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SCRUTINY PROGRAMME BOARD

Monday, 14 September 2009

Present:

Councillor D Mitchell (Chair)

Councillors	J Hale	AER Jones
	C Meaden	H Smith
	S Clarke	A Bridson
	J Keeley	P Southwood

Deputies:

Councillors L Rowlands (In place of D Knowles)

12 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.

13 MINUTES

Members were requested to receive the minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Programme Board held on 27 May, 2009

Resolved – That the minutes be received.

14 TERMS OF REFERENCE

Further to minute 3 (27/5/09) Members gave further consideration to the specific terms of reference relating to the allocation of call-in notices which involve more than one of the overview and scrutiny committees.

Resolved – That this committee recommend to Council that the following amendment be made to paragraph (iv) of its terms of reference (Call-in Notices):

(iv) the chair and party spokespersons of the scrutiny programme board shall consider call-in notices in relation to executive functions which fall within the terms of reference of more than one overview and scrutiny committee and allocate such notices to those committees affected by the decision.

15 **RESPONSE TO MEMBERS QUESTIONNAIRE ON SCRUTINY**

The Chair presented a report providing feedback from meetings of the Group Spokespersons which reviewed the responses to the members' questionnaire on scrutiny (appendix a), and recommendations to improve the effectiveness of scrutiny.

Resolved – That the Scrutiny Programme Board:

- (1) endorses the actions of the Group Spokespersons;**
- (2) requests that each of the five Scrutiny Committees undertake at least one detailed review of a relevant topic and produce a report with recommendations for improvements.**
- (3) encourages Scrutiny Committees to facilitate greater involvement of residents and community organisations during reviews on specific topics.**
- (4) supports the production of a short 'aide memoire' document to highlight examples of good scrutiny practice.**
- (5) requests that training opportunities are identified for scrutiny members and chairs. In addition, further work should be done to identify examples of good scrutiny practice from other Councils and reports are prepared for future meetings.**
- (6) agrees that the Forward Plan should be included as a standard item on the agenda of future Scrutiny Programme Board meetings.**
- (7) requests that examples of good practice on member's scrutiny questionnaires are identified from elsewhere and that the Questionnaire be amended if necessary before the end of the current municipal year.**

16 **WORK PROGRAMMES OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

Members received reports outlining the work programmes of the following overview and scrutiny committees, including an indication of the way in which each item would be dealt with, a relative timescale for the work, and brief comments on progress:

- (a) Children and Young People**
- (b) Council Excellence**
- (c) Economy and Regeneration**
- (d) Health and Well Being**
- (e) Sustainable Communities**

Resolved – That the reports be noted.

17 **SCRUTINY PROGRAMME BOARD - WORK PROGRAMME**

Members received an update report on the committee's work programme including a proposed outline meeting schedule for the current municipal year and suggestions for additions to the work programme.

There was a general discussion regarding the scoping of the Wirral Alcohol Strategy review and it was proposed that the focus for this work should involve a detailed examination of alcohol related admissions to hospital.

The Chair highlighted the improvement in the figures produced by the Audit Commission relating to alcohol related admissions to hospital and suggested that the review should look at the underlying trends behind these figures, the way in which the reductions have been achieved, and examples of good practice.

The Chair also commented on the reasons for inclusion of One Council as an addition to the committee's work programme, particularly in light of the appointment of a new Head of Service for Human Resources.

Resolved –

(1) That the reports be noted.

(2) That a working part be established in the political ratio (1:1:1) to undertake a detailed examination of the alcohol related admissions to hospital figures, and that members of the Health and Well Being Overview and Scrutiny Committee and relevant professional in this field be also invited to participate in this work.

18 REVIEW OF THE FORWARD PLAN

The views of members were sought as to whether scrutiny should take place of any items contained within the Forward Plan for the period September to December ,2009.

Resolved – That the content of the Forward Plan be noted.

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