

For general release

Meeting: Overview and Scrutiny Organisation Committee

Date: 18 July 2005

Report of: The Director of Strategy & Governance

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 2004-2005. 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 is responsible for administering the Council's overall scrutiny function through the committee itself, the Education Overview and Scrutiny Panel, the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel and by forming ad-hoc Panels to perform in-depth scrutiny reviews.

3.2 During 2004-05 OSOC has agreed two scrutiny requests: COMART and eb4U. The Committee also endorsed the findings and recommendations of four completed scrutiny reviews: Hove Centre Lettings Policy, Procurement, The Dome and Communal Bins.

3.3 There was one call in request for the period for a scrutiny review of parking charges and methods of payment, which was turned down.

- 3.4 OSOC has received regular reports over the period on achieving best value performance targets, with the Committee focusing on a different Directorate at each of its meetings.
- 3.5 An additional Scrutiny Support Officer was added late in the period bringing resources up to two FTE Scrutiny Support Officers, which should result in a more consistent service delivery for the period 2005-06.

4. Completed scrutiny reviews

4.1 Hove Centre Lettings Policy

4.1.1 The Hove Centre Lettings Policy Scrutiny Panel chaired by Councillor Watkins was agreed by OSOC in March 2003. The Panel met nine times and then presented its work to OSOC in February 2005.

4.1.2 The Panel's remit was to investigate the level of hiring of Hove Centre by community and commercial organisations, in relation to the pricing and lettings policies for the venue and if necessary, to make proposals for improvements to the policies in the future.

4.1.3 Recommendations included developing a policy for the Centre that identifies its community and business interest. It also recommended relaunching Hove Centre as a community-focused centre and ensuring that community groups receive reasonable hire rates.

4.1.4 The report is due to go to the Policy and Resource Committee in the fall.

4.2 Procurement

4.2.1 The Procurement Scrutiny Panel chaired by Councillor Edmond-Smith was agreed by OSOC in July 2003. The Panel met 16 times and then presented its work to OSOC in September 2004.

4.2.2 The Panel's remit was to make recommendations on how to achieve a genuinely corporate approach to strategic procurement and thereby produce improvements in quality and cost.

4.2.3 The Panel made numerous recommendations, from suggesting the Procurement team raise its profile to better training and involvement from Members and Officers. It also suggested looking into its contract management processes as well as using procurement as a way of promoting small and medium size businesses in Brighton & Hove. The report also looked at codes of practice and the Gershon Review and their impact on procurement.

4.2.4 Policy & Resources received the response to the Scrutiny at its 17 November 2004 meeting. Nearly all of the 67 recommendations in the report were agreed and are in process of being implemented.

4.3 The Dome

4.3.1 The Dome Scrutiny Panel chaired by Councillor Allen was agreed by OSOC in September 2003. The Panel met nine times and then presented its work to OSOC in January 2005.

4.3.2 The Panel's remit was to consider the current and three-year arrangements being made for Council funding in light of the request for additional funding submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee on 16 July 2003. It also looked at lessons learned and how to optimise future use of the Dome.

4.3.3 Recommendations included ensuring Officers and Members are presented with all project scenarios and their nuances as well as ensuring funding for projects is in place. The report also emphasised the importance of communication between senior staff on both sides of projects and at committee meetings. It also suggested that the Council needs a proper assessment criterion and that Council objectives and goals need to be clear and understood from the onset of a project.

4.3.4 The Director of Cultural Services agreed with the findings of the report at the 23 February 2005 Policy and Resource Committee meeting.

4.4 Communal Bins

4.4.1 The Communal Bins Scrutiny Panel chaired by Councillor Young was agreed by OSOC in February 2004. The Panel met three times and then presented its work to OSOC in May 2004.

4.4.2 The Panel's remit was to review the consultation process that was used prior to the introduction of the communal bins trial in three wards of the city. It focused on the clarity of reports to committees, the duty to consult and looked at the consultation process itself.

