

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (INTERNAL)

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 MARCH 2011

Present: Councillors Mrs Y Clarkson (Chairman); Mrs J Williams, J Kane; A Mossop; R Salkeld and J Park

Also in attendance: Councillors G Clements (Portfolio Holder for Housing and Customer Services) and C Whiteside, Susan Dungworth and Glen Sanderson

Apologies for absence: Councillors Mrs M Docherty, B Dixon and Mrs A Faichney

Officers: J Hall (Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer), J Wagstaffe (Corporate Director Transformation and Resources), L Priebe (Housing Services Manager – Item 8) and J Hughes (Regeneration Strategy Manager-Item 8)

OSC1 31/10 Chairman's Opening Remarks

The Chairman began the meeting by welcoming Members and Member Peers, Susan Dungworth and Glen Sanderson.

OSC1 32/10 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 2 February 2011 were agreed as a true record.

OSC1 33/10 Executive Forward Plan

Members considered the Forward Plan. Cllr Whiteside referred to the Albion Square CPO and the Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer was requested to liaise with relevant officers. The Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer referred to the Workforce Strategy and advised this was being placed on the next Work Programme for monitoring.

RESOLVED – That the Forward Plan is noted.

OSC1 34/10 Update Report from the Chairs and Deputy Chairs

Members noted the report.

RESOLVED – That the Update Report from the Chairs and Deputy Chairs is noted.

OSC1 35/10 Copeland Housing Strategy

The Chair thanked Councillor Clements for attending.

Members queried a number of areas including why the strategy had been delayed and whether the Portfolio Holder was satisfied that the strategy addressed recommendations made by the Audit Commission in 2008 and 2010. Members were informed the strategy would address all of the recommendations.

Discussion followed on financial implications the authority was facing, affordable housing and rent, empty homes, private sector renewal and improving existing stock, the New Homes Bonus and housing provision for young people and the travelling community in the Borough. There was also discussion on what support was available for families facing financial hardship. Members also queried how the strategy linked up to the LDF.

Detailed discussion also took place on the housing implications of nuclear new build.

Members sought details on what consultation had taken place and assurances that consultation had been taken account of. They were advised consultation had taken place with partners and stakeholders as well as a public consultation carried out via the Housing Needs Assessment which had provided an evidence base for the strategy and results at locality level were available.

The OSC also raised the Decent Home Standard and the extension Home Housing had been given to meet this. The committee was advised Home was on track to meet this by 2013 and it would be monitored.

The OSC sought information on when an action plan accompanying the strategy would be available. Members were advised a detailed action plan would be in place by June. They were also informed that an Equality Impact Assessment was imminent.

OSC requested that the Portfolio Holder return with the Housing Strategy and accompanying action plan for review when it was available. It was agreed that this would happen in July 2011 and the OSC would monitor progress so far.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the current draft of the Copeland Housing Strategy 2011-14 at February 2011 is noted;
- b) That the Portfolio Holder for Housing returns to the OSC in July to report on the Copeland Housing Strategy, the accompanying action plan and progress made.

At this point (3.55pm) the committee took a short break and reconvened at 4.00pm.

OSC 36/10 Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2010-2011

The Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer introduced the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for information. She advised that this was the final draft and it would be presented to Council by both OSC Chairs on Tuesday 22 March 2011.

Members queried the way attendance had been reported. The Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer advised that the Constitution required OSC Member attendance to be reported in the Annual Report and it was noted that this did not take account of apologies and when non-attendance had been unavoidable.

RESOLVED – That the report is noted.

OSC1 37/10 Work Programme

Members considered the Work Programme. It was agreed all of the 'complete' items could now be removed. The Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer was requested to ensure that the Copeland Housing Strategy 2011-2014 and its action plan were carried over and scheduled into the committee's next Work Programme.

It was further agreed that the Review of Kerbside Recycling (recommendations of the final Safer and Stronger OSC Task and Finish Group report on improving participation in kerbside recycling) be removed as performance had improved in this area since the recommendations were made.

RESOLVED – That the Work Programme is noted and updated.

OSC1 38/10 Work Programme 2011-2012

The Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer presented a report to Members which outlined the process for developing the next annual work programme for 2011-2012. She also drew the attention of Members to the attached Work Programme Prioritisation Protocol.

Topic suggestions were sought from Members for the new Work Programmes. Councillor Kane requested that a review of the Council's Debt Policy be placed in the pool of suggestions for assessment.

RESOLVED – That the process for development of the 2011-12 Work Programme is agreed.

The Chair recorded her thanks to her Deputy Chair Councillor Kane and to all Members for their contribution to the committee over its first year. The meeting closed at 4.15pm

Chairman

Date