

Extract of the minutes of the meeting of the  
Local Government Reform Cabinet Sub Group  
held on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2007.

15 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

The Scrutiny Manager presented a report following the last meeting of the Group held on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2007, where a further discussion paper was requested on an Overview and Scrutiny system based on having one Scrutiny Panel (with its own work programme) operating as it does at present, but with additional powers to appoint a series of Task and Finish Groups. The groups would each have one subject at a time to examine in detail. The report outlined the proposed timetable for achieving such a system together with details of associated issues.

On discussing the report, Members raised a number of issues namely:-

- The title of the task and finish groups - a more exciting name?;
- The types of subjects and issues to be discussed;
- Appointing the Members and Chairman to the groups;
- The number of groups;
- The timetabling of the meetings of the groups - some rigidity required? ;
- The reporting arrangements;
- The skills of the group members;
- The terms of reference of the groups

When discussing the above issues, the Group was advised that the names of the groups would depend on the issues they were being tasked with and that the Scrutiny Panel would decide on those issues. The only Members exempt from sitting on a group would be Cabinet Members. It was proposed that the group leaders and Chair of the Scrutiny Panel would make recommendations to the Scrutiny Panel as regards to the Chairmen and members of the groups. Each issue would need to be project managed by each Chairman. It had been decided that there should be three groups so as not to confuse with the previous four Policy Development groups and to take into account limited resources. It was felt that the programming around the issues should be fluid and led by the project manager [Chairman] with key dates flagged up in advance as opposed to being fed into and led by the annual timetable of meetings. The group's findings would be reported to the Scrutiny Panel with recommendations going to Council. This will enable the Scrutiny Panel to undertake its 'overseeing' role but give all Members at Council the opportunity to participate in a discussion of the issues. It will also allow the groups the opportunity to demonstrate to full Council the work that it has been doing. Chairmen and Members of the groups will be appointed based on their levels of interest and skills and the Member Development Programme will be built around the key skills required by Members over the four year term. This will form part of the Member Development Strategy. The terms of reference of the groups will broadly reflect those of the existing Policy Development Groups but will be 'tidied up' for the purposes of the Constitution.

Allan Reid offered to present this report, including the issues raised at this meeting, to the meeting of the Cabinet on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2007 and he also offered to present this at group meetings upon request.

**DECISION:** That it be **recommended to Cabinet:-**

That Council be recommended to approve the proposed Overview and Scrutiny process, as set out in the report.

***The full report considered by the Group is attached at appendix A.***

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## 16 **MEMBER DEVELOPMENT**

The Senior Democratic Services Officer presented a report following the last meeting of the Group held on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2007 where a further discussion paper was requested on the issues surrounding Member Development, with specific reference to the 2007 Induction Programme for new Councillors. During the discussion at the last meeting, it was felt that issues such as Electronic Government, Planning, Personal Safety, Constituency Issues and the Complaints Procedure should all feature quite prominently in the induction programme and as early as possible and these had now been included in the draft Member Conference agenda and induction timetable, the details of which were set out in the report.

On discussing the report, reference was made to the Conference being held on a Saturday and the Senior Democratic Services Officer was asked to look into the provision and reimbursement towards the cost of childcare arrangements to enable maximum attendance.

**DECISION:** That it be **recommended to Cabinet:-**

- (1) That a Member Seminar be held on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> May at Causeway House for all new and existing Councillors with invites also going to Members of PACT;
- (2) That the Senior Democratic Services Officer, in consultation with the Leader and the Chief Executive, puts together a programme of events in line with the views expressed by Members having considered the draft programme as set out in the report;
- (3) That a welcome letter to all newly appointed Councillors, setting out details of the Induction Programme, be handed out immediately after the results have been declared on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2007;
- (4) That Members of the Local Government Reform Cabinet Sub Group oversee the work surrounding the implementation of the Member Development Charter.

***The full report considered by the Group is attached at appendix B.***

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## 17 **CURRENT ISSUES**

The Democratic Services Manager presented a report covering a number of issues raised at the last meeting the Group when changes were agreed around the layout of the Council agenda, the appointment to the Employment Appeals Panel and public question time at Council meetings.

The purpose of the report was to outline the precise changes for recommendation to Council.

On discussing the report, it was acknowledged that not all Chairmen use their discretionary powers to enable a discussion on any issue raised during public question time and that this would be picked up as part of the Chairman's training.

**DECISION:** That it be **recommended to Cabinet:-**

That Council be recommended to approve:-

- 1) That the revised order of Council business be endorsed and the Democratic Services Manager be authorised to make any consequential changes to paragraph 10 of the Council procedure rules in part 4 of the Constitution;
- 2) That the terms of reference of the Employment Appeals Committee, as set out in part 3 of the Constitution, be amended to incorporate the change set out in the report;
- 3) That the rules for public question time at full Council meetings be amended to reflect the rules that apply to all other public meetings of the Council;
- 4) That paragraph 9 of the Council Procedure Rules in part 4 of the Constitution be amended to reflect those changes highlighted in the report.

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## APPENDIX A

### Discussion Paper

### Local Government Reform - Cabinet Sub Group – 12<sup>th</sup> March 2007

### Overview and Scrutiny System based on one Scrutiny Panel with its own work programme plus up to 3 Task and Finish Groups.

