FOR PUBLICATION

SCRUTINY AND COMMUNITY ASSEMBLIES INVOLVEMENT

MEETING:	OVERVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY FORUM
DATE:	3 APRIL 2014
REPORT BY:	POLICY AND SCRUTINY OFFICER
WARD:	ALL
KEY DECISION REFERENCE (IF APPLICABLE):	N/A

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BACKGROUND PAPERS   N/A.
FOR PUBLIC REPORTS:

1.0   PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1   To report on the presentation of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny role to Community Assemblies.

1.2   To report the priorities raised by Community Assemblies for the Forum to consider their inclusion into our scrutiny work programmes.

2.0   RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1   To consider the priorities raised by Community Assemblies as at paragraph 4.2 and agree any for recommended inclusion into our scrutiny committee work programmes.

2.2   To consider how Community Assembly representatives might be further involved in any scrutiny work agreed.

3.0   BACKGROUND

3.1   The Overview and Scrutiny role was introduced as part of the democratic and political decision making process alongside the Executive role to ensure accountability and develop and review

policy. And the broader purpose of the overview and scrutiny responsibility is to be a voice for the community and to help represent community interests as an important part of that democratic decision making process.

3.2   Chesterfield's Overview and Scrutiny Committees (OSC) have always consulted with their stakeholders to inform OSC work programmes. However for the first time, to help engender greater and more direct community involvement in scrutiny and in influencing council decision making more generally, this year we were represented at Chesterfield's four Community Assemblies (South, East, North and West) during their March cycle of meetings.

3.3   The visits to Community Assemblies were undertaken by the Policy and Scrutiny Officer and OSC Chairs, Councillors Lang and Innes, and comprised the following two elements :-

3.3.1   A presentation to introduce, share knowledge and examples of the role, purpose and work of Chesterfield's OSCs.

3.3.2   The delivery of workshops with those in attendance at each Assembly meeting to facilitate some agreement of issues that they would like scrutiny to help them with.

4.0   <u>COMMUNITY ASSEMBLY WORKSHOPS RESULTS</u>

4.1   The workshops were organised around discussion and consideration of 'issues for change' - a list of issues that Community Assemblies had already agreed at their previous meetings about what they would like to see change in their areas. The lists for each of the four Assemblies are attached to this report for information, as Appendices 2, 3, 4 and 5. The workshop purpose was for Community Assemblies to consider their area's agreed list and prioritise the key issues they would like scrutiny committees to help with.

4.2   A summary note of the key issues raised by each Assembly is attached at Appendix 1. From that summary a list of the 6 key issues for change raised by Community Assemblies is identified below (paragraphs 4.2.1 to 4.2.6) :-

4.2.1   Involving, supporting, communicating with and building communities and community groups for all people young and old. (Raised by all four Assemblies).

4.2.2   Improving issues related to dog fouling. (Raised by all four Assemblies).

4.2.3   Improving issues related to litter and the general street scene. (Raised by 3 Assemblies – East, North and West).

4.2.4   Looking after and protecting your green spaces and grass verges. (Raised by 2 Assemblies – East and West)

4.2.5   Looking to improve issues related to parking and roads. (Raised by 2 Assemblies - East and West)

4.2.6   Looking to develop how public service agencies can work better together particularly around Community Safety. (Raised by 1 Assembly - North).

5.0   KEEPING COMMUNITY ASSEMBLIES INFORMED / INVOLVED

5.1   Consideration should be given to keeping Community Assemblies informed of the outcome of this consultation and relevant progress going forwards. Today's Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum's decision will be communicated to Assemblies at their June cycle of meetings.

5.2   If the Forum's decision is to include any of the Community Assembly priorities into scrutiny work programmes, some consideration could also be given to providing further opportunity to involve them / their appointed representative(s) with the scrutiny work going forwards.

For example this could be by appointing representatives from each Assembly to a Scrutiny Project Group as co-opted members; or to invite Assembly representatives along to meetings on a more ad-hoc basis to give evidence and share information to inform a scrutiny review.

6.0   RISK CONSIDERATIONS

6.1   There may be potential for disappointment if communities feel let down by undelivered promises with the associated risk to the reputation and integrity of the Council's scrutiny function and Council.   As part of the presentation to Community Assemblies, the message was clearly relayed that there is not enough capacity to look at all the issues raised – at least not at the same time.

7.0   FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

7.1   There are no financial implications arising from the contents of this report. All associated costs will be contained within existing budgets.

8.0   LEGAL CONSIDERATION

8.1   There are no legal implications arising from the contents of this report.

9.0   EQUALITIES CONSIDERATIONS

9.1   There are no direct equalities implications arising from the contents of this report. However it will be necessary to ensure that, as far as possible, Community Assemblies and their attendees are treated equally in terms of opportunity for involvement and influence.

10.0   RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1   To consider the priorities raised by Community Assemblies as in paragraph 4.2 and agree any for recommended inclusion into our scrutiny committee work programmes.

10.2   To consider how Community Assembly representatives might be further involved in any scrutiny work agreed.

10.0   REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1   To help further develop and fulfil the Council's Overview and Scrutiny community representational role.

10.2   To enable the Council to be more responsive to the community through improved community engagement and involvement.

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You can get more information about this report from
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