

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (SPECIAL) MINUTES

1 FEBRUARY 2017

Chair: * Councillor Jerry Miles

Councillors:

* Ghazanfar Ali	* Jo Dooley
* Richard Almond	* Susan Hall (4)
* Mrs Chika Amadi	* Barry Macleod-Cullinane (3)
* Jeff Anderson	* Paul Osborn

Voting Co-opted: (Voluntary Aided) (Parent Governors)

Mrs J Rammelt
Reverend P Reece

Non-voting Co-opted: * Harrow Youth Parliament Representative (Dara Foody)

* Denotes Member present
(3) and (4) Denote category of Reserve Members

191. Attendance by Reserve Members

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

Ordinary Member

Councillor Chris Mote
Councillor Ameet Jogia

Reserve Member

Councillor Susan Hall
Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

192. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

Agenda Item 3 – Homelessness Scrutiny Review Challenge Panel

Councillor Jo Dooley declared a non-pecuniary interest in that she was a resident of Vaughan Road, the location of a development site mentioned in the Cabinet response to the review. She would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Councillor Paul Osborn declared a non-pecuniary interest in that he was a resident of Vaughan Road, the location of a development site mentioned in the Cabinet response to the review. He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Agenda Item 3 – LGA Peer Review

Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane declared a non-pecuniary interest in that he was an accredited peer reviewer for the Local Government Association. He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Agenda Item 4 – Regeneration Programme Financing – Scrutiny Review

Councillor Chika Amadi declared a non-pecuniary interest in that she worked in Wealdstone Town Centre, an area proposed for regeneration projects. She would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

193. References from Council/Cabinet

Homelessness Scrutiny Review - Cabinet Response

The Chair of the Scrutiny Challenge Panel for the review of homelessness, introduced the report, pointing out that the Cabinet had, in effect, accepted the recommendations of the review while also adding a couple more action points.

The Vice-Chair of the Scrutiny Challenge Panel, referred to the “shipping container” units to be used for housing purposes and argued that officers should ensure that Opposition councillors were kept informed of such developments; in this instance, these councillors were not made aware of this initiative until after the Cabinet meeting even though it was relevant to the scrutiny review.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

LGA Peer Review – Reference from Cabinet

The Chair referred to discussions with members of the Committee about the Peer Review which had taken place at the Scrutiny Leadership Group meeting earlier in the week. He and the Vice Chair of the Committee were now due to meet with representatives of the Centre for Public Scrutiny the following day to consider ways of addressing the issues raised in the review about the relationship between Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny.

Two Members contrasted the tendency for senior officers, including the Chief Executive and Corporate Directors, to attend Cabinet meetings as a matter of course with different practices in the case of meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee; indeed, at this special meeting itself, dealing with two references from Cabinet and a draft scope for a scrutiny review, there were no officers present to answer questions. It was suggested this revealed a failure of the Cabinet and the Administration to engage properly with scrutiny work even when good work was being done to recommend improvements to Council policies and services. Councillor Almond added that, in the context of addressing the relevant recommendations of the LGA Peer Review, it would be helpful to see a draft action plan.

A Member registered her disagreement with the views expressed about officer attendance, saying that it was not necessary for senior staff to attend every Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, but rather that this should depend on the items on the agenda.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

194. Regeneration Programme Financing - Scope for the Scrutiny Review

The Chair of the Scrutiny Review Challenge Panel, commended the draft scope to the Committee and outlined the intended approach; this would go beyond desktop research to include visits to other authorities which could assist the Council's understanding of the issues involved and points of best practice. He was pleased to see the large number of councillors who had expressed an interest in the review and he would be happy for others to be involved as well. He expected the review to conclude by the summer recess.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the draft scope for the review, as set out in the Appendix to the report, be approved;
- (2) the political groups be requested to notify officers of the membership of the review;
- (3) Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane be confirmed as the Chair of the Review Panel; and
- (4) the timing of the review and associated reporting arrangements be agreed as proposed in the report.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.02 pm, closed at 7.21 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR JERRY MILES
Chair