

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1 SEPTEMBER 2009

Present: Councillors B. Dixon, Chairman; Mrs Y Clarkson; Mrs E Eastwood; G Garrity; K Hitchen: Mrs W Metherell

Officers: M Jepson, Head of Legal and Democratic Services; N White, Scrutiny Support Officer; D James Member Services Officer

Apologies for absence: Councillor Mrs M Docherty; J Kane; P Whalley

Also in attendance Councillors H Branney; J Williams; J Bowman; N Clarkson; D Moore; D Wilson; C Watson; P Watson; N Williams

J Betteridge, Head of Development Strategy; H Mitchell, Head of Policy and Performance; C Coombs, Acting Head of Leisure and Environmental Services

MGT 22/09 Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 August 2009 be signed as a correct record.

MGT 23/09 Arrangement of Agenda

It was noted that following the questioning of the witnesses members would need sufficient time to collate the information gained into a further report with recommendations for submission to Council on the 8 September it was therefore

RESOLVED – that following the questioning of the witnesses and consideration of Agenda items 8 & 9 the meeting would stand adjourn to be reconvened

MGT 24/09 Choosing to Change

Following a request of the Chairman that the Committee consider the present status of the Choosing to Change initiative.

The Leader of the Council, the Leader of the Opposition Group and Acting Corporate Director, Quality of Life were invited to attend the meeting in order to respond to a series of questions which would be used as evidence to enable to Committee to make recommendations to Council at it's meeting on the 8 September 2009. It was noted that following each session Members of the Public would be given the chance also to ask questions.

During questioning of the Acting Corporate Director Quality of life it was noted that the Leader of the Council was due to be questioned and was due to attend another meeting it was therefore

AGREED – that the questioning of Mr Parker be adjourned and he be asked to rejoin the meeting for the afternoon session following the questioning of Councillor D Moore.

Following questioning of the Leader of the Council it was

AGREED – that the meeting be adjourned for a 30 minutes lunch break at 1.20pm

Reconvened meeting 1.50pm

Present: Councillors B. Dixon, Chairman; Mrs Y Clarkson; Mrs E Eastwood; G Garrity; K Hitchen; Mrs W Metherell and

Officers: M Jepson, Head of Legal and Democratic Services; N White, Scrutiny Support Officer; D James Member Services Officer

The Leader of the Opposition Group was asked his series of questions and upon completion of this Mr Parker was asked to retake his seat for the remainder of his questions.

It was **AGREED** – that a) the evidence received be noted and collated; and

b) a further report be submitted to the meeting being reconvened on the 2 September 2009 with the findings recommendations for submission to Council on the 8 September 2009.

MGT 25/09 **Time Limit on Meetings**

During questioning of the Acting Corporate Director, Quality of Life it was noted that the time limit on meetings had been reached, and in accordance with Standing Order 13.1.a, it was moved, duly seconded and;

RESOLVED to continue in the normal manner and complete the business remaining on the agenda, as determined in Minute MGT 23/09 above

MGT 26/09 **Work Plan**

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

RESOLVED - that the Work Plan be noted.

MGT 27/09 Executive Decisions

Consideration was given to the decisions made by the Executive at its meeting on 25 August 2009.

RESOLVED - that the decisions made by the Executive at its meeting on 25 August 2009 be noted.

The meeting adjourned at 4.20 pm

Reconvened Meeting 2 September 2009 4.00pm

Present: Councillors B. Dixon, Chairman; Mrs Y Clarkson; G Garrity; K Hitchen; Mrs W Metherell

Officers: M Jepson, Head of Legal and Democratic Services; N White, Scrutiny Support Officer; D James Member Services Officer

Also present: Councillor N Clarkson, J Bowman and H Mitchell

A further apology was received from Councillor Mrs E Eastwood

MGT 28/09 Choosing to Change

Further Minute MGT 24/09 the meeting reconvened and consideration was given to a revised report detailing the findings of evidence given and making a series of recommendations to be submitted to Council for approval.

Members felt that as choosing to change was such an important issue it should have been put to a wider audience other than restricting it to the Executive and Corporate team concern was also expressed that several opportunities had been missed to inform other Members of the Council. It was agreed that more should be done to ensure cross party working and the Council's Constitution should be revised to take this into account.

It was noted that the evidence did not clarify as to whether the choosing to change document had been leaked to the press and felt that if there had been a leak an investigation should be carried out.

RESOLVED - That on the basis of the evidence before the Committee Council be recommended to approve/note:-

a) that in future any council meeting should have a clear purpose attached to it that linked to a stated outcome(s);

b) that any future away day that covers such wide ranging and important issues should include a wider audience than just the Executive and the Corporate Team;

c) that bearing in mind the importance of the proposals reached at the away day and the need to get all 51 Councillors to buy into this principle felt it would have been appropriate for full council to have a chance to debate the principle of the proposals as its next meeting following the decision reached at the away day;

d) the Committees disappointment that there have been three full council meetings since that away day and that opportunity (MGT 28/09 (c) refers)has not been taken up;

e) that the details of the draft bid were confusing and contrary to the verbal evidence that was given and agree that the status of the documentary evidence be clarified;

f) that the discrepancy regarding the possibility of a leak be clarified and if a leak had occurred then an investigation should be undertaken;

g) the Committees concern at the impact of the Article in the Whitehaven News and it's further concern at how this happened and agree that there needs to be work done by the council to improve how it communicates to its own Councillors, as well as the community at large. This should include the local media and the external agencies be asked to propose ways in which the council can achieve this; and

h) that work needs to be done to ensure that the governance of the council is cross party and a re-examination of the Council's Standing Orders and Constitution be undertaken to ensure that this happens. This work should commence by the end of September 2009 and implemented by the end of December 2009

Chairman.....

Date.....