

APPENDIX B(3)

Scrutiny request

Issue - I would like JOSOC to consider supporting an external scrutiny review from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny. This organisation are national leaders in this field and offer a bespoke review to local authorities. It is carried out through a combination of council self-evaluation, carried out with the help of the CfGS scrutiny self-evaluation framework, CfGS expert review of documentation, evidence and assessment – interviews, surveys and member/officer input, a study of scrutiny's role and integration in the council, observation of meetings and through the joint development of a realistic action plan. I would contend that serious issues emerged during JOSOC in the last 12 months but whether or not people agree with this, such external scrutiny will simply help us to take advantage of the opportunity to ensure that scrutiny plays a vital, central role in the life of the authority and the wider community. In essence, to ensure that we are following best practice nationally. This will directly benefit the residents of Adur and Worthing as well as supporting the executives and officers in the vital work that they do.

Request from - Councillor Carl Walker - Worthing Borough Council

Public interest - Maximising the effectiveness of our scrutiny work will improve council decision making, policy making and the vital support work we do for our communities. It will ensure transparency, accountability and greater involvement of the public in our governance processes.

Score = High

Ability to change - Yes. It is common practice for local authorities to ask CfGS to carry out these external reviews.

Score = High

Performance - There is a clear rationale for engaging in best practice external scrutiny in and of itself. My own contention is that there have been failings in JOSOC in the last year but I have made these public on several occasions and won't labour that point further. However I'm happy to should the chairs feel that it is necessary.

Score = High

Extent - Scrutiny has a central role in the entire decision making and running of the council. This is a crucial issue.

Score = High

Replication - No, it is not being considered elsewhere.

Score = High

Expected Outcomes - Our Councils will hugely benefit from adopting best practice in scrutiny. JOSOC will improve and with it, accountability, transparency and decision making will improve across the entire Councils.

Does the proposed review link with the Council strategic objectives or does the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee have the ability to influence and/or add value on the subject?

'Platforms for our Places: Going Further 2020 - 2022' - Platform 5 Leadership of Place - 'Politics' and 'politics' Commitment 5.5 - Activity 5.5.1 - *Continue to enhance and strengthen the formal Political leadership of our places (in an uncertain national political environment). Continue to develop and build capacity in elected Members' roles, elections, relationships between officers and Members, JOSC, and ensuring party political disagreement leads to strong direction setting and doesn't hold up essential elements of the agenda.*

Score = High

How could this review be undertaken? Independent review.

Recommendations from Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairmen/Vice-Chairmen:-

That the request be refused on the basis that a review during the pandemic is premature and there is an element of duplication with a review previously undertaken by JOSC in 2019.

It is estimated that a review of this kind would cost the Councils at least £3,000, JOSC does not have a budget for this and it is considered that there are more urgent issues currently requiring attention. There may also be consequences for other Committees from a review.

The Chairmen and Vice Chairmen are, however, aware of the need to continually improve the skills of JOSC Members and to help in this, training is ongoing and there will be a questioning skills training session held on 26 July.