

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Committee

18th June 2008

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Phil Mould (Chair), Councillor David Smith (Vice-Chair) and Councillors K Banks, M Chalk, D Taylor and D Thomas

Officers:

S Hanley and A Heighway

Committee Officer:

J Bayley and H Saunders

13. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Hartnett and Norton.

14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest or of any party whip.

15. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

Subject to the addition to the record of Councillor Banks' apologies, the minutes for the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday the 28th May be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

16. ACTIONS LIST

Officers provided an update on the latest edition of the Committee's Action List.

.....
Chair

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Committee

18th June 2008

Officers explained that Action 6 on the Actions List related to a scoping document for a proposed scrutiny exercise to investigate the Council's presentation of information relating to the Council's corporate priorities, which had been submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the previous year. Members agreed that this item should be removed from the Committee's Work Programme and Actions List. Instead, Members agreed to reconsider whether there was a need for such a review following consideration of the quarterly performance and budgetary reports by the Committee.

Members were informed that, as requested at the previous meeting, the possibility of visiting Westminster to observe proceedings during a Select Committee meeting had been investigated. The Chair advised Members that, owing to limited Councillor availability and the summer recess of Parliament, this visit was to be postponed until the autumn.

RESOLVED that

the Actions List be noted.

17. CALL-IN AND PRE-SCRUTINY

This standard item on the Committee's agenda had been expanded to ensure that Members had an appropriate opportunity to consider options for pre-scrutiny of Executive committee items.

Officers informed Members that the performance update on the business centres, discussed at the previous meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, was due to be reported to the Executive Committee on Wednesday the 29th October 2008. Therefore, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be considering the potential need for scrutiny of the business centres in November 2008.

There were no call-ins and no proposed items for pre-scrutiny.

18. TASK & FINISH REVIEWS – THIRD SECTOR DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENT

Officers explained that, as agreed at the previous meeting of the Committee, a meeting had taken place with Councillor Thomas to consider the scoping document for the exercise. During this meeting Councillor Thomas had requested that the review's terms of reference be simplified. This work had subsequently been undertaken by Officers.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Committee

18th June 2008

Councillor Thomas informed Members that the Third Sector review would focus on strategic funding relations between the Council and third sector organisations. The focus of the review would be distinct from the work of the Council's Grants Panel, which considered, approved and monitored bespoke funding arrangements for individual third sector organisations on a case-by-case basis. Councillor Thomas explained that the Third Sector review would focus specifically on the Council's overarching arrangements for awarding grants and donations to third sector organisations.

The membership for the Third Sector Task and Finish Group was discussed. Members agreed that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee would appoint Members to the Group, and to all subsequent scrutiny groups launched during the year. Councillor Thomas was appointed to Chair the exercise and Councillor Pearce was approved as a member. Members agreed that three further Members would be appointed to the Group.

Officers explained that Members would need to remain mindful of the potential for conflicts of interest when undertaking this exercise. Members were informed that this would not apply if the review retained an overarching scope but that conflicts of interest could arise for certain Members if the review focused on any particular third sector organisations, or on factors which affected their own more or less than other organisations.

RESOLVED that

- 1) a further objective, "to investigate the sustainability of Council funding for third sector organisations in the future" be added to the terms of reference for the exercise;**
- 2) the Third Sector Task and Finish review have a deadline of December 2008; and**
- 3) the terms of reference for the Third Sector Task and Finish review be approved, as now amended.**

19. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MEMBER TRAINING

Officers explained that this item had been included on the agenda to provide Members with an opportunity to reflect on the outcomes of the "Introduction to Scrutiny" training provided on Thursday the 5th June 2008. Members were informed that in particular the potential for external scrutiny work had been identified during the training as an area that could be further developed at the Council.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Committee

18th June 2008

Members discussed the recent suspension of the 57/58 First Bus route in the town and the impact on people visiting the Alexandra Hospital. Members noted that this might be a suitable subject for external scrutiny and that it might be useful to invite representatives of First Bus to attend a meeting of the Committee to explain their actions further. Members agreed to discuss the suitability of this subject for scrutiny during the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Planning Afternoon on Friday the 20th June.

Members questioned why it was not possible for people to apply for a bus pass using the Council's website. Officers undertook to provide further information about this subject for Members' consideration.

20. REFERRALS

There were no referrals.

21. WORK PROGRAMME

Officers explained that the Council was no longer obliged to publish the Council's Corporate Performance Plan. The Service Plans, which formed part of the planning stages for the Corporate Performance Plan, would therefore not need to be prepared for Member consideration during the year. Consequently, Members were informed that the Service Plans, scheduled to be considered by the Committee on Wednesday the 10th October 2008, were unlikely to be made available.

RESOLVED that

Subject to this report the Work Programme be noted.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 7.45 pm