



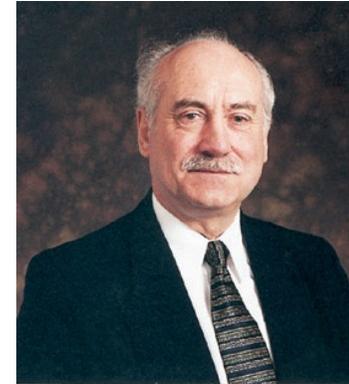
Scrutiny Annual Monitoring Report 2010-2011



Seventh Annual Monitoring report September 2011

Foreword

Former Chairman –
Graham Marsden



"The Scrutiny Committee has an important role to play in Council business by ensuring that policy decisions by the Cabinet and the functions of the Council are closely monitored. It is the eyes and ears of residents making sure that policy decisions are genuinely made on their behalf and for their benefit. In that respect the Committee may hold hearings and investigate any matters relating to the delivery of Council services.

A special meeting is always held to review the proposed Council Budget for the following Civic Year prior to its presentation to Cabinet. In addition it regularly receives reports on the performance of the Council against its target indicators. A recent annual addition to its responsibilities has been to scrutinise the work of those involved in Crime reduction across the town.

The Committee welcomes any comments on the work of the Council where you, as residents, believe that performance is less than might be accepted as reasonable. This could lead to the Committee setting up a review of that service in order to ensure improvement. All members of the Committee are keen to improve the process of checks and balances to Council decision making sure that it is always carried out in the best interest of the residents of Eastbourne."

About Overview and Scrutiny

Scrutiny is still a comparatively new function for local authorities. It has been introduced as part of the modernisation agenda for local government and the Local Government Act 2000 requires Council's to have at least one scrutiny committee.

What is Scrutiny?

There is no single definition of overview and scrutiny. It therefore should be viewed as an umbrella term covering a wide range of possible roles. However, the four key legislative roles are:

- holding the Executive to account
- policy development and review
- best value reviews
- External scrutiny.

This suggests an emphasis towards:

- acting as a watchdog for Executive decision-making
- checking on whether existing policies are effective and helping to shape new ones
- contributing towards the continuous improvement of Council services
- Reviewing or investigating matters of particular concern either within the Council or within the Community.

The scrutiny role also provides new opportunities for public involvement and debate. This can support elected members in taking a community-orientated approach and

brings new ideas and experience to scrutiny. Above all, the process needs to be firmly focussed both on matters of importance, and in making a difference, as this will be key to scrutiny reaching its potential and being of value to the Council and to local people.

The main role

The main role of Scrutiny is to help improve the council's performance through monitoring and review; to examine the Cabinet's decisions and challenge where necessary; and to help in the development and monitoring of the council's policies and strategies. The Committee can also look at the effectiveness of outside organisations and the council's external partnerships.

Scrutiny's approach is loosely based on the model of Select Committees at Westminster.

It is one of the most effective ways in which councillors who are not on Cabinet can independently challenge and influence those making decisions.

How does it work?

The Scrutiny Committee meets in public and members of the public are encouraged to take part and join in the discussion.

The Committee can invite Cabinet Members, Council officers and representatives of outside organisations to discuss how things are currently being done and how they can be improved.

Scrutiny Committee can also gather evidence in other ways, for example public consultation.

The Scrutiny Committee has a work programme that sets priorities for the coming year.

How do Scrutiny Task Groups operate?

Scrutiny task groups meet in an informal atmosphere. They invite those who they believe can help with their investigations to come along to a task group meeting to provide information or views about a particular issue – and usually working through a list of questions prepared in advance helps to do this.

What powers do Task Groups have?

Scrutiny task groups, like the main scrutiny committee, cannot automatically change earlier Cabinet decisions or alter the way services are provided. A task group's recommendations go to the Scrutiny Committee for consideration and possible amendment. They then go to the Cabinet and Council for evaluation.

Recommendations arising from reviews are monitored and reported back to the main committee at a later date.

How can I find out more?

