

HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY BOARD

SCRUTINY BOARD – ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14

Report by the Chairman of the Scrutiny Board

Portfolio: Not Applicable

Key Decision: N/A

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The Council's Constitution requires the Overview and Scrutiny Board to report annually to Full Council on its workings and to make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods, if appropriate. This report provides a summary of the work undertaken by the Scrutiny Board in 2013/14 and gives the Board an opportunity to review its performance over the last year and make recommendations in respect of its 2014/15 work programme.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 That the Board recommends its annual report to Full Council.

3.0 Summary

3.1 As part of a structured work programme, the Board has scrutinised various matters within its remit, held Portfolio Holders and Lead Officers to account, and questioned representatives of external organisations. The work programme has been subject to review at each programmed meeting of the Board and has been regularly updated as directed by members.

3.2 Matters included in the work programme were those identified by the Scrutiny Panels, selected either from the Forward Plan for scrutiny prior to consideration by the Cabinet, or at the request of individual members of the Board.

3.4 Membership of the Scrutiny Board in 2013/14 was as follows:

Councillors G Shimbart (Chairman), Bastin, Blackett, Bolton, Cousins, Edwards, Farrow, Galloway, Gibb-Gray, Hart, Heard, Hilton, Keast, Kennedy, Lenaghan, Mackey, Pierce Jones, Ponsonby, Smallcorn, D Smith, G Smith, J Smith, K Smith, Tarrant, Turner, Wilson and Wade.

4.0 THE WORK PROGRAMME

4.1 The Board now has a well established approach to scrutiny and the following key principles have been established:

- scrutiny panels be appointed to undertake research on the various matters coming forward to the Board's work programme in order to obtain a greater depth of

understanding, leading to the formulation of informed and robust recommendations to the Cabinet;

- scrutiny takes the form of a question and answer section, followed by a member debate after which the Board draws up its conclusions and recommendations;
- before each meeting, members are asked to give some thought as to potential lines of enquiry in advance, thus ensuring that the debate at the meeting is as structured and productive as possible and allowing the scrutiny panels and witnesses to prepare fully and be in a position to provide any detailed information required by the Board; and

4.2 Appendix A sets out the detail of the work undertaken by the Board over the last year in relation to:

- Development Management Service- Improvement Plan
- Corporate Performance Health Check
- Customer Access Strategy
- Marketing Strategy
- Democratic Process/ Role of the Mayor
- Discharges into Local Harbours
- CCTV
- Revenue Budget 2014/15
- Events
- Climate Change and Sustainability
- Leisure Strategy Review
- Quarterly Budget Scrutiny
- Community Infrastructure Levy
- Pricing Strategy/Residents Packs
- Review of HBC's relationship with PUSH
- Enhancing Planning Communication & Marketing
- Peer Review- Review Appeals Process & Major Planning Applications

4.3 The terms of reference of the Overview and Scrutiny Board is set in Appendix B.

5.0 Scrutiny Panels

5.1 The Scrutiny Panels are an initiative, introduced in May 2011. Five Panels were created, each aligned to one of the service clusters with the aim of researching specific matters within each service. The establishment of these Panel's has allowed members of the Board to conduct thorough reviews of particular areas and formulate robust and well researched recommendations to go forward to Cabinet. It is recognised that this initiative has produced some excellent pieces of work and it is hoped to build on progress made in 2013/14. The following Councillors were appointed to each Panel:

- (i) Environment and Neighbourhood Quality –
Scrutiny Lead Councillor D Keast assisted by Councillors H Farrow, R Cousins, C Mackey and O Kennedy
- (ii) Planning and Built Environment –
Scrutiny Lead Councillor Mrs G Blackett assisted by R Bolton, B Gibb-Gray, C Hilton and G Shimbart
- (iii) Economy and Communities –

Scrutiny Lead Councillor Mrs C Tarrant assisted by Councillors K Smith, F Edwards, P Wade and M Wilson

- (iv) Governance and Logistics –
Scrutiny Lead Councillor L Turner assisted by Councillors R Heard, R Bastin, A Lenaghan and Mrs Smallcorn
- (v) Marketing and Development –
Scrutiny Lead Councillor J Smith assisted by Councillors R Galloway, T Hart, F Ponsonby, G Smith and V Pierce Jones

5.2 The approach adopted by the scrutiny panels has varied according to the nature and complexity of the subject matter under investigation. Scrutiny Panel investigations in 2013/14 included visits to reference sites and other local authorities, interviews with Cabinet Portfolio Holders, Senior Council Officers, representatives of external organisations and various other forms of consultations. In all cases, however, the objective has been to provide evidence-based recommendations for consideration by the Board as a whole. It is hoped to build on experiences of the scrutiny undertaken this year and use it to continue to robustly develop Council policies of each service cluster, scrutinise Cabinet decisions and ensure scrutiny remains an important component in the decision making process.

5.3 The Chairman endeavours, whenever possible, to attend Scrutiny Panel meetings, interviews and visits as an observer, so as to keep abreast of progress and maintain an overview of the work being undertaken on behalf of the Board.

6.0 CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

6.1 Once again this has been a very busy year for the Scrutiny Board and, especially, the five Scrutiny Panels.

6.2 A very varied range of items has been scrutinised over the last 12 months, and, once again, these have been examined in a very thorough and business like way. This will have a marked effect on the efficiency of the Council and will help to point the way to future savings.

6.3 I would especially thank the Panel leads for the way in which they have ensured that the panels have worked well and effectively since I became Chairman of the Scrutiny Board.

6.4 Also, I would like to thank the many officers who have worked with the panels to ensure that the work undertaken has been well carried out, and for their support for myself as Chairman.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Resources

There are no financial implications arising out of this report. If any recommendations made by the Scrutiny Board for adoption by the Council have financial implications they are identified separately in each report.

7.2 Legal

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

7.3 Strategy

The scrutiny reviews undertaken endeavour to help Havant Borough Council achieve its aims of being Cleaner, Safer, More Prosperous.

7.4 Risks

If a scrutiny annual report was not produced it would contravene Article 7 paragraph 7.3 (c) of the council's constitution, which states that the Scrutiny Board must report annually to full Council on their workings.

7.5 Communications

The Scrutiny Board needs to continue to promote and demonstrate clearly how it is contributing towards the improvement and efficiency of Havant Borough Council.

7.6 For the Community

The scrutiny reviews attempt to involve, if appropriate, local residents, community and voluntary sector groups; businesses etc and the views and evidence gathered are fed into the individual reports.

7.7 The Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been completed and concluded the following: The scrutiny function recognises the importance and role of diversity and equality issues. All work undertaken seeks to include sections of the community relevant to the issues being investigated. Every effort is made to engage and consult local residents when required.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Work undertaken by the Scrutiny Board in 2013/14

Appendix B – Terms of reference of the Overview and Scrutiny Board

Background Papers:

Reports and minutes relating to meetings of the Scrutiny Board in 2013/14

Agreed and signed off by:

Senior Contentious Lawyer; 13/02/2014

Service Manager for Legal and Democratic Services; 12/02/2014

Executive head for Governance and Logistics; 13/02/2014

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