

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 1 SEPTEMBER 2010 FROM 7PM TO 8.25PM**

Present:- Alistair Auty, Norman Jorgensen, Jenny Lissaman and Pam Stubbs (substitute for Michael Firmager)

Also present:-

Kevin Jacob, Principal Democratic Services Officer

Muir Laurie, Business Assurance Manager

Madeleine Shopland, Senior Democratic Services Officer

11. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 20 May 2010 and 5 July 2010 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendment:

- Minute 9 – Burial review – update on recommendations.

RESOLVED That the action taken and comments on progress made since the previous update in February 2010 be noted and that a further update be provided at the Panel's meeting in February 2011.

A Member questioned when possible review topics would be considered. The Panel were notified that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee had considered possible topics at their July meeting and had apportioned topics to the Panels as appropriately. It was noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee would receive a briefings on energy efficiency in Council buildings and the Waterside Centre at its September meeting. The Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel was to receive a briefing on the Council's website in the future. Members were informed that the Council's Enforcement Policy and S106 protocol could be considered as a possible review topic. The Principal Democratic Services Officer indicated that he would send a copy of the minutes of the July Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee meeting to Panel members.

12. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bowring, Firmager and Munro.

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

14. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions received.

15. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions received.

16 BRIEFING ON COUNCIL'S WEBSITE

Members agreed that this item be deferred until the Panel's next meeting to enable those members who were unable to attend the meeting to participate in discussions.

17. WOKINGHAM ENTERPRISE LTD – TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Panel discussed the terms of reference for the scrutiny review on the governance arrangements of local authority companies and the executive Trading and Enterprise Sub-Committee.

During the discussion of this item the following points were made:

- The Panel were informed that Council had requested that Scrutiny and the Audit Committee meeting investigate this matter. The Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel and the Audit Committee had agreed that the Scrutiny Panel undertake a review supported by Business Assurance and Democratic Services. The results of this review would be fed back to the Audit Committee and from there to either the Executive or Council.
- The Business Assurance Manager provided feedback on the terms on the draft terms of reference from the Strategic Leadership Board. He indicated that the Panel should examine how any local authority company interacted with the Trading and Enterprises Sub Committee as opposed to any company's specific governance arrangements which were covered by legislation.
- Members agreed that it was important to establish what could and could not be reviewed and also so as not to duplicate work of other bodies.
- The Business Assurance Manager and Principal Democratic Services Officer provided some background information on local authority companies and the Trading and Enterprises Sub Committee.
- The Business Assurance Manager explained that the Council itself was not allowed to make a profit.
- The Panel discussed the proposed key objectives and scope of the review in detail.
- The Panel examined the list of potential witnesses. They agreed that it was important that they gathered information from other local authorities who had already established local authority companies or were also in the process of doing so, early in the review process. It was noted that Essex County Council had established a local authority company, Essex Cares, which dealt with social care. Croydon Borough Council was also looking at establishing local authority companies. Members asked that representatives from Essex County Council be asked for information. It was suggested that if representatives were unable to attend a Panel meeting consideration should be given to a site visit in order to gather information. A Member suggested that other bodies such as the Chamber of Commerce also be approached.
- Members felt that the word 'adequately' in key objective three should be amended to read 'competently'. They also believed that the words 'as possible' should be removed from key objective three.
- The Panel agreed that key objective five should be amended to read 'To ensure that the Council has visibility of and can protect its interests in arrangements entered into by Local Authority Companies where these arrangements have the potential to affect the risk profile or financial viability of the Council', to provide clarification.
- The Panel agreed additional meeting dates at which the review would be undertaken. The Senior Democratic Services Officer would circulate these dates to all Panel members. The Panel would also be provided with packs of the information detailed in the 'information to be obtained from' section.

RESOLVED That

- 1) The draft terms of reference be agreed subject to the following amendments:

- a) the word 'adequately' in key objective three should be amended to read 'competently'.
- b) that the words 'as possible' should be removed from key objective three.
- c) that key objective five should be amended to read 'To ensure that the Council has visibility of and can protect its interests in arrangements entered into by Local Authority Companies where these arrangements have the potential to affect the risk profile or financial viability of the Council'

These are the Minutes of a Meeting of the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel

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