

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board

At 7.00 pm on Monday 29th April, 2024 in the Council Chamber, Corby Cube

Present:-

Members

Councillor Graham Lawman (Chair)
Councillor Lyn Buckingham

Councillor Philip Irwin

Officers

Ben Smith (Head of Democratic Services/Statutory Scrutiny Officer)
Kunwar Khan (Interim Scrutiny Manager)

26 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors King Lawal and Steven North.

27 Minutes of the meetings held on 18 January and 29 February 2024.

Resolved that:-

The minutes of the meetings held on 18 January and 29 February 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

28 Notification of requests to attend the meeting.

There were no requests to attend the meeting.

29 Declarations of Interest

The Chair invited those who wished to do so to declare any interests in respect of items on the agenda.

No declarations were made.

30 Draft Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/24

The Board considered a report of Kunwar Khan, Interim Scrutiny Manager, who presented a report setting out the draft Scrutiny Annual Report for 2023/24 in order to allow the Board to comment on the current version, prior to it being referred to full Council in line with the Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny. A copy of the report, marked as 'item 5', is filed with the agenda for this meeting.

Arising from discussion, the following principal points were noted:-

- i) Sections on each of the three scrutiny committee areas had been prepared by the scrutiny officers in consultation with the Chairs of each Committee.;

- ii) The role of call-in should be made more prominent in the Executive Summary;
- iii) An additional top line for scrutiny in 2023/24 should be that of budget scrutiny;
- iv) Within the enhanced scrutiny arrangements section, it was important to differentiate between the role of scrutiny and the role of executive advisory panels;
- v) In terms of strategic initiatives and outcomes, it was considered the joint of working between scrutiny committees should be included, where this had taken place;
- vi) The section on budget scrutiny should include a forward looking paragraph;
- vii) It was considered in terms of training, it would be important for future sessions to look at ways of encouraging more councillors to become involved;
- viii) In the final main section, looking ahead, it was requested that the enhancement of the budget scrutiny process and the continuing focus on ICT be included.
- ix) The draft report, whilst currently in text only format would be converted into report format, with graphics and images, prior to its submission as a final version to full Council.

It was **resolved** that:-

- a) The draft Annual Scrutiny Report 2023/24 be noted, subject to the comments now made;
- b) It be delegated to the Statutory Scrutiny Officer / Head of Democratic Services in consultation with the Chair of the Scrutiny Management Board and Scrutiny Manager to finalise the contents of the annual report, prior to its submission to full Council for consideration.

31 Scrutiny Workplan - April 2024 Update

The Scrutiny Management Board considered the updated annual workplan for 2023/24, as of April 2024, in order to consider, approve its contents and discuss any other items it wished to scrutinise, including from the Executive Forward Plan. A copy of the reported, marked as item 6, is filed with the agenda for this meeting.

Arising from discussion, the Board noted and considered:-

- i) This would be the last iteration of the 2023/24 scrutiny workplan and so it covered the final meeting of municipal year for each committee, plus the first meeting of the next municipal year in order to provide continuity and ability to plan and prepare ahead for both members and officers;

- ii) The three additional items requested by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee should each be added to the Scrutiny workplan, as at Appendix C to the report;
- iii) The suggested topic of Adoption of Roads should be referred to the Executive Advisory Panel for Planning Communities for its consideration;
- iv) In considering the latest Executive Forward Plan, the report on Draft Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy should be added to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee work programme;
- v) 2024/25 would involve a foreshortened scrutiny cycle foreshortened due to the May 2025 North Northamptonshire Council elections and the pre-election period that preceded that which would commence during March 2025.
- vi) Due to the shorter year of activity and noting the number of carry forward items already proposed it was agreed that a smaller workshop style approach should be undertaken by the Scrutiny Management Board to determine the 2024/25 work programme, prior to returning to a Scrutiny/Executive Conference format following the May 2025 elections.

It was **resolved** that the Board:-

- a) Notes the updated list of dates and items for inclusion in the Workplan;
- b) Notes the contents of the current Executive Forward Plan;
- c) Subject to the comments and changes now made, approves the third iteration of the Workplan, to be attached to the minutes of the meeting;
- d) Notes that the Workplan remains a living document which will be subject to review and may be updated
 - i. to reflect the changing needs and priorities of scrutiny; and
 - ii. following consideration of items requested by the three scrutiny committees and individual councillors.
- e) Agrees to the proposed process for creating the 2024/25 scrutiny work plan, as set out at paragraphs 5.5 to 5.8 of the report, in order to reflect the changing needs and priorities of scrutiny in the final year of the current Council.

Reasons for Decisions – To meet the Constitutional requirements for the Scrutiny Management Board to demonstrate its strategic responsibility for the Scrutiny function, its overall responsibility for the direction and management of Scrutiny, and to fulfil its obligation to develop, approve and monitor the Annual Scrutiny Workplan.

Alternative Options Considered – Not to update the Scrutiny Workplan - however this would not demonstrate the Board's strategic responsibility or provide the necessary strategic direction to the three Scrutiny Committees.

32 Close of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair thanked Members and Officers for their attendance and closed the meeting.

Chair

Date

The meeting closed at 8.33 pm