

DOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

ANNAUL COUNCIL – 14 MAY 2008

ANNUAL REPORT ON OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Recommendation

<i>That the annual report on overview and scrutiny arrangements 2007/08 be approved and adopted.</i>
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Contact Officer: Rebecca Brough, extension 2304.

Introduction

1. Article 6 of the Constitution requires that an annual report is presented to Council on the workings of Overview and Scrutiny Committees, their future work programmes and any proposed amendments to working methods. Accordingly, this report provides the following information:
 - (a) Statement by the Monitoring Officer.
 - (b) Performance Review Statistics.
 - (c) Future Work Programmes.
 - (d) Amendments to Current Practices.

Statement by the Monitoring Officer

2. The Monitoring Officer states that he is satisfied that the statutory overview and scrutiny function is operating and has been properly and lawfully exercised in accordance with the Constitution. In particular, the following parts of the overview and scrutiny function have been correctly followed:
 - (i) The Council has operated two scrutiny committees (the law requires one or more).
 - (ii) Work Programmes have been set and approved and carried out.
 - (iii) More than 12 ordinary meetings in total of Overview and Scrutiny Committees have been held during the year.
 - (iv) Policy review and development has been undertaken in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules.
 - (v) Reports from Overview and Scrutiny Committees to the executive have been considered by the executive within 4 weeks.
 - (vi) Overview and Scrutiny Committees have exercised call-in.
 - (vii) The urgency procedures have been properly exercised and reported.
 - (viii) Officers and Members have attended Scrutiny Committees to give evidence when required.

3. Guidelines/protocols have been operated during the year to assist in respect of:
 - (a) The call-in procedure;
 - (b) Chairmen's procedure for key question setting and chairmen's meetings;
 - (c) The key stages for topic reviews;
 - (d) Officer support.
4. The Scrutiny Co-Ordination Sub-Committee has acted in a co-ordination role for work programmes and scrutiny reviews on behalf of the Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee. The Sub-Committee comprises of the two Scrutiny Committee Chairmen, the two Scrutiny Committee Spokespersons, and an additional Scrutiny Committee member.
5. The responsibility for call-in arrangements, the Budget and Policy Framework has remained with the Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee.

Performance Review

5. During the year a number of recommendations have been made by Scrutiny Committees to Cabinet and Council, and a summary of the outcomes is shown below:

Overview	Executive Business	Council Business	Total
Number of Scrutiny Recommendations	40	7	47

Executive Business	Approved	Amended	Rejected	Total
Number of Scrutiny Recommendations	34	1	5	40

Council Business	Approved	Amended	Rejected	Total
Number of Scrutiny Recommendations	7	0	0	7

6. In addition to the above there will be recommendations to Cabinet and Council relating to the Review of Future Health Service Provision in the Dover District following the completion of that review.
7. There have been 3 Executive Decisions called-in for scrutiny during the course of the year. These were CAB52 (District Strategies for Sport and Recreation and Parks and Open Spaces); CAB57 (Replacement of Tennis Hall at Tides Leisure Centre); and CAB93 (Deal Pier – Café / Bar and Miscellaneous Contract Works).
8. The Centre for Public Scrutiny in its 2007 Survey of Overview and Scrutiny in Local Government identifies the national average number as 3 call-ins per year (up from 2 in 2006), from a range of call-ins from 0 to 76. As a consequence, overview and scrutiny at the council was again consistent with the national average. While no Executive Decisions were reversed as a result of call-in this year, some of the recommendations from scrutiny have been accepted in addition to the original decision.

Work Programmes

9. Each Committee has developed a one-year work programme and scrutinised a number of issues.

Committee	Major Items within Work Programme
Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee Items considered during the year include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BVPP • Animal Circuses (Reference from Council) • Performance Report • Licensing Policy Review • Parking Regulations • Access to Services • Budget and MTFP • Corporate Plan • East Kent Cluster Work • Deal Pier • District Strategies for Sport and Recreation and Parks and Open Spaces • Replacement of Tennis Hall at Tides Leisure Centre • Asset Management Plan • Vista Leisure 	All Budget and Policy Framework Items and Selected Key Decisions within the Forward Plan
Scrutiny (Community and Regeneration) Committee Items considered during the course of the year include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post Office Network Change • Air Quality • Designated Public Places Order (Follow-Up on Implementation) • Major Projects • Fair Trade Review (Follow-Up) • Concessionary Fares • Choice Based Letting Scheme 	Review of Future Health Service Provision in the Dover District

10. The work programmes are subject to regular review by the individual Scrutiny Committees and possible revision in liaison with the Scrutiny Co-Ordination Sub-Committee having regard to the corporate objectives and priorities, public consultation, and other events that may require the Scrutiny Committees to reappraise their work programmes.
11. In order to align scrutiny more closely with the core corporate objectives of the Council, a new approach to planning the work programme of scrutiny committees was introduced in February 2007 with the inclusion of the Forward Plan in the agenda. This conforms to best practice in place at other authorities.

12. Cabinet Decisions relating to items on the agenda are now extracted in full from the Record of Decision and included in the agenda as a standing item.

Development of Scrutiny for 2008/09

12. It is intended that the Sub-Committee will continue to meet to co-ordinate the work programmes. The membership of the Sub-Committee will remain at five, comprising of the Chairman and Controlling Group Spokesperson for each of the scrutiny committees plus an additional scrutiny committee member determined in accordance with the rules of political balance.
13. The 'Spotlight on Scrutiny' newsletter will continue throughout 2007/08 in order to promote the successes of the scrutiny process and inform elected Members not serving on a scrutiny committee of the work being undertaken. It is hoped that by informing all members about scrutiny that it will encourage both executive and non-executive members to take a more active interest in the work being undertaken by scrutiny. Consideration is being given to widening the distribution in future to include town and parish councils so that they may remain informed as to the activities of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function.
14. The issue of how to raise awareness of the work being undertaken by scrutiny among the local community and ways of encouraging greater involvement by the public and press in the scrutiny process will be investigated. Following the work undertaken during this year, the scrutiny committees will be encouraged to continue to undertake site visits where appropriate in the course of the scrutiny process and ongoing reviews.

Background Papers

1. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes 2007/08
2. Forward Plans 2007/08

Resource Implications

None.

Consultation Statement

This report has been prepared in consultation with the Chairman and Controlling Group Spokesperson of the Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee and the Chairman and Controlling Group Spokesperson of the Scrutiny (Community and Regeneration) Committee.

Impact on Corporate Objectives and Corporate Risks

A sound governance arrangement, including an effective scrutiny process, underpins the achievement of all the Council's corporate objectives.

Attachments

None.

DAVID RANDALL

Monitoring Officer

The officer to whom reference should be made concerning inspection of the background papers is the Head of Governance, Dover District Council, White Cliffs Business Park, Dover, Kent CT16 3PJ. Telephone: (01304) 821199, Extension 2141.