

Organisation Improvement and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Commission



Annual Report 2007/2008

ORGANISATION IMPROVEMENT AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION.

This Overview and Scrutiny Commission deals with:

- Public Health/Health Improvement.
- Local Environment.
- Highways and Traffic.
- Local Economy.
- Managing the Council/Corporate Services.



Council Offices, Crescent Gardens

WORK PROGRAMME 2007/2008

During 2007/08 the Commission held nine meetings.

Highlights of the Commission's work includes:

- Scrutiny of North Yorkshire and York Primary Care Trust's financial recovery plan - representatives of the PCT presented an update to the Members regarding progress on the plan.
- Review of the Council's Planning Service – an in-depth review of the Planning processes.
- Scrutiny of North Yorkshire County Council's review of the Highways Agency Agreements.
- Scrutiny of Events Management/ Road Closure Procedure throughout the District involving North Yorkshire Police and Harrogate Borough Council.
- Consideration of the Council's Diversity Action Plan.

CALL-IN OF CABINET/CABINET MEMBER DECISION

In 2007/08 the Organisation Improvement and Environment Commission 'Called-In' one Cabinet Member Decision: *Harrogate Local Development Framework Site Allocations (Homes and Jobs) DPD: Preferred Options*. Members questioned the decision to exclude Southlands from the redevelopment framework.

Comment on 2007/08

In its second full year of operation the Organisation Improvement and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee has continued and expanded upon its work to ensure the effective scrutiny of matters relating to public health, local environment, highways and traffic, the local economy and management of the Council/Corporate Services.

The Commission has seen its first address from a member of the public and has also continued its work to scrutinise local public bodies, as well as the Council's own organisational structure and processes.

Commission Members 2007/08

Chairman:

Vice-Chairman:



Councillor Mrs Atkinson

Councillor Sid Hawke

Cllr Ian Galloway
Cllr Reg Marsh
Cllr Chris Lewis
Cllr Michael Newby
Cllr Peter Phillips

Cllr Clifford Trotter
Cllr Fred Willis
Cllr Richard Grange
Cllr Christine Willoughby

External Reviews

The Organisation Improvement and Environment Commission has carried out three external reviews in the last year involving the following organisations: North Yorkshire and York PCT, North Yorkshire Police (NYP) and North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC).

PCT – Financial Recovery Plan

Representatives of the PCT were invited to address the commission to outline the proposed recovery plan. Mr Lee Squire, Head of Corporate Communications addressed the Commission at their meeting on June 18th 2007 and gave an overview of the situation the PCT was in at this time, financially and recruitment wise. The Commission was updated on achievements made by the PCT up to that point and it was agreed that the Commission would be updated on a regular basis regarding its performance. The Commission followed this up with a second review on March 3rd 2008 when Mr John Brown, Director of Corporate Affairs and Mrs Debbie Newton, Assistant Director of Finance for the PCT updated the Commission on the recovery plan.

NYCC - Termination of Highways Agency Agreements.

The Commission's scrutiny of NYCC was especially significant as it involved the Co-option of officers from another Borough Council. At a special meeting of the Commission on December 17th 2007 members of the Commission, alongside co-opted members from Scarborough Borough Council met to conduct a joint scrutiny of the scrutiny process of North Yorkshire Borough Council in reviewing the Highways Agency Agreements. All members expressed serious concerns over the potential termination of the Highways Agency Agreement, the lack of consultation undertaken by NYCC and the scrutiny of the issue. A report on the issue was forwarded to NYCC.

NYP Events Management

The Commission's third work of external scrutiny this year involved the Cost of Staging Public Events in relation to Highways and Road Closure Issues. Superintendent Alison Higgins of North Yorkshire Police addressed the Commission at the meeting of April 7th 2008, outlining Police policy on community events. The Commission also received a written report from Head of Development Services regarding the issue. Representatives of local organisations also attended the meeting and posed questions.

Internal Reviews

The Commission has carried out one internal review; a detailed scrutiny of the Council's Planning Service, analysing the Planning processes and producing a report for improvement of the Service.

In-depth Policy Reviews

In 2007/08 the Organisation Improvement and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Commission produced two working groups to carry out in-depth policy reviews. The first was tasked with the review of Car Parking Policy within the District, the second with the review of redevelopment of the Harrogate International Centre.

THE YEAR AHEAD...

The Commission has yet to agree its formal work programme for the year 2008/2009 but items that have been identified for consideration are:

- ❖ Review of Recruitment and Retention Action Plan.
- ❖ Review of Operation of Council Meetings.
- ❖ Environment Strategy Review
- ❖ HIC Working Group Report.