

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 JANUARY 2010 AT 2:00PM

Present: Councillors Mrs Y Clarkson; Mrs M Docherty;
Mrs E Eastwood; G Garrity; J Kane; Mrs W Metherell and P Whalley.

Officers: A Johnson, Interim Scrutiny Consultant; M Jepson, Head of
Legal and Democratic Services and C Willoughby, Member Services
Technical Support Officer.

Also Present: Councillors R Pitt and N Williams.

Apologies for absence: Councillors B. Dixon and K Hitchen

MGT 61/09 Appointment of Chairman

In the absence of the Chairman (Councillor Dixon) and the Deputy
Chairman (Councillor Hitchen), it was moved, duly seconded and
AGREED that Councillor Garrity be appointed Chairman for this
meeting.

MGT 62/09 Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meetings held on
21 December 2009 and 14 January 2010 be signed as a correct
record.

MGT 63/09 Compliments, Comments and Complaints

Members were provided with details of Compliments, Comments and
Complaints by the Customer Relations Officer, for the period July 2009
to September 2009. This showed a total of 23 complaints were
investigated through the Council's Comments, Compliments and
Complaints procedure, compared to 24 in the second quarter of
2008/09.

Members were also advised that 12 Compliments were also recorded in
the same period.

The Committee was advised that a system to monitor Freedom of
Information requests was currently being developed and would be
added to Covalent.

RESOLVED - that the Compliments, Comments and Complaints report
be noted, and that members consider for the future the best use of the
data presented to ensure continual improvement.

Gender Equality Scheme

Members noted that this item had also been considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Safer Stronger Communities Committee on 7th January 2010, to which Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Children, Young People & Healthy Communities Committee had also been invited.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced the draft Gender Equality Scheme to the Committee and advised that this was part of the normal 3 yearly review.

The revised scheme proposed a number of actions including:

- Consulting stakeholders and taking into account feedback
- Gathering and using information (workforce and community profiling) in reviewing policies and practices
- Ensuring Crime and Disorder Strategies focus on combating domestic violence
- Providing information to ensure that victims of domestic violence can find appropriate help
- Revising and reviewing Equality Impact Assessments and implementing actions in Equality Impact Assessment action plans
- Reporting on progress annually and reviewing the scheme triennially.

During the discussion that followed, Members expressed concern that there was no domestic violence refuge in Copeland and that when victims were moved, there was a knock on effect to the education of any children involved.

The Council's Housing team are to be asked to provide this Committee with current refuge arrangements for women and children in Copeland. Those members who also sit on Outside Bodies were asked to ensure this subject is given a high priority at meetings they attend, in particular those who attend the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership meetings.

There was an undertaking that Members comments would be taken into account before the Gender Equality Scheme was submitted to Full Council, however, it was also noted this was a working document and could be reviewed at any time.

RESOLVED - that the Gender Equality Scheme be updated following Members comments and submitted to Full Council.

MGT 65/09

Work Plan

Consideration was given to the Work Plan of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

During discussion of this item, a Special Meeting of this committee was requested to consider the draft Corporate Improvement Plan and the Budget for 2010-2011.

A discussion regarding Strengthening Local Democracy was also requested to be made an agenda item for the next meeting of this Committee.

Consideration was given to a request to scrutinise the County Council's Winter Maintenance Programme for the Borough of Copeland.

It was believed that the County Council's Local Area Committee would already be doing this and therefore copies of their findings may be sufficient. However, depending on its outcome, Members should keep this in mind for a potential scrutiny review in the next municipal year .

Members generally felt the County Council's staff had performed well in difficult weather conditions and congratulated them.

It was felt that any specific concerns in the Copeland area should be passed to the Portfolio Holder.

It was noted that the Housing issues report was due out, but had been delayed until March. The report would then be presented to the Strategic Housing Panel. This Committee felt that it should maintain a 'watching brief'.

RESOLVED - that

- a) the Work Plan be amended/updated as agreed,
- b) a Special Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee be arranged for 4 February at 10:00am and
- c) 'Strengthening Local Democracy' be made an agenda item for the next meeting of this Committee.

MGT 66/09

Progress Report on the Scrutiny Review

It was advised that following the initial meeting for Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee Members held on 14 December 2009, two workshops had now also been held on 11 January 2010 and 20 January 2010 for all non-Executive Members to discuss the future role of Overview and Scrutiny at Copeland.

At the last workshop it was agreed that the Chairman and Deputy Chairman would meet with the Interim Scrutiny Consultant to prepare a progress report for the Executive meeting on 10 February 2010. Any further comments were to be given to them as soon as possible

RESOLVED - that the progress report on the Scrutiny Review be noted.

MGT 67/09 **Executive Decisions**

Consideration was given to the reports considered in public by the Executive at its meeting on 18 January 2010.

RESOLVED - that the decisions made by the Executive at its meeting on 18 January 2010 be noted.

MGT 68/09 **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 item 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.

Consideration was given to the exempt reports considered by the Executive at its meeting on 18 January 2010.

RESOLVED – that the decisions made by the Executive in private at its meeting on 18 January 2010 be noted.

The meeting closed at 4:30 pm

Chairman.....

Date.....