Dear Sir/Madam,

OVERVIEW JOINT SCRUTINY COMMISSION
Monday, 22nd October 2012
Agenda Item 6, Chairs’ Reports
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I refer to the above agenda item, and now attach the relevant paperwork. Please bring this with you to the meeting.

Yours faithfully,

ALAN FRANKS
Managing Director

To: All Members of the Overview Joint Scrutiny Commission

Mrs. L. Price ) Members)
As part of the regular work of the Economic & Corporate OSP’s work it receives performance monitoring reports half yearly from the voluntary and community groups. This spring the Citizens Advise Bureau (CAB) took its turn out of sequence to report to the OSP as it had grave concerns regarding the changes being imposed by central government on funding. At a time when the calls on their services were being increased the level of funding was reducing. The Members were also concerned as to how the gap would be closed and requested that a seminar for the voluntary groups and members was arranged to discuss the issues in more detail.

The OSP monitored the Integrated Performance Report over the first half of the year and the Panel were advised that the risk register was being reviewed and a new regime maybe put in place.

Members had previously had concerns about the website however, a new website was launched in June 2012 and the Panel is getting an update on how it has been received by the public and what further improvements are still to be introduced.

At a recent meeting the Economic OSP received a report on the changes coming in April 2013 regarding Welfare Reform and in particular the changes in Housing Benefits and Universal Credits. There are, together with Council Tax changes, serious implications on the Council’s budget as a result of this and the Panel therefore requested that a Members Seminar be arranged so that all Members could be made aware of the possible impact.

As part of the Car Parking Strategy the OSP asked that a section on electric and other eco cars was given a separate heading in the document. The Members also raised some issues around parking enforcement and as a result asked for further information to be made available on numbers of tickets issued and identifying where they were issued. Complaints had been received again about cars driving through and parking in the pedestrianised area, also the timing of the bollards raising and falling. A joint working group will consider these issues.

Other matters discussed at the OSP have been Emergency Planning and in particular new arrangements that may affect effective communications between partner organisations, the Police & Crime Panels that will come into effect following the Police Commissioner elections and also a report on Warwickshire Race Equalities Partnership and the work that they are doing.

Cllr B Hawkes
Chair – Economic & Corporate OSP
Housing, Health & Communities OSP Chair’s Report

October 2012

The main areas of consideration for the Social Overview & Scrutiny Panel relate to Health, Housing and Community Safety and this year whilst the Panel has covered all these areas there has been a heavy emphasis on Health again including ongoing meetings with the County Council.

Health & Health Inequalities

Work with WCC to put in place working arrangements for joint scrutiny. As a result of new legislation around health and the changes to commissioning we have been attending meetings with the other Districts and County Council to find a way forward working in partnership to reduce duplication of effort and to tackle the health scrutiny role at all levels. The County have now put a second draft protocol on the table that looks much improved and the OSP will consider this at their next meeting for approval.

The Panel received consultation documents regarding Trust Status from George Eliot Hospital Trust at the end of the last municipal year. The Chief Executive of GEH again at the beginning of this year with further information and is due to return again at the end of the year to advise the Panel of their new partner organisation and how the arrangements will operate.

Also last year part it was suggested that there could be the relocation of paediatrics and maternity services from GEH to University Hospital in Coventry. The Panel made it very clear that they would not be happy for this to go ahead without full local consultation and I can report now, that those proposals received a further review which resulted in changes being made to retain the services at GEH.

The Health Inequalities Working Group has been reconvened to consider last years project, Motiv8, and to look at what is being done locally regarding “narrowing the gaps” and in particular how as a Council we can promote, prevent and provide a consistent approach corporately to reduce inequalities, in the Borough. A report is due to come back to the OSP at the end of the year.

Housing

The Members received the Empty Property Strategy for their consideration and issues were raised about the problems caused by absent landlords, empty property above shops and the possible introduction of “starter tenancies”.

There were other concerns relating to housing that Members have raised such as how the Council will deal with the issues of under/over occupancy and the expected budget effects of Housing Benefit changes as a result of the new legislation on Welfare Reform.
Community Safety

During the year the Social OSP has received the usual quarterly Community Safety Partnership reports, supported by Chief Inspector Reynolds. The Panel was concerned that there had been an increase in Acquisition Crime such as domestic burglary, theft from vehicles etc. Also whilst Violent Crime has reduced Serious Violent Crime has gone up, this would include issues to do with alcohol and the night time economy. This issues will be closely monitored and additional information has also been requested on Hate Crime and Metal Theft and this will be available for the next meeting of the OSP.

As Chair, I would like to take this opportunity of thanking the members, partners and witnesses who have attended during the year so far and also to show my appreciation to the members of the public who have come to the meetings.

Cllr S Doughty

Chair of Housing, Health & Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel
The Environment OSP received the usual quarterly integrated performance reports raising questions and making comments on a number of areas of concern together with the action plan and half yearly updates on the Environmental Sustainability Strategy. A new Environmental Sustainability Strategy is due for 2013-16 and the panel suggested the need to concentrate efforts into fewer priorities following a review of the strategy’s actions and themes. A new draft strategy will come to OSP in early 2013.

At the first meeting of the OSP the panel received a report from the Allotment Working Group with its recommendations for consideration. This review included a number of representatives from the Borough’s Allotment Associations which in turn had shared progress with their members. The OSP meeting was well attended by allottees and several spoke on the matters raised. The portfolio holder was also in attendance and welcomed the report. The panel looks forward to seeing their recommendations in the Allotment Strategy document early in 2013.

A briefing note on Emergency Planning - Flooding was presented to the OSP to advise Members of the current issues in relation to partnership working and the problems faced in regard to communications and when NBBC would be informed if an emergency occurred and whose responsibility it was to do that. The panel recommended that further clarification was sought from the partners on this.

An ongoing concern has again this year been the Borough Plan and the planning issues that having no plan in place, puts the Council in. The Borough Plan is taking some time due to the need to identify where growth is required. It is now anticipated that the draft Borough Plan options will be out later this year for consultation.

Members received information on the number of complaints received regarding dogs, fixed penalty notices issued for dog fouling, the number of strays and the number of dogs destroyed. As a result of this item a working group was set up to consider the use of Dog Control Orders in
the Borough. Currently there are no orders in place or bye-laws. The OSP look forward to receiving this report and recommendations at the end of the year.

The OSP are looking forward to a report from Waste Management reviewing the revised kerbside recycling and refuse collection service as this will have been in operation for a year. Similarly the panel will review the Glendale Contract to ensure that quality and standards are as expected.

Cllr D Navarro
Chair Planning & Environment OSP