Please contact;

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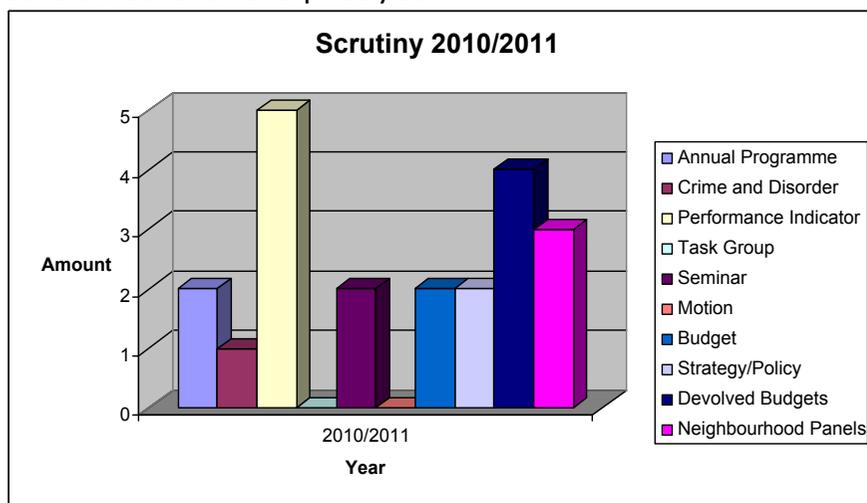
Website at www.eastbourne.gov.uk

Review of the Annual Programme 2010-2011

At its meeting on 4 July 2005, Scrutiny agreed that an Annual report would be produced detailing the work of the Committee, the reviews conducted, the outcomes of each review and the work programme for the forthcoming year. This is the sixth annual monitoring report.

Review of the 2010/11 Programme - Items considered.

The table below details the actual items Scrutiny have considered over the past year.



(These items have been grouped to enable easier analysis, for example there have been 2 items for Task Groups,

which covers the formulation of the Groups and includes the final reports). New items included are reports on Devolved Budgets, Neighbourhood Panels and the Crime Reduction Partnership. Best Value Review reports, Call-in, Audit and Information reports have been removed from this analysis as there were no reports during the year and are unlikely to be included in future year end reports.

Performance Indicator Reports

For 2010/11, the Council's Corporate Plan contained a combination of National and Local Performance Indicators alongside projects and actions in order to measure progress against the 4 revised key priority themes. These actions and indicators were monitored, managed and reported through the year using the Covalent performance management system. As well as quarterly reports being presented to Scrutiny, Members were given an overview of Covalent and access to the live system and monthly updates of developments via the Members Newsletter.

During 2010/11 the Government announced the abolition of the Nation Indicator Suite so future performance management will focus on actions, project plans and locally agreed indicators focused on delivering our key priorities.

Scrutiny Seminars

The committee receives presentations based on two Council priorities each year giving the members the opportunity to discuss and review progress. The presentations highlight the actions and activity including information on the National indicators listed for each area.

19 October 2010 – Annual Finance Seminar

The first of this year's seminars – The Annual Finance Seminar - was held on Tuesday 19 October 2010.

The seminar covered an update the final outturn for 2009/10, the Annual Governance Report by the external auditors, Reserves vs. Forecasts, and any points arising and lessons learned. In addition the seminar covered the emerging national picture, the main risks and opportunities for the Council, the Service and Financial Planning process for 2011/2014 – and what's emerging from level 1 plans, the Asset Management and capital strategy and finally; the HRA reform and the subsidy system.

Members discussed various aspects of the presentation and were particularly interested in the Council's reserves and future planning, repairs and maintenance of various Council buildings, how any overspends would be managed and changes to the benefits regime.

7 March 2011 – Prosperous Economy

The second of this year's seminars was held on Monday 7 March 2011 and was based on the Prosperous Economy theme.

The presentation highlighted the six projects contained with the Prosperous Economy theme and included;

- Providing and promoting a sustainable events programme that attracts visits and overnight stays
- Marketing Eastbourne to increase the number of short stay and business visitors
- Regeneration of the Town Centre – New Town Centre Master Plan
- Development of a Science Park in Sovereign Harbour
- Activating Eastbourne – cross sector partnership tackling unemployment and championing job creation
- Establishing a Loyalty Scheme for Eastbourne

Members discussed various aspects of the presentation and were particularly interested in the Overnight stays, Events programme, Improvements to rail links, Science Park and the development of a loyalty card.

Officers and the Cabinet Portfolio Holder were in attendance to answer member's questions for both seminars.

Following the presentation a background report and slides were circulated to those members who were unable to attend both seminars. For copies of these please contact Katie Armstrong, Scrutiny Co-ordinator 415023 or Katie.armstrong@eastbourne.gov.uk.

