

PERFORMANCE AND FINANCE SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE**23 JULY 2007**

Chairman: * Councillor Mark Versallion

Councillors: * Ms Nana Asante * Christopher Noyce
 * Robert Benson * Phillip O'Dell (1)
 * Mrs Janet Cowan (2) * Mrs Rekha Shah
 * B E Gate * Stanley Sheinwald (6)
 * Barry Macleod-Cullinane * Jeremy Zeid (3)

* Denotes Member present
 (1), (2), (3) and (6) Denote category of Reserve Member

1. **Appointment of Chairman:**

RESOLVED: To note the appointment at the Special Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting on 12 July 2007 of Councillor Mark Versallion as Chairman of the Sub-Committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2007/2008.

2. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

RESOLVED: To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Members:-

Ordinary Member

Councillor Don Billson
 Councillor Manji Kara
 Councillor Ashok Kulkarni
 Councillor Mitzi Green

Reserve Member

Councillor Mrs Janet Cowan
 Councillor Jeremy Zeid
 Councillor Stanley Sheinwald
 Councillor Phillip O'Dell

3. **Declarations of Interest:**

RESOLVED: To note that there were no declarations of interest made by Members in relation to the business transacted at this meeting.

4. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

RESOLVED: That all items be considered with the press and public present.

5. **Appointment of Vice-Chairman:**

RESOLVED: To appoint Councillor B E Gate as Vice-Chairman of the Sub-Committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2007/2008.

6. **Terms of Reference of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee:**

Following a discussion on the merits of including both paragraphs 1 and 2 in the Sub-Committee's Terms of Reference, it was

RESOLVED: That the Terms of Reference of the Sub-Committee be noted.

7. **Public Questions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were put at the meeting under the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 8.

8. **Petitions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions were received at the meeting under the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 9.

9. **Deputations:**

RESOLVED: To note that no deputations were received at the meeting under the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 10.

10. **References from Council and Other Committees/Panels:**

RESOLVED: To note that no reports were received.

11. **Principles of Performance Management:**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Director of People, Performance and Policy, which set out the principles of good performance management, details of which had been extracted from reports and publications made available by the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA).

The Scrutiny officer explained that the report identified training needs for Members and further suggestions would be welcomed.

The Chairman set out the role of the Sub-Committee, and stated that the bulk of training would be delivered by an in-house team. Members commented as follows:

- they should be consulted on dates and times for the training to ensure full participation;
- training sessions should be made available on the intranet and that a 'library' containing material relating to the training would be helpful;
- information should be clear and easy to understand. It was noted that whilst some jargon was unavoidable, a glossary would be provided to Members;
- specific training ought to be provided on scorecards by the Performance team.

A Member queried if project management and the methodologies used should be part of the training. The scrutiny officer stated that certain methodologies used were complex and that he would look into and would report back on this matter. He also undertook to investigate the provision of general glossary on the website.

RESOLVED: That (1) a glossary for, and the content of, the training session be made available to Members prior to the training session(s) to allow Members to familiarise themselves with the information;

(2) training sessions lasting a maximum of 2 hours be held in September 2007 between 6.00 – 8.00 pm and, if necessary, on Saturdays/Sundays.

12. **Protocol for Operation of Performance and Finance Sub-Committee:**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Director of People, Performance and Policy, which sought approval of the protocol for operation of the Sub-Committee. The scrutiny officer informed the Sub-Committee that it would be receiving information from a variety of sources, as outlined in the report, and that the protocol would be particularly helpful in planning agendas. He stated that monthly briefings would be held with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman and an 'action' sheet would be produced and distributed to Members of the Sub-Committee, for information.

In response to questions, the officer stated that in order to ensure that the processes were transparent, briefings would be open to the public and the usual channels of publicising the briefings would be used. A Chairman's report sheet would be submitted to the Sub-Committee. The Chairman additionally informed the Sub-Committee that Members could raise issues at briefings rather than waiting until the meetings of the Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the protocol endorsed.

13. **New Approach to Business Planning and Performance Management in Harrow Council:**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Director of People, Performance and Policy, which set out the principles of the new integrated business planning and performance management network. Members were asked to note and comment on the new framework.

The Chairman informed the Sub-Committee that the author of the report was unable to attend the meeting and suggested that Members send any queries initially to the scrutiny officer. The report would be re-submitted to the next meeting for discussion.

Members praised the report and stated that it was a useful information document. A minor amendment in respect of the number of flagship improvement projects was reported.

RESOLVED: That the report be considered at the next meeting of the Sub-Committee.

14. **Review of First Year of Partnership with Accord MP:**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Director of People, Performance and Policy, which set out a proposal for a review of the first year of partnership with Accord MP in the delivery of public realm infrastructure services. Members were asked to agree to undertake the review and to identify Members of the review group.

The Chairman suggested that a draft scope be developed to guide the review group and give it focus. He proposed that the review group meet twice and carry out desktop research. Thereafter, the review group would form 3 sub-groups each looking at different aspects of the contract with Accord MP. The review group should identify the lessons learnt, which would help move the contract forward. The group should not make too many recommendations. A 'light touch' review was envisaged. He called for volunteers to participate in the review group and stated that an invitation would be sent to all non-Executive Members and key stakeholders. The review group would initially report on progress to the October 2007 meeting of the Sub-Committee and the final report would be submitted to its January 2008 meeting with a view to submitting the recommendations to Cabinet.

Members discussed the remit of the review and the types of documents that they would want to examine as part of the review. Some Members suggested that the parameters of the review ought to be broader to allow it to make comparisons with experiences of other bidders for the contract and Local Authorities.

The Chairman stated that it was important not to dilute the scope of the review, which should focus on the Council's expectations from the contract. He requested that Members forward their requests for documents, including background information, to the scrutiny officer who would keep the Chairman informed about their receipt.

In response, the scrutiny officer advised that the review group might wish to consider focussing on the stages leading up to the contract and performance issues.

Following further discussion on the scope of the review, it was

RESOLVED: That (1) a review of the Council's partnership for public realm infrastructure services be undertaken;

(2) Councillors Robert Benson, Janet Cowan, B E Gate, Barry Macleod-Cullinane, Mark Versallion and Jeremy Zeid be identified as members of the review group and that other Members also be invited to participate;

(3) the scope be agreed virtually, and the outline scope and project plan for the review be submitted to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

15. **Dates of Future Meetings:**

An officer informed the Sub-Committee that the dates for future meetings of the Sub-Committee had not yet been finalised.

RESOLVED: That the dates be circulated to Members electronically in due course.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.33 pm, closed at 9.34 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR MARK VERSALLION
Chairman