

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Agenda Item 74

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Scrutiny Panel Update
Date of Meeting: 26 January 2010
Report of: Director of Strategy and Governance
Contact Officer: Name: Tom Hook Tel: 29-1110
E-mail: Tom.hook@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 Section 6, paragraph 5.1 of the Council's constitution states 'Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee may appoint Ad Hoc Panels to carry out short, sharply focused pieces of scrutiny work'. This report provides members with a brief summary of the work of the scrutiny panels and select committees to date.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission notes the report.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 During 2009 six scrutiny panel reviews were completed. The Dual Diagnosis study was reported to Council in December 2009 and three reports are scheduled to be on the agenda for the Council meeting on the 28 January, these are:
- Students in the Community
 - Older People and Community Safety
 - GP-Led Health Centre
- 3.2 The Children and Young People Alcohol Related Harm Scrutiny Report is to be discussed at Licensing Committee on March 4th.
- 3.3 The Environmental Industries Scrutiny Report is set for discussion at the Enterprise, Employment & Major Projects Cabinet Member Meeting on the 26th January.
- 3.4 Panels currently conducting reviews are listed below, along with a short update on their activity.
- **Street Access Issues** (Cllr Sven Rufus)
Evidence had been taken from a range of witnesses including business representatives, charities, local voluntary organisations, council officers and residents. Recommendations will focus on traders' items (A boards and tables

and chairs), communal and commercial bins and bicycles. The panel is looking to report to OSC in March.

- **Climate Change Adaptation** (Chair Prof Gordon MacKerron)

The panel is looking at how prepared the Council and partners are to respond to a changing climate. The three panel meetings held to date have focused on the climate data, the national and regional context and are now starting to look at the Council's and partners preparedness.

- **20mph** (Chair Cllr Pete West)

The panel has held a scoping meeting and will be holding a first public meeting on the 19th January. Terms of reference have been agreed as:

- To gain an understanding of the collision statistics
- To seek a range of views as to the impact of 20 mph speed limits and 20 mph zones on road safety in terms of reducing vehicle speeds and casualty numbers
- To investigate what options other local authorities across the country are pursuing in terms of 20 mph speed limits/zones
- To gain an understanding of the potential environmental impacts of 20 mph speeds on air quality, tail pipe and carbon emissions as well as noise
- To gain an understanding of the potential 'other benefits' which 20 mph speeds may bring, such as health benefits, increased sociability, and better walking and cycling conditions
- To gain an understanding of any potential consequences of any displacement of traffic as a result of introducing lower speed limits
- To gain an understanding of the speed limit review currently being undertaken in the city and the links with this investigation
- To identify the benefits, feasibility and potential costs of various 20 mph speed options for the city
- To develop recommendations for the future development of council policy on 20 mph speed limits/zones

- **School Exclusions** (Chair Cllr Rachel Fryer)

The panel has taken evidence from a range of witnesses including parents, pupils and teachers. Council officers who have given evidence include the AD for Learning, Schools and Skills, Senior Secondary and Specials Schools Advisor and Behaviour Strategy Manager. External witnesses have included staff from the Self Managed Learning Centre, YOT, and the learning support service.

Site visits have been undertaken to a number of schools and support services. Whilst still ongoing issues raised to date are waiting times to access support services, increased support for schools, different levels of support offered in different schools and the specialist knowledge required for certain conditions and experiences.

- **Dignity at Work** (Chair Cllr Gill Mitchell)

The panel will be meeting in early February to discuss the draft Dignity at Work Strategy.

- **Dementia Select Committee** (Chair Cllr Pat Hawkes)

The Select Committee on Dementia has now held a series of evidence gathering meetings and has heard from the city commissioners of mental health services, a range of clinicians and professional care providers, support services (e.g. the Alzheimer's Society) and carers.

The Committee is now considering its draft recommendations, and will shortly be producing a report, although it may be necessary to take some more evidence in the areas of general acute care (e.g. the diagnosis and support for dementia in general hospitals), and the city's in-patient dementia beds (as a consultation on whether to keep these beds in the city is expected to commence imminently).

- **Staff Disabilities** (Chair Cllr David Watkins)

The Panel has held a scoping meeting and asked for further information on relevant legislation, existing council policies, performance and initiatives regarding disabled staff recruitment and retention.

Witnesses including staff with disabilities, council officers and other professionals working in the area, local organisations, and others with an interest are being invited to public meetings on Monday 22 Feb 10am HTH CC and Friday 12 March 10am HTH CC.

The Panel's remit is:

"Wishing positively to support officers in the good work already being done:

- To ensure progress on the issues raised about staff disabilities from the Diversity Peer Challenge (as reported to 14 July 2009 OSC)
- To investigate issues relating to performance under the Local Area Agreement
- To investigate action take by the council to encourage people with disabilities to apply for a job.

Noting that: Progress from the Equalities and Inclusion Action Plan is being monitored via the regular reports within the existing OSC work programme; and that the draft Single Equality Scheme is being reported to 15 December OSC and considered in more detail at an informal meeting on 12 January 2010."

- **Support for Victims of Sexual Violence Support Services** (Chair David Watkins)

The scoping meeting for this panel was held on the 18th January. Terms of reference were agreed

- **Cultural Provision for Children** (Chair tbc)

Scoping to start in mid-February.

- 3.5 All panel papers and final reports are available on the Overview and Scrutiny pages of the Council's website.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 There has been no consultation in relation to this report.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Equalities Implications:

- 5.4 A number of scrutiny panels are investigating issues that will have implications for how the council relates to equality issues.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.5 A number of the scrutiny panels currently ongoing will impact upon sustainability issues, most notably the panel on climate change adaptations.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.9 The scrutiny review into support services for victims of sexual violence will probably have some crime and disorder implications.

Risk & Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.10 Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a duty to ensure that the number of Ad Hoc Panels which it appoints does not exceed the capacity of the Member and Officer resources available to support their work.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.11 There are no corporate implications arising from this report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

None