

For general release

Meeting: Overview and Scrutiny Organisation Committee

Date: 19th July 2004

Report of: The Director of Cultural Services

Subject: Annual Report on Scrutiny

Ward(s) affected: All

1. Purpose of the report

1.1 This report summarises the work undertaken within the scrutiny function at Brighton & Hove during the year 2003-2004. Overview and Scrutiny has continued to form an integral part of the committee structure by holding the executive committees to account and playing a key role in monitoring performance to ensure the delivery of high quality services.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the report be noted and submitted to the next Full Council meeting in accordance with the procedural rules for OSOC.

3. Background

3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Organisation Committee has responsibility to manage the Council's overall scrutiny function (with the exception of education-related matters), setting up ad hoc scrutiny panels where necessary. It has been especially pro-active during the year in refining scrutiny roles and procedures and developing practical improvements to the process (see Chair's report Appendix 2).

3.2 During 2003-04 OSOC has determined five scrutiny requests and established 4 in-depth scrutiny reviews. The Committee also endorsed the findings and recommendations of the Patcham Place Pavilion and War Memorials Scrutiny Panels resulting in the agreement to reinstate the Pavilion and pitches and to provide higher railings around the memorial.

- 3.3 The scrutiny request for an-depth review into the pension provisions of the authority was dealt with by OSOC itself and the information provided by officers from Brighton & Hove and East Sussex County Councils was noted.
- 3.4 Representations have been made to Executive Committees on various issues during the year, following deliberations at committee meetings. Queries raised by scrutiny Members have either been addressed at meetings or subsequently in the form of written responses.
- 3.5 One request for Call-in was received and concerned the awarding of grants to organisations. The application was refused, but a letter sent by OSOC to Policy & Resources achieved the desired result with Member involvement earlier in the awards process being agreed.
- 3.6 Regular reports have been presented to OSOC throughout the year on the progress in achieving the best value performance targets and key delivery targets from the best value performance plan and the committee have developed a work programme to consider each service area in detail at least annually. This enables each OSOC meeting to focus on one service area and question the relevant chief officer and executive councillor on targets and outcomes. Performance within each service area is thus scrutinised at least once per year.
- 3.7 OSOC have been continuing to receive regular updates on corporate complaints and to monitor progress against the Internal Audit Plan. The Committee are being kept informed of the Council's Race Equality Scheme and progress with its implementation.
- 3.8 The delivery of the scrutiny function has had some difficulties over the year and has been the focus of questions at Council in respect of the level of resources that have been available. A report was considered by the Policy & Resources Committee on the 23rd June (see item No.9) and an additional Scrutiny Support Officer is to be appointed, as well as greater support being given to OSOC by the Head of Democratic Services.

4. Completed scrutiny reviews

4.1 Patcham Place Pavilion

- 4.1.1 The Patcham Place Pavilion Scrutiny Panel chaired by Councillor Hamilton completed its work in March 2004 and the Environment Committee considered its report on the 18th March.
- 4.1.2 The scrutiny report and the executive response from the Environment Committee were reported to Full Council on the 22nd April 2004 and the Panel's

recommendations were agreed.

4.2 War Memorial Scrutiny Panel

4.2.1 The War Memorial Scrutiny Panel chaired by Councillor Allen completed its work in November 2003 and the Environment Committee considered its report on the 18th March 2004.

4.2.2 The scrutiny report and the executive response from the Environment Committee were reported to Full Council on the 22nd April and the Panel's recommendations were agreed.

4.3 Communal Bins

4.3.1 A three-Member scrutiny panel chaired by Councillor Young to look at the council's procurement structures was agreed by OSOC in 2003.

4.3.2 The Panel has met three times and concluded its work in June 2004. The Panel is finalising its report, which will be submitted to the 13th September OSOC meeting and will be submitted to the Environment Committee for its meeting on the 2nd September 2004.

4.4 Procurement

4.4.1 A five-Member scrutiny panel chaired by Councillor Edmond-Smith to look at the council's procurement structures was agreed by OSOC in July 2003.

4.4.2 The Panel has met thirteen times and concluded its work in June 2004. The Panel is in the process of finalising its report and will then submit it to OSOC and Policy & Resources Committee in September.

