

ORGANISATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 23 JUNE 2020

Present:

Councillor Angelique Foster (Chair)
Councillor Maureen Potts (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Patricia Bone
Councillor Joseph Birkin
Councillor Pat Kerry
Councillor Philip Wright

Councillor John Funnell
Councillor Maggie Jones
Councillor Heather Liggett

Also Present:

S Veerman Overview and Scrutiny Manager
D Stanton Governance Officer

OSC/1/2020-21 Apologies for Absence

No Apologies for absence were received.

OSC/2/2020-21 Declarations of Interest

Members were requested to declare the existence and nature of any disclosable pecuniary interest and/or other interest, not already on their register of interests, in any item on the agenda and withdraw from the meeting at the appropriate time.
No declarations were received.

OSC/3/2020-21 Minutes of Last Meeting

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of the Organisation Scrutiny Committee held on 14 January 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

OSC/4/2020-21 Remit of Committee

The Overview and Scrutiny Manager detailed a number of key points in relation to Scrutiny at North East Derbyshire District Council (NEDDC). Members were provided with the Terms of Reference for the Organisation Scrutiny Committee, Growth Scrutiny Committee, Communities Scrutiny Committee, and the Audit and Corporate Governance Scrutiny Committee.

Members were reminded that the Committees' Terms of Reference provided the basis for the Committees' remit.

The Committee noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Manager was responsible for three Scrutiny Committees at the Council, and that on some occasions, particular issues could fall within the functions of two or more Scrutiny Committees. It was stated that at this point, it would be up to the

Chairs' to decide which Committee would be best suited to review that particular topic.

Members were reminded that Scrutiny was a mechanism in which Council performance could be monitored. That included monitoring performance, monitoring action plans, being alert to service information, and monitoring Cabinet decisions.

The Committee heard that following a Scrutiny Review it could make a series of recommendations to Cabinet. It was advised, however, that Scrutiny could not make decisions or policies.

Members heard that the Work Programme was not a set document, but a work in progress. The Overview and Scrutiny Manager explained that it was usual practice for the Committee to choose a review topic, which would form the basis of the Work Programme. This would usually be an in depth review, and evidence would be gathered for the majority of the Municipal Year. There was however, also the option for spotlight reviews.

OSC/5/2020-21

Selection of Scrutiny Review Topic

The Committee agreed that the Coronavirus Pandemic had presented a number of challenges to the Council and its staff. There was a consensus that spotlight reviews, where the Committee looked at a number of topics, would be more appropriate given the wide ranging impact of the lockdown and the pandemic.

The Committee discussed home working, and the potential impact it may have had on the health and wellbeing of staff. Members noted that the Council had already instigated a Review on its home working policy, and had sent out a survey to staff seeking their opinions on how it had worked during the pandemic.

The Committee agreed that whilst they did not want to duplicate the Council's ongoing work, there could be other aspects of home working that may be worth investigating in support of this work, and provided an opportunity for the Committee to review this area and gather evidence.

Members had a wide ranging discussion on home working, and agreed that it was vital the Council reviewed the impacts homeworking has had on staff. Members acknowledged that home working environments varied, and that it was important members of staff maintained access to equipment that improved their physical health such as good quality desk chairs and additional screens.

The Chair proposed that the Committee reviewed the overall health and wellbeing of staff during the lockdown, and what lessons could be learned so that the Council was adequately prepared for a future pandemic. It was also proposed that the Committee complimented the Council's Review on Homeworking.

The Committee agreed to scope the Review at the next meeting.

OSC/6/2020-21 Draft Work Programme 2020/21

The Committee informed the Overview and Scrutiny Manager that they wished for the planned interviews with staff members and managers to be brought forward in the Municipal Year. Members also discussed the Annual Report from Human Resources and the update on the Transformation Programme.

AGREED – That the Draft Work Programme be noted.

OSC/7/2020-21 Forward Plan of Executive Decisions

Members wished for it to be noted that there was a preference for hard copies of the agenda to be distributed to Members of the Committee. The Governance Officer agreed to raise this with the Governance Manager and that the request would be considered.

AGREED – That the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions 13 March – 9 April 2020 be noted.

OSC/8/2020-21 Exclusion of Public

RESOLVED – That the public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of the following items of business to avoid the disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1, Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006).

OSC/9/2020-21 Previous Scrutiny Review 2019/20 - Health and Wellbeing

The Committee discussed outstanding issues relating to the previous Scrutiny Review into Health and Wellbeing. Members agreed to pause any further work on the Review as a result of the Coronavirus Pandemic. The Overview and Scrutiny Manager suggested to the Committee that an Interim Report could be drafted and sent to Members for consideration. This report if agreed would then be sent to Cabinet to inform them of the work done.

OSC/10/2020-21 Additional Urgent Items

There were no additional urgent items for discussion at this meeting.

OSC/11/2020-21 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next scheduled meeting of the Organisation Scrutiny Committee was scheduled to take place on Tuesday 4 August 2020 at 10.00 am. There was a request for the meeting date to be rescheduled and this request would be considered by Governance.