

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT PANEL

Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Management Panel held on Thursday, 14 September 2023 at 5.30 pm in the Executive Meeting Room, Portsmouth Guildhall.

Present

Councillor Cal Corkery (in the Chair)

Councillors Leo Madden
Lewis Gosling
Graham Heaney
Abdul Kadir
Emily Strudwick
Mary Vallely

14. Apologies for Absence (AI 1)

No apologies for absence had been received.

15. Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

16. Minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2023 (AI 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2023 were confirmed and signed as an accurate record.

17. Review of actions following the LGA Peer Review (AI 4)

Following a request made at the previous meeting, the panel received a report which provided an update on the actions following the corporate peer challenge that took place in October 2001.

In introducing the report, the Director of Corporate Services explained that good progress has been made and that the actions detailed now formed the 'business as usual' operation of the council.

During the discussion, members referenced the amber rating for the review of the constitution. The City Solicitor explained that the council had commissioned a third party to undertake this task and due to structural changes they had only completed one third of the work, namely the evidence gathering and subsequent review. The findings had however not been reported back to the council. Due to a lack of further contact from the third party it was suspected that the remainder of the work would need to be completed in-house by the council.

The importance of Equality and Diversity training was highlighted by a panel member, as it was felt that the undertaking of this would have gone some way

to mitigate the apparent feel of unease displayed by some members and officers at a recent vigil. In reply, the Director of Corporate Services confirmed that this training was available for all members and that whilst the Council had come a long way there remained work to do. To this end, a draft strategy would be considered by Cabinet in October 2023.

The panel asked how non Cabinet members were being engaged in respect of the first action ' Create more time and space for collective reflection and long-term planning for the future (members, senior officers and then jointly)'.

In reply, the Director of Corporate Services confirmed that there was a great focus on cross party working groups and cited the Local Plan and Civic offices Working Groups as examples.

Following the discussion it was RESOLVED that the update report be NOTED.

18. Consideration and agreement of the draft scoping document for the scrutiny item 'The use of Systems Thinking within Portsmouth City Council' (AI 5)

The panel discussed the draft Scoping Document for the review which had been previously circulated.

During the discussion the panel was advised that systems thinking had been in place at the council for many years, although it had evolved over time and it had proven useful where processes required reviewing. The work was undertaken by those services who requested it and to date the team had not come across any services where the methodology could not be applied.

As an amendment the panel agreed to add the word 'outcomes' to the second bullet under 'purpose of the enquiry' in the scoping document so that it reads:

- The methodology employed within PCC - to include an explanation of interventions, how they work and outcomes.

The panel agreed to progress the review via a task and finish group open to all members of the SMP. The review to conclude and the final report to be considered by the SMP in January 2024.

Following the discussion it was RESOLVED that the draft Scoping Document, as amended be agreed.

The meeting concluded at 6.15 pm.

Councillor Cal Corkery
Chair