5. Scrutiny Reviews in Progress

5.1 Hove Centre Lettings Policy

5.1.1 A three-Member scrutiny panel chaired by Councillor Watkins to investigate the Council's letting policy at Hove Centre was agreed at OSOC in March 2003. This follows a proposal for scrutiny in February 2002 by the former Corporate Resource Allocation Scrutiny Board and agreement by the former Scrutiny Management Committee. The scrutiny review had been deferred to allow for changes to the Council's venues lettings policy to take effect.

5.1.2 The Panel has met five times to date and it is anticipated that it will have completed its work by the autumn of 2004.

5.2 Dome

- 5.2.1 A three-Member scrutiny panel chaired by Councillor Allen to look at the Dome was agreed by OSOC in September 2003.
- 5.2.2 The Panel has met eight times to date and it is anticipated that it will have completed its work by the autumn of 2004.

6. **Education Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

- 6.1 Although no specific task and finish scrutiny panels met during 2003, the opportunity was taken to strengthen the monitoring role of the Panel and to ensure that Members were kept fully informed regarding performance of both the department of Children Families and schools and across the city's schools and of forthcoming issues. The layout of agendas was refined to ensure that areas of its work were clearly defined e.g. "Monitoring & Service", "Performance" "Policy Advice / Information", "One-off" items. In addition to these improvements, each agenda now includes at its foot a detailed Forward Plan setting out the anticipated timeframe for receipt of reports relating to specified issues.
- 6.2 The panel received regular up dates regarding service audits carried out during the period between each of their meetings and this was also the case in relation to the on-going OFSTED inspections, which are carried out throughout the year. The Panel also received the annual report relating to exam results and results across each of the respective key stages for the City as a whole, besides regular up dates regarding the Six Term Year consultations that have place across the City and with neighbouring authorities. The Panel also received information regarding review of SEN provision across the City and Home to School Transport and, was additionally able to provide valuable input into the Department Development Plan (DDP) and School Organisation Plan.
- 6.3 As part of its development process and in recognition of its desire to be accountable, transparent and to receive input from a broad range of "educational" experience, the Panel agreed to the appointment of the Opposition Spokesperson as the Deputy Chair and to the appointment of an additional non- voting representative on behalf of the NASUWT. Both of the existing Parent governor Representatives stood down during the course of the year but were replaced without hiatus. The valuable contribution all co -optees are able to bring by virtue of their diverse backgrounds has continued to be acknowledged.
- 6.4 Although no Panels were held to scrutinise specific areas during 2003, it is envisaged that Scrutiny of the COMART PFI will commence from mid 2004, by

which time consultations on its future will have been completed. An initial scoping report is anticipated for consideration at the Panel's meeting in June 2004.

7. Health Overview & Scrutiny Panel

- 7.1** The Health Overview & Scrutiny Panel held its first formal meeting in November and is scheduled to meet on a quarterly basis.
- 7.2** The Panel has met on two occasions during period covered in this report. The Panel has received one request for scrutiny concerning GP boundaries that has been causing concern for both members and constituents. Members have been concerned that with the introduction of new GP contracts with effect from 1 April 2004 that a number of GPs have taken the opportunity to reduce their areas in an effort to manage the number of patients on their books. This has meant that whilst existing patients outside the redefined area will be retained, no new patients would be accepted.
- 7.3** The Panel has recognised these concerns and has requested a report that is expected to be available towards the end of July 2004 that will seek to assure members that there is no area within Brighton and Hove that is not covered by an existing practice.
- 7.4** In addition the Panel will be receiving a report shortly to establish protocols for dealing with formal consultations from the health service that cover more than one local authority and also to establish exactly what the definition is of a major variation of service that is not fully defined in legislation or regulations.
- 7.5** The Panel has received a presentation from the health service about the proposed transfer of orthopaedic services to Haywards Heath and has expressed its wish to be involved with further consultations about the impact of such issues as transport and others. Further updates will be reported on a regular basis to future meetings of the Panel.

Appendix 1

Meeting/Date	19th July 2003 Overview and Scrutiny Organisation Committee
Report of	Director of Cultural Services
Subject	Annual Report on Scrutiny
Wards affected	All

Financial implications

The financial implications are considered in each scrutiny report as appropriate.

Legal implications

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Corporate/City-wide implications	Risk assessment
There are no direct corporate/city-wide implications arising from this report.	No risk assessment has been undertaken in relation to this report.
Sustainability implications	Equalities implications
There are no direct sustainability implications arising from this report.	There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report.
Implications for the prevention of crime and disorder	
There are no direct implications for the prevention of crime and disorder arising from this report	

Background papers

None

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