

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Thursday, 26th March, 2015 at 5.00 p.m.
at the Council House, Priory Road, Dudley

Present:

Councillor D Tyler (Chair)
Councillor A Finch (Vice-Chair)
Councillors D Blood, P Bradley, I Cooper, C Hale, M Hanif, R James, L Jones
and G Simms

Officers:

R Sims, Interim Chief Housing Officer (Lead Officer to the Board), S Griffiths
(Democratic Services Manager) and M Johal (Democratic Services Officer -
Directorate of Resources and Transformation).

34 **Apology for Absence**

An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor
M Mottram.

35 **Declaration of Interests**

No Members declared interests, in accordance with the Members' Code of
Conduct, in respect of any of the items to be discussed at this meeting.

36 **Minutes**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 11th December, 2014, be
approved as a correct record and signed.

37 **Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board 2014/15**

A joint report of the Strategic Director (Resources and Transformation) and the
Lead Officer to the Board was submitted on the annual report of the Overview
and Scrutiny Management Board for 2014/15.

Resolved:

- (1) That the annual report of the Overview and Scrutiny Management
Board for 2014/15 be received and noted.

- (2) That the Strategic Director (Resources and Information), following consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair, be authorised to make any necessary amendments to update the annual report prior to its submission to the Council at its meeting on 13th April, 2015.
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Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements for 2015/16

A joint report of the Strategic Director (Resources and Transformation) and the Lead Officer to the Board was submitted on the Council's future Overview and Scrutiny arrangements in the context of the organisational restructure and other key developments. An Appendix setting out the necessary amendments to the Constitution and terms of reference was also attached to the report submitted.

In presenting the report the Democratic Services Manager explained about the proposed future arrangements for scrutiny for the ensuing Municipal Year and stated that they would be aligned to the three new Strategic Directorates, namely People Services, Resources and Transformation and Place, together with an Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and the Health Scrutiny Committee.

The Democratic Services Manager also reported on a visit that he had undertaken together with the Vice-Chair to Parliament concerning the operation of Select Committees. A briefing would be produced on the findings and presented to the informal meeting of the Board to be held in April, 2015.

Arising from the presentation of the report the following comments were made by Members:-

- In referring to the Kerslake review of Birmingham City Council and the recommendation to reduce the number of Scrutiny Committees to three it was commented that this number was not sufficient to enable proper scrutiny to take place given the breadth of issues. The proposals for the number of Scrutiny Committees in Dudley for the ensuing year were deemed to be sufficient and balanced.
- It was considered that Members should be engaging with and utilising the call-in mechanism with a view to scrutinising and challenging certain issues, particularly those of national concern. The Chair commented that Group Leaders should be urged to encourage Members to engage in the scrutiny and call-in process.
- Reference was made to discussions held at the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee regarding child sexual exploitation and it was considered that this item be included in the forthcoming relevant Committee's Annual Scrutiny Programme.

Resolved:

- (1) That Child Sexual Exploitation be included in the Annual Scrutiny Programme for the People Scrutiny Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year.
 - (2) That the Council be recommended to approve the establishment of the revised Scrutiny Committee structure for the 2015/16 Municipal Year, as set out in paragraph 4 of the report submitted.
 - (3) That the Council be recommended to approve and adopt the necessary amendments to the Constitution, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted.
 - (4) That the Strategic Director (Resources and Transformation) identifies the Lead Officers for Scrutiny Committee to support the overview and scrutiny arrangements for the 2015/16 Municipal Year.
 - (5) That the Strategic Director (Resources and Transformation), following consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair, be authorised to develop the draft Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2015/16;
 - (6) That an informal meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board be held on a date to be determined during April, 2015.
 - (7) That the Annual Scrutiny Programme 2015/16 be submitted to the first meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, following the annual meeting of the Council, for formal approval.
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Forward Plan of Key Decisions

The Board received the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the four month period commencing 1st April, 2015.

A comment was made stressing the importance of the document and the lack of awareness amongst Members. It was suggested that an element of training in this regard be included as part of the Member induction process. It was also suggested that a list of key decisions be submitted to the relevant Scrutiny Committee prior to its consideration by Cabinet.

Reference was made to the information relating to contact details of officers and the need to have an up to date list given that some Officers had, or were due to leave the Council.

Resolved:

That the Forward Plan of Key Decisions be noted.

Ron Sims – Assistant Director (Housing Strategy and Private Sector) (Lead Officer to the Board)

The Chair Reported that this would be the last meeting of the Board attended by Ron Sims prior to his retirement. The Chair, together with other Members of the Board paid tribute to Ron's contribution in his role as Lead Officer to the Board and expressed best wishes for a long, healthy and happy retirement.

The meeting ended at 5.45 p.m.

CHAIR