SCRUTINY PROGRAMME BOARD

Wednesday, 30 May 2012

Present: Councillor   A Hodson (Chair)

                Councillors   W Smith   P Glasman
                                S Kelly   J Stapleton
                                C Blakeley   S Whittingham
                                A Sykes   KJ Williams

1   **MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/PARTY WHIP**

Members were asked to consider whether they had personal or prejudicial interests in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state what they were.

Members were reminded that they should also declare, pursuant to paragraph 18 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, whether they were subject to a party whip in connection with any item(s) to be considered and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of the whipping arrangement.

No such declarations were made.

2   **MINUTES**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2012 be approved.

3   **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR**

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management requested the Committee to consider whether it wished to appoint a Vice-Chair.

Resolved – That Councillor Adam Sykes be appointed Vice-Chair for the ensuing municipal year.

4   **SCRUTINY PROGRAMME BOARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Scrutiny Programme Board was requested to consider what issues should form the basis its work programme for the ensuing municipal year.

A Member commented that a key role of the Board, set out in its terms of reference was to approve and co-ordinate the work programme for the five themed overview and scrutiny committees including resolving any conflict between such committees; and, to allocate work to (or remove work from) any of the five overview and scrutiny Committees. He commented that meetings of the Board should have been scheduled to take place at the end of each cycle of meetings and expressed a view that

subsequent meetings should be rearranged, so as to allow the Board to effectively fulfil its role.

In response to questions from Members, the Head of Legal and Member Services outlined the role of the Scrutiny Programme Board, which was set out in a report presented to the last meeting (minute 30 (28 February 2012) refers).

A Member commented also that the Board should take a key role in identifying topics that would benefit from scrutiny. He suggested that this could be achieved by the Board undertaking a liaison role with local authority partners and other groups and making suggestions for inclusion of appropriate topics within the work programmes of the relevant scrutiny committees. Members commented also on the Council's Forward Plan of key decisions and expressed concern that it had not evolved to be an effective aid to scrutiny. An effective structure for the Forward Plan would provide more information to assist Members in identifying matters for pre decision scrutiny. The Head of Legal and Member Services indicated that a review was being undertaken of the Forward Plan, which would be informed by Best Practice elsewhere. He proposed to present a summary of the review to the next meeting of the Board.

It was resolved at the Special Meeting held on 18 July 2012 that the following sentence be added to the last paragraph of the above preamble:-

"to enable Members to be involved in the improvement of the Forward Plan and structure".

Resolved –

(1)   That a Special Meeting of the Board be arranged at the end of the current cycle of meetings to consider the work programmes of each of the five themed Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

(2)   That, subject to the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management consulting with Group Leaders and subject to there being no impact on other Overview and Scrutiny Committees, the calendar of meetings be varied for meetings of the Scrutiny Programme Board to be moved to the end of each cycle of meetings.

(3)   That the report of the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management on the Role of the Scrutiny Programme Board, presented to the last meeting, be circulated to all Members of the Board.

(4)   That the results of a review (including the layout) of the Council's Forward Plan be presented to the next meeting of the Board.