

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 13 JULY 2007**

Present: Councillors P Connolly (Chairman); K Hitchen; Mrs W Metherell; M McVeigh; R Salkeld; P Whalley.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs YRT Clarkson and Mrs E Eastwood

Also Present Councillor N Williams (Items1 – 8)

Officers: J Salt, Head of Customer Services; H Mitchell, Head of Policy and Performance; N White, Scrutiny Support Officer; L Taylor, Member Services Technical Support Officer.

#### **MGT 08/07 Executive Decisions**

The Committee considered the decisions from the Executive meeting on 10 July 2007.

**RESOLVED** – that the decisions from the Executive meeting on 12 June 2007 be noted.

#### **MGT09/07 Customer Service Commitments**

The Committee received a report from the Head of Customer Services outlining the results of a Customer Commitments Survey commissioned by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Performance and Resources in November 2006. Summaries of the survey and the mystery shopping report were appended to the report. The survey and mystery shopping exercise measured the Council's performance against the Council's Customer Service Commitments.

Members were informed that the results of the survey showed that the Commitments are important to the Council's customers and therefore should be retained.

The Committee considered options to improve the Council's performance against the targets set out within the Council's customer services commitments. The options included communication to all employees to remind them of the Commitments and the development of an IT system which would automatically record correspondence received and issue reminders when responses were due. It was hoped that this would improve the process for correspondence received by e-mail and letter.

The Committee considered that a survey should be undertaken every six months to ensure that the Council's performance against the Customer Service Commitments was being regularly measured.

The Committee further considered that the survey results did not indicate any geographical distribution and requested the officers to ensure that in future surveys also show the results by postcode area.

**RECOMMENDED** - that

- a) the results of the Commitments Survey are published accordingly,
- b) the options to improve customer services detailed in the conclusion to the report be introduced across the Council,
- c) a survey be undertaken every six months to measure the council's performance against the Customer Services Commitments and the Executive be asked to find ways to fund these,
- d) Further reports be submitted to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee as solutions detailed in the conclusion are being developed, and
- e) in future the results of surveys undertaken by the Council are also shown by postcode.

**MGT 10/07 Compliments Monitoring**

Members received and noted summaries of compliments, comments and complaints for October 2006 – March 2007.

The Committee noted that in 2006/07 there had been 106 complaints investigated through the Council's Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure which was a significant reduction on the 173 recorded in 2005/06.

The Committee further noted that these figures do not include anonymous complaints, complaints about Councillors, complaints about a Policy and initial requests for a service. Neither did they include complaints dealt with by the department which they have not subsequently reported to the Customer Relations Officer for monitoring and recording purposes.

**RESOLVED** - that

- a) the report be received, and

- b) all Managers be encouraged/reminded to record and feedback details of complaints received by the Customer Relations Officer for monitoring and reporting purposes.

**MGT 11/07 Forward Plan**

The Committee considered the Forward Plan of the Council's Key Decisions from July to October 2007

The Committee noted that it was anticipated that a report would be submitted to the August meeting of the Executive on the Council's budget process for the 08/09 budget setting.

The Committee requested that following the Executive report, a report detailing the achievements and performance of the South Whitehaven Neighbourhood Management Board be brought to the Economic Development and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED – that a report detailing the achievements and performance of the South Whitehaven Neighbourhood Management Board be brought to the Economic Development and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**MGT 12/07 Work Plan**

The Committee considered the work plans of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

The Committee were advised that The Cumbria Strategic Partnership/Local Area Agreement Implementation Plan was due shortly and it was hoped that this would be brought to the next meeting of the Committee.

The Committee agreed that as the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees followed the terms of reference of the thematic groups of the Local Area Agreement it would be appropriate for the Council's representatives on these groups to be the respective Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Members were informed that a West Cumbria Strategic Partnership Workshop would take place on 23 July and that all Chairs and vice chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should attend if possible

It was noted that the results of the Employee Attitude Survey were now available and that the findings which would feed into the Restructure Review that could be restarted in November.

The Committee noted that the IT Sub Group had recently met and agreed that it would like an additional member from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to be on the sub group. The Committee agreed that this should be Councillor Mrs W Metherell and that Councillor D Wilson should replace Councillor A Bradshaw on the sub group.

The Committee further noted that the Planning Appeals task and finish Group was now short of one member and agreed that Councillor P Connolly should replace Councillor A Bradshaw on the group.

The Committee, in considering the work plan for the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, noted that the item on Bransty Ward refuse collection issues had been put on the work plan by the local member who had now left the council and as such should now be removed from that work plan.

**RESOLVED** - that

- a) Councillors Mrs W Metherell and Councillor D Wilson join IT Sub Group;
- b) Councillor P Connolly replace A Bradshaw on the Planning Appeals Sub Group,
- c) the Council's representatives on the thematic groups of the Local Area Agreement be the respective Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and
- d) Bransty Ward on long standing refuse collection issues item be withdrawn from the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Plan.

#### **MGT 12/07 Urgent Actions – Scoping**

The Committee noted that The Overview and Scrutiny Performance and Resources Committee at its meeting on 15 March 2006 had agreed that a review of urgent actions in the past year be undertaken (OSC-PR115).

The Committee agreed that the Management Committee itself should undertake this review at its next meeting on 10 August 2007.

Consideration was given to a scoping report on the review of the Council's Urgent Action Process. The report included the Council's current procedures for Urgent Actions, the procedures of other authorities and

urgent actions taken in 2006/07. The Committee agreed that the terms of reference for the review should be to:

- 1) ensure that the process used is prompt, transparent and accountable and is understood by Members and Officers alike; and
- 2) ensure that the process is running correctly and achieves its aims.

**RESOLVED** – that

- a) a review of the council's Urgent Actions Procedure be taken at the meeting on 10 August 2007; and
- b) that the terms of reference for the review be to:
  - 1) ensure that the process used is prompt, transparent and accountable and is understood by Members and Officers alike; and
  - 2) ensure that the process is running correctly and achieves its aims.

The Meeting Closed at 12:05pm

Signed:.....

Date:.....