4.4.3 The Panel's recommendations included ensuring that all parties, including Officers, Members and the Public, are aware of actions to be taken and that they are also made aware of how they can influence those actions. The report suggested that briefing Councillors was essential and that they should also be involved in the process of informing their constituents. Internal experts, such as the Council's Research and Consultation Team, should be engaged to undertake specific activities thereby ensuring all groups' needs are identified and addressed.

4.4.4 The Director of Environment responded to the Scrutiny at the 21 October 2004 Environment Committee meeting by welcoming the scrutiny and agreed all the recommendations.

5. Scrutiny Reviews in Progress

5.1 COMART PFI

5.1.1 The five Member scrutiny panel chaired by Councillor Wrighton was agreed by OSOC in March 2004.

5.1.2 The scrutiny report detailing the Panel's findings and recommendations was finalised and sent for consideration at a special meeting of EOSP which was held on 25 May 2005. The purpose of the special meeting was to enable EOSP to formally approve and sign off the Panel's report prior to its consideration by the Children, Families and School's Sub Committee and the Policy and Resources Committee. The report will be forwarded to Full Council for consideration at its July 2005 meeting.

5.1.3 The Panel's remit was to assess the decision-making framework behind the inclusion of COMART in the PFI process and the process for projection school pupil numbers.

5.2 eb4U

5.2.1 The five Member panel chaired by Councillor Young was agreed by OSOC in November 2004. The Panel has since met 8 times and is at the point of reviewing and compiling evidence gathered to date.

5.2.2 The Panel's remit is to make recommendations to the Council and eb4U to maximise the opportunities that exist for the regeneration of East Brighton via New Deal for Communities over the remaining five years of the scheme to ensure full public confidence in the eb4U programme.

6. Education Overview and Scrutiny Panel

6.1 During the period covered by this report, the Sub-Panel was set up (first meeting held in July 2004) to consider COMART's inclusion in the PFI. This panel has now concluded its work and a separate entry has been included elsewhere in this report. The Education Overview and Scrutiny Panel considered the COMART PFI Panel's scrutiny report in relation to this matter at a specially convened meeting held on 25 May 2005. The refinements made to agendas during the previous year have been retained as Members have found this beneficial.

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. Members also received several reports relating to the Ofsted 14-19 Area Inspection: Post Inspection Action Plan and in respect of the Integrated Inspection of Children's Services.

6.3 Sadly Mr Andy Magrath, a parent-governor representative on the Panel, died during the summer of 2004. A number of Members and officers attended a memorial service celebrating his life. His enthusiasm and contribution to the Panel will be missed greatly. Both parent-governor places on the Panel are currently vacant and it is hoped that they may be filled in the near future. The valuable contribution all co-optees are able to bring by virtue of their diverse backgrounds has continued to be acknowledged.

7. Health Overview & Scrutiny Panel

7.1 During the year the Panel considered the consultation published on behalf of the local NHS Trusts by the on Best Care, Best Place on the future of health services in Sussex. In general the Panel supported the broad principles set out in the consultation which sought to establish a way forward to sustaining and enhancing the services provided by the NHS. Further proposals arising from the consultation will be considered in due course after the business plans have been prepared.

7.2 The Panel also participated in a Joint Committee established on behalf of this authority and also East and West Sussex County Councils to consider the same proposals to see how they impacted on the health economies of both East and West Sussex. The Joint Committee submitted a response and will continue to be involved as the proposals evolve.

7.3 The Panel considered draft proposals for a review of mental health services throughout Sussex. The consultation period commenced in early May and will continue until August 2005.

7.4 A work programme for 2005-2006 was established that will provide a framework for items and issues that will be focused on during the period.

Appendix 1

Meeting/Date	Overview and Scrutiny Organisation Committee / 18 July 2005
Report of	Director of Strategy & Governance
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

There are no direct corporate/city-wide implications arising from this report.

Risk assessment

No risk assessment has been undertaken in relation to this report.

Sustainability implications

There are no direct sustainability implications arising from this report.

Equalities implications

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.

Contact Officer

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