

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT PANEL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the Scrutiny Management Panel held on Thursday, 8 November 2012 at 4.30pm in the Executive Meeting Room, Third Floor, Guildhall, Portsmouth.

(NB These minutes should be read in conjunction with the agenda for the meeting, which can be viewed at www.portsmouth.gov.uk)

Present

Councillor Michael Andrewes (Chair)
Councillor Peter Eddis (Vice Chair)
Councillor Darron Phillips
Councillor Phil Smith
Councillor Sandra Stockdale
Councillor Rob New
Councillor Mike Park
Councillor Jim Patey

Officers

Vicki Plytas, Senior Local Democracy Officer

10 Apologies for Absence (AI 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Matthew Winnington and from Councillor Caroline Scott. Councillor Phil Smith attended the meeting today as standing deputy for Councillor Caroline Scott.

11 Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2)

There were no declarations of members' interests.

12 Minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2012 (AI 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

13 Scrutiny Report to Council (AI 4)

The Senior Local Democracy Officer explained that the purpose of the report was to comply with the city council's constitution and that the report would also be taken to Full Council.

RESOLVED that the report be received and the work done by the panels be acknowledged.

14 Verbal Updates on all Scrutiny Panels (AI 5)

The Chair of the Scrutiny Management Panel, Councillor Michael Andrewes, invited the chairs of each Scrutiny Panel to provide a brief update of the work being done.

Economic Development, Culture and Leisure Scrutiny Panel

Councillor Phillips updated the panel as the Chair of the panel, Councillor Winnington was unable to attend the meeting today. He advised that the panel had been looking at the topic of "making community ownership work for Portsmouth". The panel had met three times so far and had interviewed eight witnesses including council officers and Francis Davis an outside expert in the field of community and co-operative ownership. Evidence collected had been on the understanding and experience of and ideas relating to community ownership including the community right to challenge, the community right to bid and connected to the latter the community asset register. The next meeting would be collecting evidence from individuals who are involved with community owned projects both within and outside the city. The panel is currently on schedule to produce its report in Spring 2013.

Education, Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel

The Chair of the panel, Councillor Darron Phillips, advised that the review into targeted support for children and young people who demonstrate behaviours that may put them at risk was almost completed but had not yet been signed off.

The panel had just begun a review in to "How well do we care for looked after children? How can we improve stability and outcomes in their lives?". He said that so far the panel had been encouraged about the work being done. The Chair said that the panel had been very impressed by the passion evident in foster carers and felt that they deserved greater recognition and thanks for their work.

Councillor Phillips said that there were two further meetings arranged before Christmas and that the panel hoped to produce their report in Spring 2013.

During discussion the following matters were raised:

- It was confirmed that the foster carers' recruitment process had hit a plateau but that Portsmouth as an authority seemed to be doing well compared with its neighbouring authorities.
- Members felt that there was a need to check that there was not too much red tape involved in the process.
- Members recognised that the overspend in children's services could be reduced if there were fewer numbers of children in private foster homes.

- Councillor Phillips asked that if any members had examples of where they think the process could be improved the scrutiny panel would be pleased to hear from them.
- Councillor Phillips said that the new process for prospective foster carers was shorter than previously. Members were concerned that the shortened process did not lead to more people dropping out.
- One problem that had been identified was that there seemed to be as many people leaving fostering as there were new people coming in.

Councillor Phillips also advised that it was intended that three teams of members of the panel were going to visit children's homes and that a specific set of questions would be asked at each venue. The plan was to talk to both users and staff.

Housing and Social Care Scrutiny Panel

Councillor Sandra Stockdale, Chair of the panel, advised that the panel is reviewing "Advancing the use of technology in Adult Social Care (Telecare and Telehealth)" and has received evidence from the Telecare officers based in Community Housing, PCC, seeing the range of equipment offered to 3,000 residents in both local authority sheltered housing and residents in their own homes needing a service.

The equipment shown included the pennant alarm systems, smoke/gas/extreme heat/flood detectors, chair/bed/door sensors and those linked to specific medical conditions (eg epilepsy fit sensors, bedwetting).

Councillor Stockdale said that the panel had also heard from the project manager for Assistive Technology who is developing a Telecare and Telehealth strategy. The project manager for Assistive Technology gave examples Telehealth uses where there is the remote exchange of data between an individual and a health care professional.

Councillor Stockdale said that the panel will be looking further at the benefits of these services and had already received some evidence of the savings experienced by other councils by using them to help promote independent living.

Health Overview & Scrutiny Panel (HOSP)

Councillor Peter Eddis, Chair of the HOSP, said that he had introduced a regular pattern of meetings. He said that ongoing problems included:

- The vascular issue. He said that there was another session on this due in November.
- Care quality commission – Councillor Eddis explained that they were expanding their remit.

- Ongoing problems at the Queen Alexandra Hospital – for example too many people were presenting at Accident and Emergency rather than making use of the Out of Hours Service. There was also a problem with the discharge of patients. There seems to be an issue as to whether the delays were caused by Social Services or the hospital. Councillor Eddis outlined the areas that the Care Quality Commission were responsible for and said that from April next year they would also be responsible for GP surgeries.

Councillor Eddis said that the Scrutiny Management Panel would be kept updated on the following three main issues:

1. The Care Quality Commission
2. Bed blocking
3. Out of Hours Service

15 Discussion to agree a method for monitoring recommendations and outcomes from previous reviews (AI 6)

The senior local democracy officer circulated a list of recent reviews and explained that a possible way forward had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

Following discussion members agreed with the method outlined except that at point 3 it was decided that officers could be invited at that time to answer queries from the panel rather than at a subsequent meeting.

A discussion then took place about which previous reviews members wished to consider at future meetings.

The panel decided to look at

- the review outcomes from the Disability Discrimination Act,
- the recommendations following the review on neighbour relationships within private and social lets
- the recommendations from the review on icy pavements and
- the Welfare Reform Proposals.

16 Date of next meeting

The Chair asked for the date of the next scheduled meeting to be changed as several members could not attend on 17 January. It was agreed that this would be arranged outside the meeting and that members would be contacted with possible alternative dates.

The meeting ended at 5.50pm.

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Chair

VJP/CB
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