview and Scrutiny Committees be recommended to consider a survey that measures what local residents think about the services of the Council and where any potential areas for improvement have been recognised, in order to identify future areas of scrutiny activity.
- (2) That it be recommended to the Leader of the Council that an IPSOS-style survey be undertaken in order to measure the public's priorities for scrutiny activity, with the results utilised to inform the work programmes of the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- (3) That the Leader of the Council be requested to provide details of any forthcoming issues that are due to be received by Cabinet, that may perhaps not be listed as yet on the Council's forward plan that could be suggested to Overview and Scrutiny for pre-decision scrutiny.
- (4) That the minutes of the Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group be circulated to all Councillors.

The meeting closed at 5.22 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____