

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on 5 March 2009 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 11.50 am.

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Lawrie Stratford - in the chair

Councillor Alan Armitage
Councillor Lynda Atkins
Councillor Norman Bolster
Councillor Liz Brighthouse
Councillor Nick Carter
Councillor Timothy Hallchurch MBE
Councillor Bob Johnston
Councillor Peter Skolar
Councillor David Wilmshurst

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor C.H. Shouler (for Agenda Item 8)

Officers:

Whole of meeting: G. Malcolm (Corporate Core)

Part of meeting:

Agenda Item	Officer Attending
5	Dr I. Alvi, Corporate Core
6	S. Capaldi, Corporate Core
7	N. Kirkwood, Corporate Core

The Scrutiny Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting and agreed as set out below. Copies of the agenda and reports are attached to the signed Minutes.

6/09 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

Apologies for absence and temporary appointments were received as follows:

Apology from	Temporary Appointments
Councillor Lynda Atkins	-
Councillor Peter Skolar	-

7/09 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item 8, Annex 8:

Councillor Johnston declared a personal interest by virtue of share ownership in two of the counterparties;

Councillor Brighthouse declared a personal interest by virtue of share ownership in one of the counterparties.

8/09 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15 January 2009 were approved and signed.

Minute 51/08(c) - Better Offices Programme (BOP)

The Chairman reported that following consultation with Councillor Colin Lamont, Chairman of the Environment & Economy (E&E) Scrutiny Committee and the Head of Property there was a consensus that it was appropriate for this Scrutiny Committee, who already had the topic in its Work Programme, to take the lead on BOP and invite member/s of the E&E Scrutiny Committee through its Chairman as and when appropriate.

9/09 PARTNERSHIPS

(Agenda Item 5)

On 18 December 2008 the Committee asked the Partnerships Working Group to consider the report to Cabinet on behalf of the Committee and to make any observations or comments to the Cabinet.

The lead members of the Group (Councillors Brighthouse, Bryden, Carter, Stratford and Wilmshurst) gave an update on the current position. The report on the Review of Partnership Governance Arrangements had been rescheduled for Cabinet consideration on 17 March 2009. Councillors Wilmshurst and Brighthouse reported that the lead members were due to meet on 9 March 2009 with the aim of signing off the review work on this topic so far and considering scrutiny of the Community Strategy after the County Council elections in June 2009.

10/09 RESTRUCTURE OF COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING

(Agenda Item 6)

The Committee had identified this topic for scrutiny on 18 December 2008.

The Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy) circulated an overview of the background and current progress on the Communications Review and responded to questions and comments.

The Committee thanked Mr Capaldi and **AGREED** to invite the new Head of Communications, Marketing & Public Affairs to a future meeting in order to outline his/her approach and key priorities.

11/09 PUBLICATIONS

(Agenda Item 7)

The lead members (Councillors Armitage, Atkins, Carter and Hallchurch) with the Head of Communications attended for this item.

The Head of Communications had submitted an initial report to the lead members on the provenance and cost of the publications which she had been asked to investigate as part of the proposed publications Review.

The lead members felt that this initial work had achieved their objectives and proposed that no further work be pursued at this stage in view of the wider restructure of Communications & Marketing (see Minute 10/09 above).

The Committee considered that after the June 2009 County Council elections scrutiny should not lose sight of this issue.

It was **AGREED** to commend the Committee at its next scheduled meeting (23 July 2009) to:

- maintain this topic in its Work Programme as a high priority;
- and
- consider a briefing by the lead members on the position and conclusions which they had reached.

12/09 FINANCIAL MONITORING

(Agenda Item 8)

The Committee had included in its Work Programme provision for the Cabinet Member for Finance to report on a quarterly basis any trends or concerns which the Cabinet have identified in relation to the Quarterly Financial Monitoring reports

The Committee considered the commentary by the Cabinet Member for Finance (CG8). Councillor Shouler presented his commentary and responded to questions.

The Committee **AGREED** to:

- (a) receive the commentary and thank Councillor Shouler, Ms. Baxter and the Finance Team for their helpful reports to the Committee; and
- (b) note with pleasure that the Council had retained its overall assessment score of 3 and in particular that the 'Use of Resources' score had improved from 3 to 4 and congratulated members, officers and all concerned with this outcome.

Forward Plan

13/09 TOPICS FOR FUTURE SCRUTINY

(Agenda Item 9)

The Committee considered if there were any items from the current Forward Plan on which it might wish to have an opportunity to offer advice to the Cabinet before any decision was taken. There were no items in the current Forward Plan on which the Committee wished to offer advice to the Cabinet.

Other topics suggested for future scrutiny work included those raised at Agenda items 5, 6 & 7 above and follow-up to the Committee's 'Customer Focus' scrutiny review outcomes.

14/09 OVERVIEW OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEES' WORK PROGRAMMES

(Agenda Item 10)

This item had been included in order to enable members to reflect on scrutiny committees' review work.

The Committee reflected on its scrutiny work (see Minutes for detail) and noted that a schedule of completed and ongoing scrutiny reviews would be appended to the Annual Scrutiny Report 2008/09.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

As this was the last scheduled meeting of this Scrutiny Committee before the County Council elections in June 2009 the Chairman thanked members and officers for their work and contributions to the Committee and the scrutiny process.

I hereby certify that the above minutes of the meeting of the

have been sent to all those members recorded as having been present at the meeting, and have been accepted by those members as a true record of the proceedings of the meeting.

Assistant Chief Executive & Solicitor to the Council

Date:

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