

THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

26 September 2011

BATCH 1 INFORMAL SCRUTINY GROUPS 2011/12 – TERMS OF REFERENCE

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

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RECENT REFERENCES:

OS12 – Appointments to Batch 1 and 2 Informal Scrutiny Groups 2011/12 – 20 June 2011

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This Report asks Members to confirm the terms of reference for Batch 1 Informal Scrutiny Groups and consider whether there are other matters that they would wish the ISG's to focus on as part of their investigations.

The Report also sets out a draft schedule for when their final reports will be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and referred onwards to Cabinet.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Committee confirms the terms of reference for Batch 1 Informal Scrutiny Groups (as set out in paragraph 2) and consider whether there are other matters that they would wish the ISG's to focus on as part of their investigations

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DETAIL:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 At their meeting on the 1 June, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed the first batch of Informal Scrutiny Groups (ISGs) which would be undertaken in 2011/12. Their membership was finalised at the Committee meeting on 20 June 2011.
- 1.2 Batch 1 ISGs are now well advanced within their individual programmes of work. Each of the ISGs are expected to make recommendations to The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and onwards to Cabinet, within the next few months and the second batch of ISGs will commence their work around this time. The following timetable sets out this proposed schedule.

ISG	Report to The Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Report to Cabinet
(i) Gypsy and Traveller Sites	14 November 2011	7 December 2011
(ii) Asset Management	14 November 2011	7 December 2011
(iii) Air Quality	To be confirmed	18 January 2011 (to be confirmed)
(iv) WCC's carbon footprint	To be confirmed	18 January 2011 (to be confirmed)
(v) Young People and Employment	23 January 2011	8 February 2012
(vi) Housing Allocations	23 January 2011	8 February 2012

2 Batch 1 Informal Scrutiny Groups 2011/12 – Terms of Reference

- 2.1 Each of the Batch 1 ISGs has agreed their terms of reference and these are set out below. The Committee is asked to consider whether there are other matters that they would wish the ISG's to focus on as part of their investigations.

(i) **Allocation of Gypsy and Traveller Sites Informal Scrutiny Group**

'The aim of the ISG is to make recommendations to Cabinet to reconcile the needs of gypsies and travellers with the expectations of the settled community. It is likely that these recommendations may give guidance to work on the LDF in developing the policy approach to gypsies and travellers, evidence of gypsy and traveller needs and criteria for assessing future gypsy

and traveller sites, as well as making other recommendations to the City Council or its partners.

As background information the ISG will:

- understand the role and responsibilities of the City Council regarding the gypsy and traveller community (what the Council can and cannot do/enforcement/local and national planning policies)
- understand the role and responsibilities of other partners, agencies and service providers regarding the gypsy and traveller community (such as the County Council, health, education, Police)

In the context of the above, create an evidence base by:

- understanding the issues faced by the gypsy and traveller community
- understanding the issues faced by the settled community

Draw conclusions and make recommendations to Cabinet to reconcile the needs of gypsies and travellers with the expectations of the settled community.

(ii) **Asset Management Plan Informal Scrutiny Group**

To take a strategic overview of the Council's emerging Asset Management Plan, in particular having regard to the following key areas:

- Project prioritisation
- Statutory compliance / Risk management
- Ongoing major funding issues - recognising future maintenance and asset management
- The maximisation of income to the Council from its property portfolio and its positive contribution to the organisation achieving its corporate objectives

and to make recommendations to Cabinet accordingly which will be considered in conjunction with its approval of the Plan.

(iii) **Air Quality Informal Scrutiny Group**

To scrutinise progress against the City Council's Air Quality Action Plan in accordance with the current guidance issued by DEFRA. In doing so the group will have regard to the following documents:

- Air Quality Action Plan 1996
- Air Quality Action Progress Report 2010
- Winchester Town Access Plan, July 2011

and to make recommendations to The Overview and Scrutiny Committee for referral to Cabinet on specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timed (SMART) actions for the future.

(iv) **City Council's efforts to reduce its Carbon Footprint Informal Scrutiny Group**

1. To agree what emissions fall within the City Council's carbon footprint (i.e those activities for which the Council has managerial responsibility).
2. To summarise the efforts made to date to measure and reduce the City Council's carbon footprint.
3. To analyse whether the City Council has met – or is on course to meet – any targets that it has set itself (e.g 10:10 and Winchester Declaration on Climate Change) for reducing its carbon footprint.
4. To analyse the costs and benefits of an approach to reducing its own emissions which would justify a claim that the City Council is 'leading by example' in facing up to the challenge of climate change.
5. To learn from the Carbon Trust and other local authorities about current 'best practice' in reducing public sector emissions.
6. To recommend to the Cabinet and City Council further measures to reduce the Council's carbon footprint, and the means to ensure that targets are met.

(v) **Young People and Employment Informal Scrutiny Group**

This ISG will:

- a) explore the nature of the difficulties facing young people from the Winchester District seeking to enter the workplace, and
- b) seek to identify ways to address these difficulties in partnership with other local agencies.

For the purposes of these meetings, 'young people' covers the age range 16 to 24.

It is proposed that Members give special reference to young people living in the District's priority communities of Winnall and Stanmore.

(vi) **Housing Allocations Informal Scrutiny Group**

Purpose:

"To explore the Council's existing allocation policies including those of our partners in our joint Choice Based Lettings scheme and make recommendations of any changes required to Cabinet".

Scope:

- Investigate existing allocation policies in particular "local" criteria.

- Review expected changes in national policy that give more freedoms to LA's to frame local policies.
- Look at the impacts of "local" policies in restricting choice.
- Explore the impact of allocation policies on larger developments in the District and what policies would be appropriate to achieve a balanced sustainable community.
- Investigate concerns of possible negative impact that cross boundary moves to the Winchester area may have had on the Council's own waiting list.
- Initial meeting to agree scope and Terms of Reference of the ISG and to receive a paper on the current national and local allocation policies.
- Representatives from the Council's CBL partners (Test Valley Borough Council and East Hants District Council) are invited to attend the September meeting of the ISG to explain, and to answer questions of the Group on their local letting policies. All Members would also be invited to address the ISG with any comments that they may have on the Council's existing allocations procedures. The Portfolio Holder would also be asked to attend.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

3. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND CHANGE PLANS (RELEVANCE TO):

When establishing Informal Scrutiny Groups, the Committee should be satisfied that these arrangements are supporting or scrutinising the delivery of the Council's priorities, or working towards identifying future priorities.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

Scrutiny is currently undertaken within the existing staffing resources of the Council.

5 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

None specifically.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Files held in the Democratic Services Division.

APPENDICES:

None