

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Internal Audit Report 2012/2013 Scrutiny Arrangements – Management Action Plan Update</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 24 November 2014
<b>WARD</b>	None Specific
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Andrew Moulton, Head of Governance and Improvement Services.

**OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

A more efficient and effective Overview and Scrutiny function.

**RECOMMENDATION**

- 1) That the Committee notes the update on the implementation of the Management Action Plan;
- 2) That the Committee determines whether any further update is required.

**SUMMARY OF REPORT**

The attached Management Action Plan Update sets out progress made to date in implementing the recommendations arising from the Internal Audit review of scrutiny arrangements in 2012/2013.

The Management Action Plan was considered at the 12 March 2014 meeting where an update was requested in November 2014.

## Background

Following receipt of a scrutiny review suggestion in 2012, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee commissioned Internal Audit to conduct a review of the Council's scrutiny arrangements.

## Analysis of Issues

Set out in the attached Management Action Plan.

Since the Plan was considered in March 2014 the Francis Report Working Group has published its report into the implications for Health Overview and Scrutiny and Overview and Scrutiny more generally from the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust Public Inquiry, (the Francis Report). The report was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 13 October 2014 and it was agreed that the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees should be asked to take the recommendations of the review into consideration as part of the operation of their Committees.

The recommendations and actions arising from the Internal Audit Review therefore should also be seen in the context of the recommendations from the Francis Review Working Group.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

***The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.***

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£0	Y	
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£0	Y	
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£0	Y	

<b>Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision</b>
N/A

<b>List of Background Papers</b>
None

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<b>Date</b> 11 November 2014	<b>Version No.</b> 1.00

## 5. Management Action Plan

No	Recommendation	Priority	Management Response	Action Owner & Implementation date	November 2014 Update
2.1	Officers and the Chair of the Scrutiny Management Committee should further promote and raise the profile of the Scrutiny function and encourage its oversight of the council's big issues (such as the vision, values, efficiency savings and building of schools), its policy development and review.	HIGH	<p>Agreed.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Profile of the Committee will be raised by quarterly attendance of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer and Democratic Services Manager at meetings of the Corporate Leadership Team. Chairman to continue to promote the Overview and Scrutiny function to councillors.</li> <li>2) Since May 2013 the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee has increased its oversight role in respect of all the Overview and Scrutiny Committees with the purpose of increasing the focus on the big issues.</li> <li>3) Scrutiny is currently undertaking a review of the Council's Meals on Wheels service through a Task and Finish Group as suggested by an Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing which links clearly to the Council's vision, values and</li> </ol>	<p>Chair of OSMC Delegated to: Kevin Jacob Statutory Scrutiny Officer</p> <p>Immediately</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Statutory Scrutiny Officer has attended meetings of the Corporate Leadership Team in March, July and August. Next attendance to be set prior to end of 2014.</li> <li>2) Work programmes of Overview and Scrutiny Committees discussed at all Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee meetings. Regular meetings of Chairman from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.</li> <li>3) The Meals on Wheels Task and Finish Group has completed its work. The Committee considered ideas for efficiencies at the October 2014 meeting and is progressing a number of these through the Overview and Scrutiny</li> </ol>

			<p>efficiency savings.</p> <p>4) The public profile of the scrutiny process is already being increased by the use of tools such a press releases and social media.</p>		<p>Committees, e.g. Income from electricity generation. This is evidence of looking at the big issues facing the authority.</p> <p>4) Press releases issued asking for scrutiny review suggestions and social media used to promote Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p>
2.2	<p>To aid effectiveness, engagement and ensure value added reviews, further work is needed to build the relationship between Scrutiny, CLT and ECLT. Consideration should be given to training officers reporting to Scrutiny. And CLT needs to be specific when making suggestions to Scrutiny about future reviews.</p>	<b>HIGH</b>	<p>Agreed – Response from NJ</p> <p>1) Quarterly attendance by the Statutory Scrutiny Officer and Democratic Services Manager at Corporate Leadership Team meetings will allow for discussion of scrutiny issues such as focus, scrutiny subjects etc and provide a forum for any concerns to be discussed and addressed.</p> <p>2) Consideration of training needs are a matter for Directors and managers. There are many courses available externally about Overview and Scrutiny. Subject to resources, a briefing will be given to a Managers Network meeting.</p>	<p>Statutory Scrutiny Officer and Andy Couldrick for CLT and ECLT Chief Executive</p> <p>Nov-Dec 2013</p>	<p>1) As set out in 2.1 above</p> <p>2) It is now considered that it would be more appropriate for the Statutory Scrutiny Officer to attend a meeting of the Extended Corporate Leadership Team, (ECLT). This to be arranged prior to the New Year.</p>

1.1	Anyone submitting papers to the Scrutiny Committees and Panels should recognise the importance of preparing these in time for Panel meetings so that Members can scrutinise the information being presented and use these to make informative decisions. If papers are repeatedly omitted, then CLT should investigate why this is occurring.	MEDIUM	Andy Couldrick down as Action owner, but suggested comment that attendance of Statutory Scrutiny Officer on a regular basis will assist mutual understanding and therefore reduce the likelihood of late papers. No incidences of this to date in 2013/2014 municipal year.	Andy Couldrick for CLT Chief Executive  Ongoing	Incidences of 'to follow' reports significantly less common than at the time of the original audit. However, the situation continues to be monitored and any concerns will be fed back by the Statutory Scrutiny Officer to Corporate Leadership Team if necessary. Ongoing work taking place to improve communication and understanding of report deadlines.
1.2	The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and the HOSC (where appropriate) should consider including a section in their annual reports and review topics which outlines how their work has helped the council hold the Executive to account and achieve its vision, values and priorities.	MEDIUM	Agreed.  Will be implemented for 2013/2014 Annual Report.	Chair of OSMC  March 2013	This was implemented as part of the 2013/2014 Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report.
1.3	The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee should regularly review data provided by the Local Authority Trading Companies and should continue to provide their input on the development	MEDIUM	Agreed.	Chair of OSMC  Immediately	The Committee has not considered any data from the Local Authority Trading Companies to date.  The balanced scorecard is being reviewed in autumn 2014 and the Committee is to receive an update on this at the January 2015

