

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was held on Thursday 18 January 2024.

PRESENT: Councillors M Storey (Chair), I Blades, S Dean, J Ewan, M McClintock, J Platt, J Walker, J Young and D Coupe (Substitute for M Smiles)

OFFICERS: C Benjamin, S Bonner and A Wilson

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors J Kabuye, J Banks, E Clynch, J Ryles and M Smiles

23/51 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received at this point in the meeting.

23/52 **EXECUTIVE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chief Executive submitted a report which identified the forthcoming issues to be considered by the Executive, as outlined in Appendix A to the report. The report provided the Overview and Scrutiny Board with the opportunity to consider whether any item contained within the Executive Forward Work Programme should be considered by the Board or referred to a scrutiny panel.

NOTED

23/53 **BUDGET CONSULTATION - SCRUTINY FEEDBACK**

The Chair outlined the role Scrutiny had played in the budget consultation process and the steps that had been taken in preparation of the summary note circulated to OSB. Members were advised that individual scrutiny panels had met with their respective service areas to receive information about the budget proposals for those services.

The summary note presented to OSB was a summary of the discussions at each scrutiny panel.

OSB was advised that while pertinent questions had been raised during those meetings, only one alternative proposal was put forward. This was during OSB's meeting of 10 January 2024 regarding FIN08 and the reduction of Small Grants to community groups.

The Chair of the Regeneration Scrutiny Panel commented the majority of the Regeneration Department's budget was dependent on sources other than revenue spending. An example was TeesAmp which generated an income stream via rents. In the event TeesAmp was sold this would create a capital receipt, but the Regeneration Department would need to replace the loss of rental income following such as a sale. It was agreed this comment would be added to the final version of the note.

A Member raised a query relating to a budget proposal previously presented at OSB. The Chair advised the query was best sent to the Director of Finance directly.

AGREED that:

1. OSB approve with the contents of the summary note.
2. A formal response be sent to Executive.

23/54 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT WARD BOUNDARY REVIEW - PHASE TWO**

The Chair welcomed the Head of Legal Services (People) to the meeting and invited her to deliver her presentation.

Members were advised that phase one of the review had resulted in a proposal by the Boundary Commission that the overall number of Councillors remain at 46.

Phase two would be looking at Warding patterns, the deadline for submissions being 11 March 2024. Based on electorate projections the optimum ratio for Councillor to electorate was 2,112. OSB was advised there had been several public and Member briefings on this matter.

Members were reminded there were three statutory criteria associated with the review: electoral equity for voters, community identities and interests and effective and convenient local government. In terms of community identity, there were several important factors to consider including reflecting the nature of local communities and information about local amenities and who used them.

Members were advised that in 2013 during the last boundary review, OSB had met weekly to examine information gathered at workshops and other discussions with Members. During those workshops there had been input from officers in the Regeneration department. It was also noted that community consultation had been limited in 2013.

A discussion took place regarding OSB's involvement in phase two of the review and how information about local communities should be captured. It was proposed that workshops, like those organised in 2013, be facilitated by OSB. These would offer Members an opportunity to provide insight into their respective communities. It was commented that individual Members and political groups could submit their own proposals if they chose to, and that in the absence of a Council submission the Boundary Commission would create a proposal regardless.

Members commented on levels of registration on the electoral register and how some information was significantly out of date for some wards.

AGREED that:

1. A Council submission be made by the 11 March deadline, which would be facilitated by OSB.
2. Workshops be organised and facilitated by OSB to capture local, community-based information.
3. Workshops would be based on Northern and Southern Wards with two workshops for each being held.
4. The Southern Wards workshop would be scheduled first.
5. Regeneration Officers be present at the workshops where possible.
6. That OSB receive updates after the Workshops had been held.

23/55

ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS WHICH, IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, MAY BE CONSIDERED.

None.