

HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION

held in the Council Chamber,  
Adam and Eve Street, Market Harborough

4<sup>th</sup> July 2012

commencing at 6.30p.m.

Present:  
Councillor Dr. Bremner (Chairman)

Councillors: Bannister, Beaty, Birch, Beesley-Reynolds, Brodrick, Mrs. Burrell, Evans, Hall, Hallam, Dr. S. Hill Holyoak, Johnson, King, Mrs. Page, Mrs. Robinson, Mrs. Simpson, Smith, Mrs. Tooley, Tomlin and Mrs. Wood.

Officers: A. Graves, B. Murgatroyd and E. O'Neill.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dewes, Graves, Knowles (substitute provided) and McHugo.

81 NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTION

Councillor Dr. S. Hill substituted for Councillor Knowles.

82 MINUTES

RESOLVED that: the Minutes of the Meeting of the Scrutiny Commission held on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2011 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

83 DECLARATIONS OF MEMEBERS' INTERESTS

None received.

84 REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Councillor Dr. Bremner presented his report, as set out below:

"I first wish to thank all members for their input and patience into the changes that are impacting scrutiny as we move through the transformation process that is gathering a pace through this Council.

It is already clear that this council's resource is impacted, both financially and upon staff but it is also important to bear in mind the efficient use of our staffing resource. Thus our resource is reduced and inadequate to support the current three panels. If that statement is supported, then we need to look at alternative structures to support scrutiny's internal and external viewpoints. The Democratic Services team are preparing short descriptions of alternative scrutiny models for the 2<sup>nd</sup> July and we will all have the opportunity to engage with the facilitator, David McGrath to draw some conclusions. The meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> will help to discuss (thrash out!) options brought to us by officers and options we may have seen or heard of in other similar districts to Harborough. At the previous workshop the alternative scrutiny model highlighted was of: one panel, supported by task-and-finish groups.

But it is not only about the structure. It is also the culture of scrutiny. Particularly the position it should have in being the source of constructive challenge to both the Council Corporate and the Executive. Plus, moving forward to have a more strategic view and focus on "big ticket" items that impact, and are of interest to, our residents. That was my motivation to call on you all to submit, by email to Ed/Beth, your top three items so they can be discussed at the meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July. You still have

time to submit before the 2<sup>nd</sup> but the deadline is the 27<sup>th</sup> June. If you require a refreshment of the invitation email I sent, it was sent on Fri 6/1/2012 12:33 PM.

Following our discussions on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, on the July 4<sup>th</sup> Commission we should have distilled our options at the workshop for the discussion of what we wish to see **in** the work-plan.

In conclusion: the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> will work hand-in-hand to continue the evolution of scrutiny and my hope is we can join together and shape it correctly for both it's impact and value to: Members; Officers, Public and partners

Cllr Dr Paul Bremner  
Scrutiny Commission Chair"

### 85 OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE ROLE OF SCRUTINY

Members considered options for the future structure of the Council's Scrutiny structure.

The Scrutiny Commission NOTED that:

- (i) a Scrutiny Work-shop was held on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2012 at which Members indicated an interest in a revised Scrutiny structure.
- (ii) a second Scrutiny Work-shop was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2012. At this work-shop Members indicated:
  - a preference for maintaining political balance of future Scrutiny Panels.
  - That all non-Executive Members should have a role in Scrutiny.

**The Committee RECOMMENDED that:**

- (i) the existing Scrutiny Panels (People, Places and Resource Development) be disbanded with immediate effect.**
- (ii) Council appoint, with immediate effect, a revised Scrutiny Structure, as set out at Diagram 1. This structure will be made up of two standing Panels:**
  - Community Leadership Panel – outward looking, locality focus, involving external bodies.**
  - Resource and Performance Panel – inward looking, examining Council decisions, resources and performance**