	of the balanced score card to ensure it is fit for purpose.				meeting and therefore will be able to input into the design.
1.4	<p>In order to perform their role effectively and 'hold the Executive to account', when reviewing KPIs the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee should scrutinise the information being presented to them. Some of the areas they could consider are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• who has agreed the KPIs</li> <li>• are they relevant and meaningful</li> <li>• what trends can be identified</li> <li>• has the status of KPIs changed from the previous reporting period to this reporting period</li> <li>• have explanations been provided for any changes, are these sufficient</li> <li>• has narrative been provided for all KPIs even if no changes have been made</li> </ul>	MEDIUM	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>KPI's now replaced by balanced scorecard.</p> <p>The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee has been involved in the development of the balanced score card and has made suggestions for possible improvements. It is happy that the balance score card is fit for purpose. In doing so it has looked at the areas suggested in the recommendation.</p>	<p>Chair of OSMC and Kevin Jacob Statutory Scrutiny Officer</p> <p>Immediately</p>	<p>At stated in 1.3 above, the balanced scorecard is currently being redesigned and the input of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee is to be sought.</p> <p>Since March 2014, the Committee has continued to ask follow up questions and pursue lines of enquiry based upon the data contained in the current balance scorecard report.</p>

1.5	CLT should consider informing Overview and Scrutiny promptly of all major council projects and policies.	MEDIUM	CLT maintains a list of major projects and programmes, and this can be made available to Overview & Scrutiny	Andy Couldrick for CLT Chief Executive  Ongoing	Included with the current Balanced Scorecard are the most significant projects which the Committee continues to monitor through its regular review of the scorecard. As part of the redesign of the Balanced Scorecard (see above) further consideration will be given as to how the full list of major projects can be incorporated.
1.6	More effective pre-scrutiny should be considered. Decisions in the forward programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee should be scheduled in a timely manner so that they are reviewed well in advance (to allow O&S to have any impact on decisions before they are made). Furthermore, the council should consider the benefits and support Scrutiny can provide if they were given access to review the budget and budget setting process.	MEDIUM	Improvements have been made to the Forward Plan. Attendance at CLT by Scrutiny officer will be used to prompt identification of suitable 'pre-scrutiny' items.	Andy Couldrick Chief Executive and Leader of the Council  Ongoing	Sufficient prior notification of forthcoming decisions on the Executive Forward Programme remains an issue.  Pre-decision scrutiny undertaken to date in 2014/2015 includes the scrutiny reviews of the Care Act and Amenity Vehicle Provision.  In October 2014, the Committee held a discussion with the Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources about ideas for future efficiencies and income generation. Whilst not full budget scrutiny this does demonstrate involvement in helping the Council to develop possible solutions to the financial challenges it faces.
2.3	There is a risk that duplication between the Working Groups and Task and Finish Groups will	MEDIUM	Agreed. Attendance on a quarterly basis at CLT meetings will involve the discussion of scrutiny and working	Kevin Jacob Statutory Scrutiny Officer	No duplications have come to light to date during the 2014/2015 municipal year. The regular meetings of Overview and Scrutiny

	occur. Scrutiny should be utilised to coordinate work which gives the council assurance without duplication and conflict.		group activity and therefore reduce the likelihood of duplication.	Ongoing	Chairman also allow an additional opportunity for duplications between Working Groups and Task and Finish Groups to come to light.
2.5	Scrutiny should review its strategy for engaging with the public. Consideration should be given to inviting citizen panels, external councils, expert advice, holding meetings in community centres or neighbourhoods and issuing press releases in an effort to increase their engagement with the public and improve their effectiveness.	MEDIUM	<p>Agreed subject to available resources.</p> <p>As per response in 2.1 greater use of press and social media is being used to promote public engagement. This will be extended from the Health Overview and Scrutiny to all Overview and Scrutiny Committee when it is appropriate to do so.</p>	<p>Head of Governance and Improvement Services</p> <p>Delegated to: Kevin Jacob Statutory Scrutiny Officer</p> <p>Immediately</p>	<p>Engagement with the public remains limited based upon existing resources and appropriate opportunities.</p> <p>A press release and social media was used to encourage members of the public to submit scrutiny review suggestions and three public suggestions were received.</p> <p>Social Media is used to promote Health Overview and Scrutiny meetings, but this is not yet embedded practice in the administration of the other overview and scrutiny committees.</p>
2.4	The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and Panels should consider including a section in its annual report concerning how they have effectively engaged with the public and whether there are plans to improve engagement in the future.	LOW	Agreed.	<p>Kevin Jacob Statutory Scrutiny Officer</p> <p>March 2014</p>	Section included within the 2013/2014 Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee Annual Report



- It is the responsibility of the audit sponsor to take the agreed actions forward.
- Internal Audit has ensured that all action owners have been informed.

Definitions of priorities can be found [here](#).