

# Overview and Scrutiny Management

## 25<sup>th</sup> June 2017



**Report of:** Andrea Dell, Service Manager, Democratic Engagement

**Title:** Scrutiny Structure and ways of working update report - Work Programme

**Ward:** City Wide

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### Recommendation

This paper is part of a series of update reports on the emerging new model and ways of working for scrutiny. This paper reports on the activity that occurred in June 2017 and specifically the trialling of the new approach to the work programme setting and tracking.

### 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. From this a draft model and way of working emerged. 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 the new ways of working have been sufficiently trialled and the Constitution changed accordingly if required.

As part of the June 2017 AGM meeting OSMB members adopted a new approach to setting the work programme for Scrutiny activity. This resulted in a short and long-list of items. The short-list is to be the subject of discussion and decision making at the July 2017 meeting.

## Context

OSMB Members discussed Bristol's Scrutiny arrangements on the 9<sup>th</sup> February 2017 (<https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=165&MId=379&Ver=4>) 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 5<sup>th</sup> April 2017, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2017, 18<sup>th</sup> May 2017 and as part of the 26<sup>th</sup> June AGM. The outcomes from this work is documented in the following OSMB reports:

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

May - <https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=165&MId=2668&Ver=4>

June - <https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=165&MId=2748&Ver=4>

A key component of this work was agreeing the following mission statement which is to 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***

## Outcomes – 26<sup>th</sup> June OSMB meeting

On the 26<sup>th</sup> June OSMB members began trialling a new approach to setting the Scrutiny work programme;

- Each OSMB member submitted a list of proposed topics for Scrutiny resulting in a long list of items. These lists were produced following discussion with different stakeholders, including the wider Elected Member core, Cabinet Members, officers and external groups such as the Youth Council, as decided by the individual OSMB member.
- OSMB members were asked to consider the prioritisation criteria (see Appendix B) and the Scrutiny mission statement when putting forward items.
- On the 26<sup>th</sup> June OSMB members carried out an activity to rank the items they felt were the most critical for scrutiny to consider. The items selected by the most members were considered along with the priority ranking (from 1 to 10 with 1 being the highest priority) and debated resulting in a short list of 11 items. Appendix A contains the long and short list and ranking.
- OSMB members agreed that the next stage was for nominated members from OSMB to devise a more detailed scope for each of the 11 items for presentation at the 25<sup>th</sup> July OSMB meeting. The scopes are to include suggested outcomes, timescales, resources and the proposed scrutiny method to be used (e.g. inquiry day, working group etc).
- At the 25<sup>th</sup> July meeting OSMB members will discuss and aim to formally agree the items that scrutiny will prioritise as task and finish pieces of work and will also be used to trial the new ways of working with.

## Immediate next steps – activity for 25<sup>th</sup> July OSMB meeting

- Once the list of topics are finalised then all non-executive members will be advised of the topics and asked if they wish to be involved. Once names are received these will be recirculated to enable all members to see the representation on the groups. This will also be explicitly shared with the Whips and there will be an opportunity to further refine the membership. As part of forming the groups Elected Members will be asked to confirm, in

conversation with the OSMB lead, their level of engagement with the work upfront (e.g. able to actively lead or only able to participate via providing feedback on proposals) and the work scoped/allocated accordingly.

- Each group will be led by an OSMB member who has the responsibility of working with Scrutiny Officers to keep the work on track and to report back to OSMB each month on progress. All final reports detailing recommendations from scrutiny must be published and heard in a public forum – this may be via an OSMB meeting or if felt appropriate by a separate public/commission meeting.
- Once the membership is confirmed then members will work to further refine the scope and also allocate work-streams etc, subject to the size of the topic.

#### **Next steps – longer term**

- OSMB members will be asked, prior to each planning meeting, to put forward any arising items that they feel need to be considered for scrutiny activity and these will be added to the ‘live’ long list of scrutiny topics. OSMB members will review the long-list and reprioritise accordingly at each monthly OSMB meeting. The wider member core will be encouraged to submit items to OSMB members to contribute to this process.
- A webpage with a visual tracker of the work being carried out by Scrutiny and the long list will be developed and will be updated each month.
- An evaluation process for all scrutiny activity will be introduced and is to include questions related to outcomes and best use of councillor and officer time.
- This approach is a new way of working and therefore will be subject to change as it is trialled. OSMB Members are asked to consider the length of time they think is appropriate for the trial and to consider the proposal to hold a review workshop prior to making any permanent structural changes to the Constitution.

#### **Appendix 1 – Scrutiny work programme short and long list**

#### **Appendix 2 – Prioritisation criteria**

#### **Appendix 3 – For reference Scrutiny cycle**

#### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

Background Papers: None.