

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES

22 FEBRUARY 2011

Chairman: * Councillor Jerry Miles

Councillors:

* Nana Asante (1)	* Paul Osborn
* Kam Chana	* Bill Phillips
* Ann Gate	* Sachin Shah
* Barry Macleod-Cullinane	* Stephen Wright

Voting (Voluntary Aided) (Parent Governors)

Co-opted:

† Mrs J Rammelt	(Vacant)
Reverend P Reece	

* Denotes Member present
(1) Denotes category of Reserve Member
† Denotes apologies received

95. Attendance by Reserve Members

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

Ordinary Member

Councillor Sue Anderson

Reserve Member

Councillor Nana Asante

96. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

Agenda Item 9 – Better Deal for Residents Standing Scrutiny Review – Quarterly Update

Councillor Paul Osborn declared an interest in that he had previously been the Portfolio Holder responsible for the Capita contract, and he had received hospitality from Capita. He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Agenda Item 11 – Scrutiny Lead Members Report

Councillors Nana Asante, Kam Chana, Sachin Shah and Stephen Wright declared interests in that they were Neighbourhood Champions. They would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Councillors Barry Macleod-Cullinane and Paul Osborn declared interests in that they had voted for the Neighbourhood Champion scheme as part of the previous administration. They would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

97. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2011 be taken as read and signed as a correct record, subject to the amendment of the third paragraph of Minute 84 to read “A Member suggested that the question and answer sessions be recorded, and this was agreed”.

98. Public Questions, Petitions and Deputations

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were put, or petitions or deputations received at this meeting under the provisions of Committee Procedure Rules 17, 15 and 16 (Part 4B of the Constitution) respectively.

RESOLVED ITEMS

99. Local Performance Management Framework - Review Report

The Committee considered a report which set out the findings of Phase 1 of a scrutiny review to examine the council’s use of performance information.

In this first phase of the review, the Review Group had focused on getting an overview of the performance information that was being captured and reported, identifying quick wins in terms of indicators which were no longer required, and looking at what, if anything, the Council should develop to replace the place survey. Some of the findings of the first phase were highlighted, as follows:

- there should be a reduction in the focus on specific indicators simply because they were nationally required; for those national indicators (NIs) that were not a local priority the Council should simply report them to the government and do nothing further;

- in-year indicators should be developed in preference to annual indicators where possible in order that remedial action could be taken earlier;
- the Council should focus on areas where it was empowered to act, not those for which other agencies were responsible;
- some indicators needed to be reviewed to determine whether actual performance was reflected in resident perception. The Review Group would be looking at NI 195 (street cleanliness) in Phase 2 as an example of this;
- there was a lack of indicators relating to Licensing and some should be developed;
- the indicator relating to sickness absence was labour-intensive to calculate quarterly. It should be reported annually and in-year monitoring carried out more frequently using SAP instead;
- the place survey was too burdensome and too infrequent. However, the only way to measure the success of the corporate priority to be a listening Council was by asking residents. A replacement, such as a reputation tracker, should therefore be developed.

A Member commented that the issue of resident perception was also emerging from another scrutiny review; at a review group meeting the previous evening, residents' perception had been that the Council did not provide enough information. It was noted that phase 2 of this review would look further at how the Council could improve its performance management, including issues such as the involvement of Ward Councillors and the fact that residents' access to performance information was not well served by the Council's scorecards. For some of the indicators, there were ways of capturing information which were more useful and which used data the Council already had. There was also a need to ensure that indicators were linked to corporate priorities, and that there was flexibility in the indicator set.

The Review Group was thanked for its work, and it was

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report of the review group be approved;
- (2) the report be referred to Cabinet.

100. Better Deal for Residents Standing Scrutiny Review - Quarterly Update

Members received a report of the Divisional Director of Partnership Development and Performance, which provided an update on the work undertaken by the Standing Scrutiny Review of the Better Deal for Residents programme.

At the meeting, the Committee received a further oral update. The Review Group had now met 4 times, and at its most recent meeting had heard from officers about the Council's project management process, and specifically the project management process used for the Capita projects. Members had differing views on the extent to which this process had been effective and robust, but all were concerned that the Capita project represented only one fifth of all the projects being carried out across the Council, and that there appeared to be many different project management styles and methodologies being used for projects within the Directorates, leading to variable performance. In addition, there was concern that projects were insufficiently focused on the benefits for and impact on residents. It was anticipated that the Review Group would be able to report its initial findings fairly soon.

RESOLVED: That the work of the Standing Review be noted and approved.

101. Report of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee Chair

The Committee considered a report of the Chair of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee, which summarised the issues to be taken forward by the Sub-Committee following its meeting on 18 January 2011.

It was noted that the Sub-Committee had requested to receive financial monitoring information on a monthly rather than quarterly basis so that any issues arising could be investigated quickly, but it had yet to receive anything despite this being chased up by a scrutiny officer. The Chairman undertook to follow this up.

A Member requested that the formatting of these reports be reviewed and that future reports set out more clearly what actions had been agreed, and by whom and by when they were to be undertaken.

RESOLVED: That the report of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee Chair be noted.

102. Scrutiny Lead Members Report

The Committee received a report of the Divisional Director for Partnership Development and Performance, which set out the reports from the Scrutiny Lead Members.

Members commented on some of the detailed issues set out in the report. It was noted that the Council would be receiving funding of around £2.6 million when it assumed responsibility for public health, and it was suggested that there should be monitoring of how this money was used. A Lead Member stated that this would be spent on new projects. With regard to the Neighbourhood Champions scheme, Members felt that Ward Councillors should be provided with the contact details for Neighbourhood Champions in their Ward, subject to the champions being happy for their details to be divulged, and that this should be investigated.

A Member requested that the formatting of the Scrutiny Lead Members' reports be reviewed so that future reports listed the dates of the Scrutiny Lead Members' meetings at the beginning, and clearly set out the issues arising. There was concern that the report did not identify any issues for the Committee to follow up. It was suggested that the report should link in more directly to the work programme, with Members suggesting possible areas for review.

RESOLVED: That the reports from the Scrutiny Lead Members be noted and the actions proposed therein be agreed.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.21 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR JERRY MILES
Chairman