

Briefing on the Corporate Governance Scrutiny Committee Partnership review 2007

Why scrutinise?

Partnership working is becoming ever more central to the provision of local services. The Partnership's activities must be accessible by the public, and accountable to them.

A primary duty of scrutiny members is to ensure the council (and its partners) achieve a real step change in delivery i.e. that tangible benefits materialise from the resources given over to partnership working.

What is involved?

The scrutiny councillors canvas a wide range of views and collect background evidence to help them assess the health of local partnership working. As well as bringing awareness of the Partnership's activities to a wider audience, they aim to identify what people think are the ingredients required for success and assess to what extent they are present in Oxfordshire.

All the evidence that is amassed will be examined and a report including recommendations will be sent to the Cabinet and the Oxfordshire Partnership Board. It will focus on what makes a positive difference for delivering a Sustainable Community Strategy with achievable Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets.

What are the objectives?

The task group have identified some core objectives from its principal aim of discovering how partnership working actually works and exploring the process, i.e. to:

- take stock of where we are now in terms of partnership development - a snapshot at this moment in time - and assess its strengths and weaknesses
- learn where partners would like to get to and what are the possibilities and challenges for moving forward
- find out what are the obstacles and threats to that vision
- establish who is involved and what their motivation for involvement is - testing commitment and engagement to see if there is real 'buy-in'
- determine if there is true collective ownership of targets or are they viewed as part of a centrally imposed government initiative
- comment on whether or not it is a 'partnership of equals'

- evaluate what impact the Partnership is having on what agencies do
- explore accountability for the LAA, with a view to informing any changes during 2007 for greater scrutiny involvement.

How is it done?

The primary evidence gathering took place at a special 'select committee style' meeting of Corporate Governance Scrutiny Committee on 27 March 2007. The meeting was led by the Chairman of the Committee and divided into a morning session, focusing on general strategic issues, and an afternoon session looking at two case studies in more detail.

The committee was keen to listen to a variety of perspectives on what makes a positive difference for delivering a Sustainable Community Strategy with achievable LAA targets and arranged for people from different sectors to come to talk to them. All views, alongside research into good practice elsewhere, will be used in writing a report to offer comment and recommendations to the council's Cabinet and the Partnership Board in June 2007.

The [Pathway/ timetable document \(.pdf format, 73 Kb\)](#) provides the detailed background to the project and timetable for production of the report.

Partnership scrutiny day

View the [agenda \(.pdf format, 18 Kb\)](#) for the Partnership scrutiny day.

The task group produced a useful [information sheet \(.pdf format, 155 Kb\)](#) for those attending the scrutiny day.

The [scrutiny committee's report \(.pdf format, 482Kb\)](#) is available here.