Monthly meetings

As part of the continuous development of the scrutiny function a monthly meeting was introduced for the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee giving members an opportunity to consider the Cabinet forward plan. In addition the Councillors can request updates from officers on various issues affecting the Council. During 2010-11 members considered the following:

May 2010

Petitions – Members discussed the new e-Petitions scheme.

Roadshow – members agreed the date for the Roadshow in the Arndale Centre as 24 September 2010.

Devolved Budget / Neighbourhood Panels – Wards would need to be nominated for the December/February and April meetings.

June 2010

Budget Outturn – Members discussed the Annual Accounts. A report was presented to Scrutiny on 5 July 2010 and Cabinet on 14 July 2010.

Executive Arrangements – A report was presented to Scrutiny on 5 July 2010 and Cabinet on 14 July 2010.

Managing Performance – A report was presented to Scrutiny on 5 July 2010 and Cabinet on 14 July 2010.

July 2010

Members received a live presentation of Covalent – all committee members were invited.

August 2010

Infrastructure Agile Working – The Deputy Chief Executive gave a brief overview of the project so far, costs, technology and hand back of 66/68 Grove Road.

Congress – Members discussed the issues that had arisen with the Congress Theatre and actions taken to resolve those issues.

Crime Reduction Partnership Annual Report – Members discussed the past years performance and future of the Crime reduction Partnership. A report was presented to Scrutiny on 6 September 2010 and Cabinet on 1 September 2010.

National Indicators – Members received an update on the current position.

October 2010

Inspection Update – Members received an update following the GOSE peer review. A report was presented to Cabinet on 20 October 2010.

PR Contract – Members were advised of the current PR contract and plans for future PR for the Council. A report was presented to Cabinet on 20 October 2010.

Finance Seminar - Members discussed the forthcoming seminar and the information the committee would like included.

Building Condition Survey Reports – members were advised on Condition Surveys reports carried out on both the Town Hall and Congress Theatre and timescales for essential repairs. A report was presented to Cabinet on 20 October 2010.

Councillors Roadshow – Members had some discussion about the development of a 'Councillors Roadshow' to include three wards per day over a three day event likely to be held in the Arndale Centre.

Report Template – Members were provided with a draft template for reporting Devolved Budget and Neighbourhood Panel items to committee.

November 2010

Corporate Plan – members discussed the Corporate Plan Refresh and Public Consultation Timetable. A report was presented to Scrutiny on 6 December 2010.

National Indicators – Members received an update on the current position.

Prosperous Economy - Members discussed the forthcoming seminar and the information the committee would like included.

January 2011

Smart Card – members were advised of the intention to develop a Loyal Card for Eastbourne. A report was presented to Cabinet on 23 March 2011.

National Indicators – Members received an update on the current position.

Managing Performance and Inspection Update – Members received an update following the GOSE peer review. A report was presented to Scrutiny on 7 February 2011.

Budget 2011/12 – Members discussed the Budget proposals for 2011/12. A report was presented to Scrutiny on 7 February 2011 and Cabinet on 9 February 2011.

April 2011

Asset Management – Members discussed the current Asset Management arrangements and plans for the future following a CIPFA review.

Finance – Members received a briefing note regarding the current budget variance and projected outturn.

Petitions – Members were advised of a current petition relating to kiosks along the seafront.

Further information on the items mentioned above reported to both Scrutiny and Cabinet can be found at; www.eastbourne.gov.uk/council/meetings/

Scrutiny Reviews 2010/11

During 2010/11 the Scrutiny committee did not conduct any scrutiny Reviews.

Full details for all the reviews and previous reviews conducted can be found on the Council's website; www.eastbourne.gov.uk

Scrutiny Road Show

For the second year running Councillors held a 'Road Show' in Eastbourne Arndale Centre. Held on 24 September 2010, various Councillors attended to give members of the public the opportunity to learn more about the scrutiny process.



New Developments for Scrutiny for 2011/12

A number of new ideas are currently being developed which will enhance the work of Scrutiny in Eastbourne. A report will be presented to the Committee in September 2011.

Conclusion

The aim of the report is to provide a factual review of the items that have been discussed during the monthly meetings and by the Committee over the past year, with particular attention to the reviews that have been conducted.

In addition, the report provides a means of monitoring the Scrutiny Committee's activity year on year.

