SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

Meeting:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Sitting as a Select Committee
Date:	Monday, 11 November 2019
Place:	Shimkent Room - Daneshill House, Danestrete
Members Present:	Councillors: Lin Martin-Haugh, (Chair), Philip Bibby CC, Sandra Barr, Jim Brown, Michael Downing, Andy McGuinness, John Mead, Sarah Mead, Adam Mitchell CC, Robin Parker CC and Claire Parris

1	**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**	
	Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Laurie Chester and Michelle Gardner. There were no declarations of interest.	
2	**COLLATED MEMBER RESPONSE TO SELF-EVALUATION SCORING MATRIX**	
	Members considered the collated response to the self-evaluation scoring matrix. The following points were raised particularly in relation to work programming: • Timing of site visits should be looked at and evening visits carried out on some occasions to ensure all Members were able to attend; • Customer Services data was useful but should not be relied upon as a complete picture; • In terms of the role of Executive Members, it could be useful to ask what topics they feel could benefit from the input of scrutiny; • The Communications Team should be asked to advise on what is trending on social media;	

	• It was felt that the Portfolio Holder Advisory Groups were working well but the possibility of the Groups being chaired by scrutiny members and not executive members should be investigated. The Scrutiny Officer advised that he would review the content within the matrix in relation to opportunities for improvement and group those comments where there was commonality and produce possible recommendations. It was **RESOLVED:** 1. That the Scoring Matrix be noted; 2. That the Scrutiny Officer report back to the next meeting with possible recommendations for opportunities for improvement.

3	**INTERVIEW WITH FOURTH TIER MANAGERS**	
	Members received responses from 4th tier managers regarding their experience of supporting Scrutiny Reviews. Three of those 4th tier Managers were in attendance at the meeting including the Council's HR Manager, Leisure Services Manager and Environmental Policy and Services Manager. A number of issues and questions were raised and responses given by the officers including: • Scrutiny was a Member led process, although often a presentation was given at the beginning of a review to ensure Members received a briefing on the matter of the review; • The timing of involving the Service officers in the scrutiny reviews, ie during or after the scoping process of a review;	

- As officers were aware of what was working and what was not in their service area they could be a source of suggestions for future scrutiny reviews;

- It was important for Members to have a base knowledge of information relating to an area to be scrutinised to ensure a review was effective. The more Councillors knew about a topic the better;

- Some recommendations from reviews were difficult to implement without having the resources available to support them, although it was agreed that resources would potentially not be forthcoming without these recommendations;

- There were a limited number of officers around the Council who had direct experience of scrutiny due to the involvement of mainly tier 4 managers and above;

- The original view of scrutiny was that it should be equal in importance to the Executive. In reality, this was not the case and could be frustrating if the Executive did not appear to give much importance to review outcomes. The process had now changed however and Executive Members were required to provide a response to scrutiny recommendations within a 2 month period. Recommendations were also now followed up after a longer period of time had elapsed;

- The question was asked regarding a possible return to the pre 2000 Committee system and if decision making would be more effective;

- Some recent scrutiny reviews had been effective and resulted in substantial changes to a service eg the review into damp and condensation;

- It was common in many other local authorities for the Chairs of scrutiny committees to be appointed from opposition groups. It was agreed that it would be more obviously independent if scrutiny Chairs were opposition Members, however the importance of the Chairs being independently minded whatever group they were from was paramount. The outcomes from a review should reflect this independence;

- Previously an all-day session with partners and voluntary and community groups had been arranged to come up with

suggestions for subjects to review but this had proved to be time consuming and resource intensive. Now Members were encouraged to engage with these groups and bring back ideas during the work programming process;

In response to a question, the Scrutiny Officer agreed to recirculate his paper which summarised and addressed the main issues on the new Government Scrutiny Guidance. This would form part of an agenda for a future meeting.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the 4th tier officers be thanked for their attendance at the meeting;

2. That the responses circulated and the comments above be noted and form part of the evidence gathering for the review;

3. That the Scrutiny Officer recirculate his paper summarising and addressing the main issues on the new Government Scrutiny Guidance to Members of the Committee and that the paper form part of the agenda for the next meeting of the Committee.

4	**INPUT FROM SCRUTINY OFFICERS AT OTHER AUTHORITIES**	

The Scrutiny Officer reported that he had contacted a number of other local authorities with a view to obtaining a view on the Council's scrutiny arrangements. Unfortunately due to work pressures including the recent calling of the General Election which most officers were now involved with no responses had yet been received.

The Centre for Public Scrutiny conference and another scrutiny networking event which were both coming up could provide opportunities to receive feedback and he hoped to be able to feedback further at the next meeting of this Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** that the update be noted.

5	**URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**	
	None.	
6	**EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**	
	Not required.	
7	**URGENT PART II BUSINESS**	
	None.	

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