

Overview and Scrutiny Management Planning meeting - draft report 15th May 2017



Report of: Andrea Dell, Service Manager, Democratic Engagement

Title: Scrutiny Structure and ways of working update report

Ward: City Wide

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Recommendation

This paper provides an overview of the work carried out by OSMB members, using the hot-house process, on the future of Scrutiny in Bristol.

Summary

Following a request from OSMB Members Bristol City Council's Scrutiny Service underwent a review in order to identify whether there were more effective ways of working. OSMB Members explored the options for Scrutiny via a series of 'hothouse' events. This report provides an outline of the structure and ways of working developed by OSMB members and agreed at 18th May OSMB committee meeting. In order to test out and develop the new proposals it has been agreed that the existing commission structure and terms of reference for Scrutiny, as set out in the Constitution, will continue until a report is brought to Full Council in September 2017. The current commissions however will trial the new methods of working over summer 2017 and trial the new approach to setting the work programme at the AGM on 26th June.

<https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=165&MId=380&Ver=4>

This link provides the background and context to the work up until 18th April 2017 as set out in the report for 24th April OSMB meeting . This report provides an overview of the work carried out in May 2017.



Context

OSMB Members discussed Bristol's Scrutiny arrangements on the 9th February 2017 and it was agreed by OSMB Members that the structure and ways of working of Scrutiny should be reviewed. There was however no consensus on what a different structure and way of working could involve. It was therefore agreed to use the hot-house method as a way of trying to reach a collective solution.

Hot house events were held on 5th April 2017, 24th April 2017 and 18th May 2017. An emerging structure and ways of working began to be developed in the first two hot-house session and is captured in the following report which provides more detailed background knowledge:

<https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=165&MId=380&Ver=4>

A key component of this work was agreeing the following mission statement which will underpin all future scrutiny activity:

To make a positive difference for the citizens of Bristol and deliver the right outcomes, by helping Bristol City Council make better decisions

Party Group Leaders were briefed on the proposals on 9th May and made the following points for consideration by OSMB:

- Ensuring that all statutory obligations are met within the new model
- Prioritising finance by making this part of OSMB remit
- Considering how and when members are able to access performance information

All existing OSMB members were invited to attend the hot-house and any members who, following the AGM, are due to become OSMB members were invited to attend. The hot-house was facilitated by officers from the council's change team with Scrutiny Advisors in attendance. Helen Rankin, LGA Advisor – Leadership and Localism, was also in attendance and will continue to work with OSMB members to implement the proposals going forward.

Outcomes

On the 18th May it was agreed that there is to be no change to the current SRA arrangements and Constitution at this time. A report of proposed changes is to be submitted to September 2017 Full Council. Thus the four directorate commissions will continue until September however their workloads, and thus if they will meet, will be determined by the work programme activities. Scrutiny will trial the new ways of working throughout summer 2017. These include:

- OSMB is to meet monthly and a substantive standing item will be the review of the work programme.
- OSMB members to coordinate producing a long list of potential scrutiny work programme items for the OSMB AGM in June 2017. Members to consider engaging with Cabinet Members, Mayor's priorities and public engagement in putting forward suggested topics. Items will then be ranked against a set of criteria as to whether they will be included on the work programme. OSMB members to then decide on the best scrutiny method for each item (e.g. workshop, Select Committee, Inquiry Day etc) and the timing and resource requirements.
- Health Scrutiny to be a permanent sub-committee of OSMB, to meet as and when required, and formed of the members sitting on the regional STP joint scrutiny committee.
- Scrutiny of finance is to be a permanent working group reporting into OSMB.
- All scrutiny work programme items to have an OSMB member as the lead member who is responsible for reporting back progress back to OSMB. The lead member is also responsible for the quality of reports and recommendations back to OSMB.

- A skills, interest and availability audit of all members to be carried out after the election with a view to enabling all non-executive members to be involved in scrutiny activity in accordance with skills and interests.
- Only formal outcomes and actions to be documented as action notes replacing detailed minutes. Sessions to be filmed/webcast if items of particular sensitivity/risk are being discussed and made available online.
- A webpage with a visual live tracker of the work being carried out by Scrutiny to be available at all times.
- An evaluation process for all scrutiny activity to be introduced and to include questions related to outcomes and best use of councillor and officer time. A draft to be developed by officers for consideration by members.

Next steps

OSMB to trail the new approach to setting the work programme on Monday 26th June. This work programme will then form the framework for Scrutiny activity for summer 2017.

A skills audit of members to be completed by 21st July 2017 for discussion 25th July OSMB meeting.

Appendix 1 – Diagram of Scrutiny cycle

Appendix 2 – Flip chart write-up (18th May hot-house).

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers: None.

APPENDIX 1 – Scrutiny Cycle



