

Agenda Item 17 refers

Annual report from the Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission (2017/18)

I am pleased to say that I am looking back on very busy year for Scrutiny, when we have often had a challenging, but welcome, workload.

Topics covered:

The Scrutiny Commission, together with the Communities and Performance Panels have covered a very wide variety of topics during the course of the year, including:

- Community Safety Partnership Annual Review
- Bedding in of the Harborough Hospital project
- Charities and Voluntary Organisations
- Registered Housing Providers
- S106 Planning Obligations
- Revisiting Contact Centre Performance
- Issues arising from the Grenfell Tower fire
- Update on progress with help for Syrian Refugees
- Harborough Cemetery and Burial Strategy
- Physical Activity Strategy
- Public Open Space & the Local Enforcement Plan
- Resource Mapping
- IT Communications strategy
- Working arrangements with the Harborough Leisure Trust
- Health, Wellbeing and Leisure Commissioning
- New Homelessness Duties
- Community Engagement & Empowerment

Presentations:

In addition to the usual reports, Scrutiny Members have received several presentations, including LLR Prepared & the Resilience Partnership (in relation to issues arising from the Grenfell Tower fire) and Lightbulb, both of which formed the basis for a detailed debate.

Meeting size, attendance and timing

Attendance at regular Scrutiny meetings has been 86% over the year, compared with 90% in 2016/17. Although this is a slight reduction, it actually equates to only 4 more absences out of a potential 103 attendances in the year. That said, there is always scope for improvement and I hope that it will be possible to improve attendance over the next twelve months. The breakdown for the individual groups over the past two years was:

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	2016/17				2017/18			
Scrutiny Cycle	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Commission	90%	90%	80%	80%	80%	80%	100%	90%
Performance	86%	86%	86%	93%	86%	100%	57%	86%
Communities	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	86%	86%	86%
Overall	90%				86%			

These figures indicate that the reduction in the sizes of the Commission and Panels has continued to be successful in keeping attendance levels high, at the same time as maintaining a saving in cost, when compared with the previous Scrutiny structure.

The inclusion of Scrutiny meetings within one-month cycles has once again worked well and has allowed flexibility in allocating the workload between Scrutiny Panels and the Commission. On two occasions during the year it has become apparent that the workload suggested for one of the Panels would have been too great to be covered at its own meetings. In line with the flexibility allowed by the new arrangements for Scrutiny, some of the items have been allocated between Panels or to the Commission. The grouping of Scrutiny meetings has meant that this has been possible without impacting on the workflow of Scrutiny as a whole and subjects have been addressed without introducing delays.

Setting the Scrutiny Workplan

The new streamlined process for deciding the Workplan continues to work effectively. The Workplan is decided by the smaller Commission, but prior to this consultation with all non-Executive Members takes place by email, so that their views can be fed into the Commission meeting by the Chairman of Scrutiny. In addition, this electronic consultation has been extended, so that ideas raised have been included into the draft Workplan prior to the meeting. This has allowed the time spent on agreeing the Workplan to be substantially reduced, which in turn has made more time available for the actual business of scrutiny.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone for their input into another rewarding and successful year for Scrutiny.

Cllr P. Dann
Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission
Harborough District Council