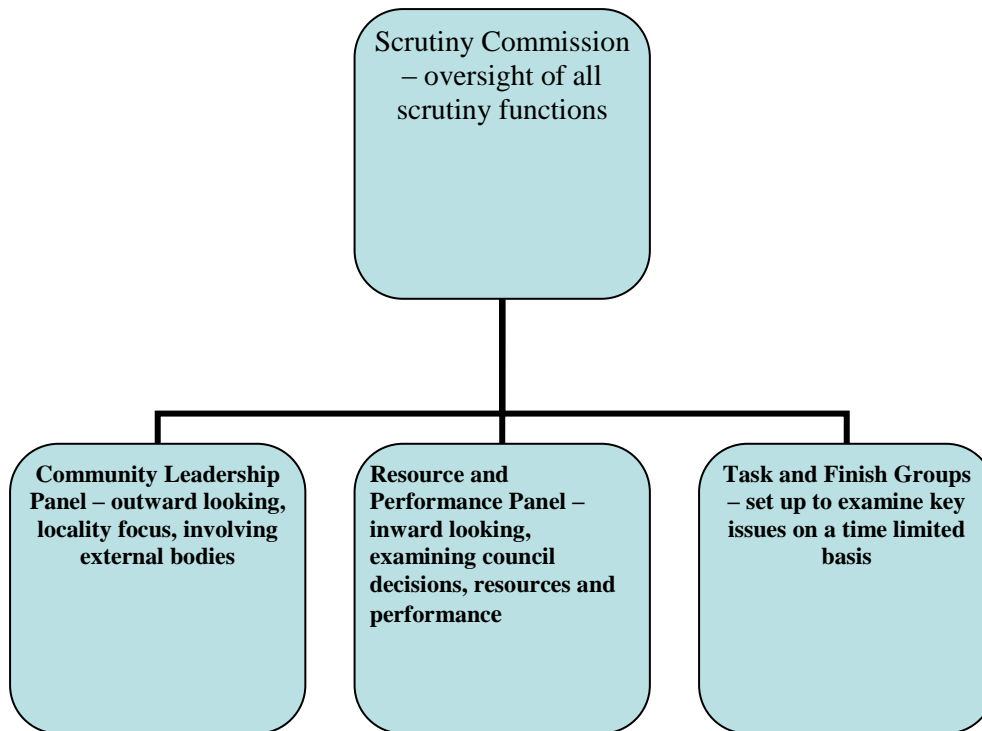


Diagram 1

- (iii) in addition to the two standing Panels, ad-hoc Task-and-Finish Scrutiny Groups be used for specific purposes as required. A maximum of two ad-hoc Task-and-Finish Groups should run concurrently.
- (iv) two ad-hoc Task-and-Finish Groups be appointed:
  - one to consider the Council's Bin Policy.
  - one to consider Cemetery Provision in Harborough District.
- (v) the standing Scrutiny Panels be made up of ten Members (Membership to be decided by the Group Whips). The size of the ad-hoc groups to be decided as required.
- (vi) all Scrutiny Panels be politically balanced.
- (vii) Quorum of the new Scrutiny Panels remain as per the existing provisions in the Council's Constitution.
- (viii) the Scrutiny Commission meet four times per year.
- (ix) the Scrutiny Commission include all non-Executive Members.
- (x) The functions of Scrutiny be undertaken by the forums set out at Table 1
- (xi) if the above recommendations are approved by Council, the revisions to the Scrutiny function be referred to the Constitutional Review Committee to make the necessary amendments to the Council's Constitution.
- (xii) the subject of remuneration for Chairmen of Scrutiny Panels be referred to the Members' Remuneration Panel.

Function	Forum
Sets the Scrutiny Agenda	Scrutiny Commission
Holding Executive to Account	Scrutiny Commission
Scrutinises Decisions	Scrutiny Commission
Policy Development	Task-and-Finish Group

'Big Issues'	Task-and-Finish Group
'Light-touch' Reviews	Panel(s)
Performance Management	Resource and Performance Panel
External Scrutiny	Community Leadership Panel
'Call-in' of Decisions	Resource and Performance Panel

**Table 1**

#### 86 THE SCRUTINY WORK-PLAN

Members considered suggestions for items to be scrutinised by Task-and-Finish Groups in the coming year.

RESOLVED that: the following items be scrutinised:

<b>Suggested Item</b>	<b>Comments/ Information</b>	<b>When</b>
Bin Policy (Task-and-Finish Panel)	Scrutiny could be involved in the development of this policy prior to adoption.  Task to complete: answer the question What is the charging Policy for bins? How does S106 pay for bins? How does the council charge for replacement bins? etc.	Q1
Cemetery Provision	As a result of the recent staff restructuring this will be the responsibility of a newly-created post.  This is known to be an area that requires attention (see previous Scrutiny recommendations). The work should include alternative solutions to cemeteries such as crematoria.	Q3/4

#### 87 MATTERS OF SPECIAL URGENCY

##### End-of-Year Portfolio Reports

E. O'Neill, Democratic Officer, reminded Members that there was a need to hold a Meeting to deal with the 2011/12 end-of-year Portfolio Reports before moving to the new Scrutiny system outlined above.

RESOLVED that: a Meeting of all of the Scrutiny Members be held on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2012.

The Meeting ended at 8.45p.m.