

# Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel

12 June 2018

**Commenced:** 6.00pm

**Terminated:** 7.00pm

**Present:** Councillors Glover (Chair), Bailey (Deputy Chair), Boyle, Chadwick, Choksi, J Fitzpatrick, A Holland, S Homer, J Lane, Lewis, Pearce, Sharif, Sidebottom, Whitehead.

**Apologies for absence:** Councillors Bowden, Bowerman, Gosling, Patrick, Sweeton, Taylor.

## 1. WELCOME AND CHAIRS OPENING REMARKS

In opening the meeting the Chair welcomed all members to the first panel meeting of the municipal year.

The Chair received comments from members on the distribution of additional meeting papers and timescales. The Chair advised members that on occasion and given the nature and structure of scrutiny activity, supporting paperwork may need to be circulated outside of the meeting timetables. It was confirmed that adequate time will be allocated for all councillors to digest and respond to such papers.

**Resolved:** That efforts continue to be made to reduce the need for additional papers and to ensure circulation at the earliest opportunity and within five working days of the meeting.

## 2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel held on 13 March 2018 were approved as a correct record.

## 3. EFFECTIVENESS OF SCRUTINY

The Scrutiny and Member Services Manager presented a paper on The Effectiveness of Local Authority Overview and Scrutiny. The paper provided a summary of findings from a recent inquiry undertaken by the Communities and Local Government Select Committee.

The inquiry examined the role and impact of scrutiny within local authorities, training for scrutiny members, improving relationships and a growing need for wider engagement. The paper included a self-assessment of scrutiny in Tameside, to reflect on the shared challenges and opportunities to improve outcomes and develop the local approach.

Panel members were encouraged by plans to strengthen relationships and information sharing with the introduction of quarterly meeting between Scrutiny Chairs and Cabinet Members. It was requested that training and development plans for scrutiny members be brought to the next meeting.

**Resolved:**

(1) That the paper be noted and for any questions or comments to be emailed to the Scrutiny and Member Services Manager by 10 July 2018.

(2) That training and development proposals be brought to the next meeting on 31 July 2018.

#### 4. ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

The Panel welcomed Simon Brunet, Policy Manager, to discuss ways to maximise future opportunities and influence of scrutiny by adapting the way activity is undertaken and reported. Scrutiny has the ability to draw on the experience of its members and create a refreshed approach to the critical friend role.

In order to build upon the responsiveness and flexibility of all scrutiny activity, plans will be put in place to keep scrutiny members informed on a range of engagement and consultation activity taking place both within the Council and across partners. Where deemed appropriate, the wider development of scrutiny may include project support and service development work at the request of the Executive and to report back on the effectiveness of service delivery changes. Scrutiny feedback and recommendations can then be taken into consideration to inform decisions and to gain a broader understanding of priorities and impacts.

The Chair advised members that in order to improve communication, plans are in place to introduce regular meetings between the Executive and Chairs of the two Scrutiny Panels. It was also agreed that the format in which activity is undertaken will change in part, to assist with the growing need for timely action to incorporate findings and recommendations within the decision making process.

**Resolved:** That content and guidance be added to the Annual Work Programme to take account of the need to improve scrutiny engagement, responsiveness and methods of reporting.

#### 5. TOPICS FOR CONSIDERATION

The Chair presented a list of potential topics for consideration to be included within a planned two year programme of work. It was agreed that topics will be subject to annual review to ensure that work remains relevant and able to react to priorities and far reaching issues.

It was discussed that a number of topics may require the attention of both panels in order to ensure that all elements are picked up. These include areas such as the impacts of Welfare Reform, Air Quality and Water Quality.

**Resolved:** That topics and discussion be collated and added to the Annual Work Programme.

#### 6. ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME

The Panel discussed a range of potential topics and subject areas to be added to the Annual Work Programme. The Chair advised members that the work programme will be drafted as a two year document to take account of the future approach needed in order to ensure scrutiny activity is responsive and remains relevant.

The programme will aim to include a number of priority issues and upcoming priorities, with the panel having a speedier approach to ensure feedback is captured and findings are reported to both inform and influence decision making.

In order for the Annual Work Programme to be presented at Overview (Audit) Panel on 30 July 2018 it was agreed that the final document will be shared outside of the meeting.

**RESOLVED:** That the Annual Work Programme be circulated by email to all panel members outside of the meeting.

**7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To note that the next meeting of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel will take place on 31 July 2018.

**8. URGENT ITEMS**

The Chair reported that there were no urgent items for consideration at this meeting.

**CHAIR**