

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 JULY 2008

Present: Councillors P Connolly, Chairman; R Pitt, Deputy Chairman; Mrs Y R T Clarkson; Mrs E Eastwood; J Kane; Mrs W Metherell; P Whalley and C Whiteside

Officers: L Murphy, Chief Executive; M Jepson, Head of Legal and Democratic Services; J Salt, Head of Customer Services; N White, Scrutiny Support Officer and C Willoughby, Members Services Technical Support Officer.

Also Present: Councillor N Williams.

Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2008 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

MGT 09/08 Arrangement of Agenda

With the permission of the Chairman, it was
AGREED to accept an extra item under Part II on Border Television.

MGT 10/08 Modern Councillor

Members received a presentation from the Member Services Technical support Officer and Scrutiny Officer on the Modern Councillor Website (an on-line training tool for Members).

Following the presentation, Members discussed the merits of offering the presentation to the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

AGREED – that the Modern Councillor presentation be made to the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

MGT 11/08 Compliments, Comments and Complaints

Members considered the report on the number of complaints for the second half of 2007/08 and for the whole of 2007/08.

The Committee noted that 43 complaints have been received in the second half of the year and 121 for the whole year which was an increase from the 106 recorded in 2006/7.

It was queried whether the three stages to the complaints procedure were applicable for Homelessness complaints as the council had not set a Homelessness standard.

AGREED – that

- a) the report be noted,
- b) Managers be encouraged / reminded to record and feedback details of complaints and compliments received to the Customer Relations Officer for monitoring and reporting purposes, and
- c) The Housing Improvement Plan be checked to ensure that a Homelessness standard will be set.

MGT 12/08 Compliments, Comments and Complaints

Members considered the report on the first quarter of 2008/09 and were advised that this was the first quarterly report, the previous being half yearly. The Committee were further advised that the figures shown in Appendix B to the report excluded complaints received resulting from the wheelie bin prosecution, which had been recorded separately.

AGREED – that

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

MGT 13/08 Commitments Survey

The Committee received the results of the Customer Commitments Survey exercise completed in April 2008.

During discussion of this item Members were advised that face to face contact had reduced from 36% last year to 18% this year and that overall, Customer Service was improving.

It was also noted that funding for this survey was made available from the Customer First budget and a request was made for a similar amount to fund the next survey.

AGREED – that

- a) the report be received,
- b) funding from the Customer First budget for regular surveys be supported, and
- c) the results be publicised and made available to all Members.

MGT 14/08 Protocol on Relations Between Overview and Scrutiny and the Executive

The Committee considered the protocol on relations between Overview and Scrutiny and the Executive.

During discussion of this item, the protocol was welcomed and it was suggested that one change was required to state that the Portfolio Holder was to attend Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings when invited.

AGREED – that

- a) the Protocol on Relations between Overview and Scrutiny and the Executive be amended to state that the Portfolio Holder attend OSC meetings when invited, and
- b) the updated Protocol be put forward to the next Executive meeting and subsequently put to Full Council at the September meeting for adoption as part of the Council's Constitution.

MGT 15/08 Forward Plan

Members considered the key decisions to be taken by the Executive from July to October 2008.

AGREED – that the Forward Plan be accepted.

MGT 16/08 Work Plan

The Committee considered the Work Plans of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees, were advised that the Work Plans had been updated following the first round of meetings and would be further amended to include National Indicators.

AGREED - that the Work Plan be noted.

MGT 17/08 Executive Decisions

Members considered the decisions made by the Executive at its meeting on 15 July 2008.

During consideration of this item, Members questioned the funding allocated for the replacement Cremators at Distington Crematorium and sought confirmation that the 2007/2008 budget had included this.

With regard to the Copeland Community Initiative Fund, Members requested clarification on how the Community Fund could be used and expressed concern on the make up of the Board, there being only two Copeland Borough Council members of the total of seven.

With regard to the Interim Resource Measures, members expressed concerns and a recommendation to Call-In this item was made and seconded.

AGREED - that

- a) the decisions made by the Executive at its meeting on the 15 July 2008 be considered and noted,
- b) confirmation be sought that the 2007/2008 budget included an allocation of funding for the replacement cremators, and
- c) the Interim Resource Measures be Called –In and the Call –In scoping be arranged for Thursday 24 July 2008 at 10:00am.

MGT 18/08 Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED - That pursuant to Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, as amended, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds of likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

MGT 19/08 Executive Decisions

With regard to the Closure of Accounts 2006-2008, Members received an overview from the Chief Executive and the proposed way forward to close the accounts.

During discussion of this item, Members requested that the Audit Committee and Overview and Scrutiny look at reviewing the finance process to prevent the current situation from recurring.

With regard to Whitehaven Rugby League Club, Members discussed the recommendation for the Council to underwrite a further overdraft facility to the Club. Councillor Connolly declared a personal interest in this item due to being a member of the Whitehaven Rugby League club.

AGREED - that

- a) the decisions made by the Executive at its meeting on the 15 July 2008 be considered and noted, and
- b) the Audit Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committee be asked to review the finance process.

MGT 20/08 Time Limit on Meetings

During consideration of Agenda items, the time limit on meetings was reached. In accordance with Standing Order 13.1.a, it was moved, duly seconded and;

AGREED - to continue in the normal manner and complete the business remaining on the agenda.

MGT 21/08 ITV Border News

Members received an update on the future proposals for ITV Border News.

AGREED – that support be given to the process and progress made to date regarding ITV Border News

The meeting closed at 1.07pm

Chairman.....

Date.....