

THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18 March 2013

BATCH 4 INFORMAL SCRUTINY GROUPS - APPOINTMENTS

REPORT OF HEAD OF POLICY

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RECENT REFERENCES:

OS62 – Batch 4 Informal Scrutiny Groups – 18 February 2013

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report sets out options for batch 4 Informal Scrutiny Groups (ISGs). At the February meeting of The Overview and Scrutiny Committee four batch 4 ISGs were agreed and Members asked for the list of potential topics to be brought back to this meeting for further discussion.

This report also sets out group nominations for Members to sit on the four appointed ISGs, for agreement by the Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 That the Committee agree the membership of the following ISGs:
 - Making Member involvement & decision making more effective
 - The Council's ability to implement ISG recommendations
 - The Guildhall as a commercial venue
 - Access, exclusion and how we address it
- 2 That the Committee consider appointing 2 further ISGs from the list in Appendix 1.

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1 Introduction

1.1 At the February meeting of The Overview and Scrutiny Committee four batch 4 ISGs were agreed and Members asked for the list of potential topics to be brought back to this meeting for further discussion.

2 Further options for Batch 4 ISGs

2.1 Elected Members were canvassed via their groups for potential ISG topics, as were senior managers. The table in Appendix 1 sets out the suggested topics which were received, a comment from the chair of The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the six scrutiny chairs appointed from the Committee, and an officer comment where provided.

2.2 The Committee are asked to consider whether they wish to appoint a further two ISGs from this list.

3 Appointment to ISGs

3.1 Group managers have put forward the following Members for appointment to the four agreed ISGs:

ISG	Chair	Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Labour
Making Member involvement & decision making more effective	Wright	<i>To be confirmed at Committee</i>	Witt Cutler	
The Council's ability to implement ISG recommendations	Hutchison	<i>To be confirmed at Committee</i>	Laming Johnston.	
The Guildhall as a commercial venue	Scott	<i>To be confirmed at Committee</i>	Izard Cook Rutter	

Access, exclusion and how we address it	Evans	<i>To be confirmed at Committee</i>	Mason Power	Pines
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3.2 ISGs should be broadly politically balanced, and generally comprise 5 Members (including the chair), although this number can be increased if there is sufficient interest. The Committee are asked to agree the membership of these four ISGs.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

4 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND CHANGE PLANS (RELEVANCE TO):

4.1 Overview and scrutiny plays in a key role in ensuring the City Council remains an Efficient and Effective organisations.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 This report does not have any additional resource implications, other than staff costs in supporting the ISGs.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

6.1 None

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 Potential ISG Topics

Potential ISG Topics

	Topic	ISG Chairs' Suggestions	Officer Comment
1	An ISG to support the review of the Community Strategy, focussing on the priorities for the Winchester District	Not supported at this time.	ISGs are often used to review strategies, and the Community Strategy is up for review in the coming year.
2	Troubled Families –progress of this initiative so far, along with the work of voluntary organisations and the Council to support the families.	Premature – agreed to re-consider after the new system to support Troubled Families is established.	It is very early on in the process for an ISG to be able to make any meaningful recommendations however it is felt that this would be a good topic for 13/14.
3	Public Health and the City Council's role.	Premature – agreed to recommend after the changes to how public health is delivered are established and running for a period	Officers feel that this would be a useful topic for an ISG.
4	Implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).	Agreed that this should initially be considered as a training opportunity for members & officers	A project has been set up to deal with CIL and is something that will need to come back to Members to agree processes and policies therefore it is unclear what an ISG will achieve over and above the Member input already scheduled. Officers are looking at organising

	Topic	ISG Chairs' Suggestions	Officer Comment
			training on CIL as requested by scrutiny chairs.
5	Impact of Welfare Reform and support from the City Council for those affected.	This topic is important albeit premature and should therefore be considered in 2013/14.	Suggested that Welfare Reform needs a bit more clarity (and time for Council Tax changes to bed down), so would be a useful topic in later 13/14 or even 14/15.
6	The operation of a good Council Tax and Housing Benefits System	Not supported at this time	Due to the upcoming changes to the benefits system it is suggested that if relevantly scoped, this ISG be linked to the above ISG on Welfare Reform in 13/14 or 14/15.
7	Arrears of Council Tax and Arrears of Housing rents	Not supported	
8	An ISG about recreational facilities i.e. River Park Leisure Centre (RPLC)	Too late to be effective scrutiny, but a future ISG may well depend on the outcome of the current investigation.	Timing will need to be considered as given Cabinet will want to take a decision, possibly in early summer, following the report of the consultants recently engaged to look at RPLC and future options.

	Topic	ISG Chairs' Suggestions	Officer Comment
9	To review the Museums Service, including the storage of collections	Topic should be deferred until current discussions between the authorities are clearer.	This ISG would need to be timed to fit in with current work on the Fully Integrated Merger work – reviewing opportunities to share museum services with HCC and Southampton City Council.
10	An ISG to examine the effectiveness of our communications - how well is the "Good News" message getting across the District. How does the day to day life of the Council touch people, and do they know what is provided and how well it is provided?	Not supported at this time	The Access to Services ISG recently concluded and had a number of recommendations on the communication function (particularly around communicating with the whole district).
11	How the Council undertakes consultation to ensure it gains the views of our diverse communities, and the method of collecting those views is appropriate to the audience. Also to review how Members are kept informed of consultations taking place in their ward.	(Added to list of potential topics during February meeting of The Overview and Scrutiny Committee)	Supported