

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM: **8**

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

8 DECEMBER 2015

SCRUTINY AND THE VOLUNTARY & COMMUNITY SECTOR

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1 To present to the Board a framework for strengthening the links between Scrutiny and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in Middlesbrough.

BACKGROUND

2. As Members will recall on 13 October 2015 a paper entitled 'Scrutiny and the Voluntary Community Sector (VCS)' was presented to OSB by the Head of Democratic Services and the MVDA's Strategic Manager. The report put forward proposals to strengthen the links between Scrutiny and the VCS.
3. It was agreed by the Board that a framework document on how the new approach would be governed and co-ordinated would be presented to a future meeting of OSB for approval. It is important to note that the proposals contained in this report do not replace existing channels of communication between Scrutiny and the VCS. The purpose is to further strengthen the current arrangements.
4. In line with the Board's request a draft framework is detailed below which covers the three areas, as previously discussed by OSB:-

Bi-annual presentations – April and October

5. The Statutory Scrutiny Support Officer will formulate a programme of bi-annual VCS presentations with MVDA. The format of the presentation and organisations invited to attend the meeting will be agreed in advance with the

Chair of the Board. The bi-annual presentations will provide an opportunity for OSB to pro-actively engage with the VCS and develop a greater understanding of the contribution of faith groups and the voluntary and community sector in Middlesbrough.

Work programme suggestions - 2016/17

6. MVDA will co-ordinate on behalf of the VCS a list of pertinent issues that the sector wants to put forward for consideration by Scrutiny.
7. The information received from MVDA will be included in the annual work programme reports, which contain suggested topics from a wide range of sources including Members, the general public, staff and partners. Whilst MVDA has a co-ordinating role, it must not be seen as the only conduit / link into Scrutiny. Individual VCS organisations / staff can also submit work programme suggestions directly via the Council website.
8. It is important to highlight that although scrutiny welcomes all suggestions it cannot guarantee that all of the suggested topics will be reviewed. Individual panels will continue to determine and prioritise their respective work programmes using the Scrutiny Work Plan Prioritisation Aid. This focuses on the significance of the issue, how many people are affected, whether it will lead to effective outcomes and is it timely.
9. In addition to the above the Chair recognises that one-off topics might arise during the year, which the MVDA / VCS wish to put forward for consideration by the Board. In such cases a report will be submitted to OSB, with the Chair's approval, which contains a brief appraisal of the topic and reasons as to why it is considered significant in Middlesbrough.

Scrutiny Annual Work Programme – 2016/17

10. Following approval of the Scrutiny annual work programme by OSB a copy of the programme and provisional timetable will be forwarded to MVDA. The Statutory Scrutiny Support Officer will liaise directly with the MVDA's Strategic Manager to discuss potential VCS witnesses / evidence sources for approved review topics. MVDA's Strategic Manager will act as the key point of contact for the provision of relevant information from the VCS.
11. Individual Scrutiny Chairs will be briefed on the information received from the MVDA / VCS by the relevant Scrutiny Support Officer. When the MVDA / VCS provide information / evidence there will be an opportunity, with the Chair's approval, for the organisation to attend a Scrutiny meeting and present the relevant information. The evidence highlighted by the MVDA / VCS will be considered in the context of the panel's investigation.
12. In addition to the above the Chair is keen to emphasise that strengthening the links between Scrutiny and the VCS is a two way process. MVDA / VCS have agreed to invite Scrutiny to attend and be involved in work undertaken by the sector that might be of interest to Scrutiny.

RECOMMENDATION

13. It is recommended that:

- a) The Board discusses the framework as detailed above and gives a view on the proposals.
- b) That if the Board is in agreement with the proposals the new arrangements come into effect as of May 2016.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

14. Scrutiny and the Voluntary & Community Sector – Overview and Scrutiny Board, 13 October 2015

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