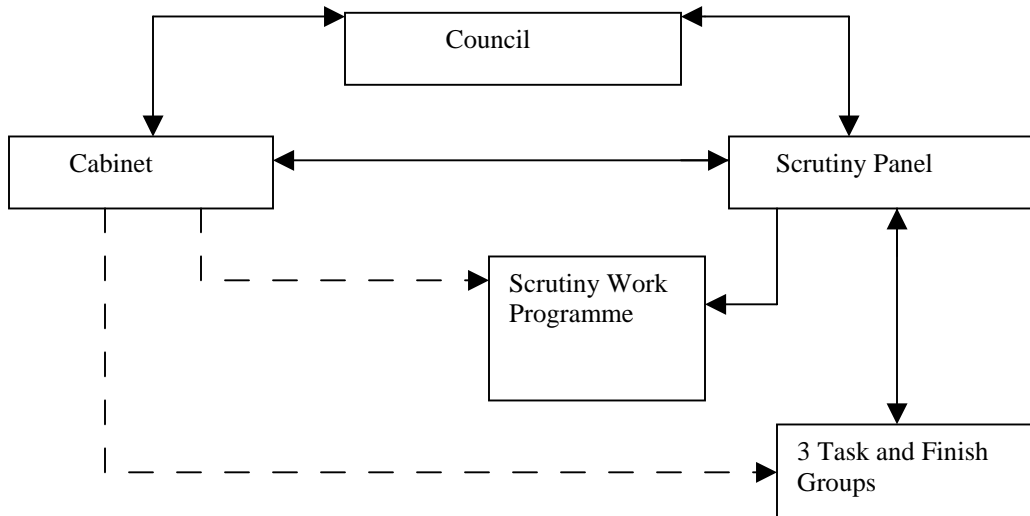
#### 1. Introduction

At the meeting of the Sub Group held on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2007, Members requested a further discussion paper for an O and S system based on having one Scrutiny Panel (with its own work programme) operating as at present, but with additional powers to appoint a series of Task and Finish Groups which would each have one subject per year to examine in detail.

There would no longer be any Policy Development Groups.

The relationships between Council, the Cabinet and Scrutiny are set out in diagrammatic form in paragraph 2; a possible timeline of events is set out in paragraph 3; and paragraph 4 contains a series of associated issues which would the Group may no doubt also wish to consider.

#### 2. Basic Diagrammatic Form



#### 3. Timeframe for 2007/08 Civic Year

- **21/5/07** – Council AGM: Cabinet appointed – Scrutiny Panel appointed.
- **23/5/07** – **Suggest** informal meeting between Leader of the Council and Chair of Scrutiny Panel to discuss:-
  - (1) Scrutiny Panel's own work programme;
  - (2) Subjects for Task and Finish Groups (discussion to focus on: details of the topics and their relationship to the Council's priorities (Direction and Ambition); the name(s) of the relevant Cabinet portfolio holder; the name(s) of the lead officers; details of any resourcing implications).

(3) Possible bid for O and S budgets.

- **30/5/07** – First Meeting of Scrutiny Panel

Leader of the Council attends to set out Cabinet's portfolio priorities for the year ahead.

Scrutiny Panel approves:-

- \* Panel's own work programme (Panel will make appropriate recommendations to Cabinet in the normal way as each item on its work programme is completed);
- \* Subjects to be studied by the 3 Task and Finish Groups.

**Suggest** Panel delegates authority to the lead officer in consultation with the Chair of Scrutiny Panel to approve Terms of Reference of Task and Finish Groups. Terms of Reference to include a requirement for each Group on completion of its work to carry out a self-evaluation exercise on the benefits of its study, lessons learnt, etc. and to incorporate the results of this assessment in its final report.

- **June onwards**

O and S support officers (in liaison with previously identified lead officers) commence scoping of the subjects of the three Task and Finish Groups to identify the key issues in preparation for the first meetings of the Groups in September.

Organise Member training on: Project Management; Research Skills; Technical Surveys; Community Involvement etc. (Training to be completed **by September**).

- **11/6/07** - All non executive members to be informed of the Task and Finish Groups and the subjects to be studied, and advised to express their interest in becoming a member of any of the Task Groups by completing and submitting a form by a set deadline **say (29/6/07)**.
- **July '07** – **Suggest** informal meeting of Group Leaders and Chair of Scrutiny Panel to consider expressions of interest and to make recommendations to Scrutiny Panel as to Chairs of the 3 Task and Finish Groups and their composition.

**Suggest** composition to be non-Widdicombed.

Task and Finish Groups – **suggest** maximum membership: 12 – minimum 6.

- **18/7/07** – Scrutiny Panel meeting.

Panel formally appoints Chairs and members of the 3 Task and Finish Groups.

Chairs of Task and Finish Groups to be paid Special Responsibility Allowance from date of appointment, and ends when Scrutiny has adopted report.

- **September** - Member training completed.
- **September onwards** – Task and Finish Groups formally commence their work.

**Suggest** Chairs of Task and Finish Groups attend each subsequent meeting of Scrutiny Panel to give brief report on progress.

Each Task and Finish Group to complete its work and submit a final report (with recommendations) to the Scrutiny Panel for consideration at its meeting on **27/2/08**.

- **27/2/08** – Final meeting of Scrutiny Panel in current civic year.

Recommendations of the 3 Task and Finish Groups to be considered by the Panel and, if adopted, forwarded to Cabinet with or without amendment.

Cycle of approving Scrutiny Panel work programme and subjects for Task and Finish Groups for 2008/09 civic year begins again.

- **3/3/08** – Final meeting of Cabinet in 2007/08 civic year.

Cabinet considers recommendations from Scrutiny Panel in respect of the studies conducted by the 3 Task and Finish Groups in 2007/08 civic year.

#### **4. Associated Issues**

- Meetings of Task and Finish Groups – the Groups may wish to conduct some of their work without meeting formally. However, the O and S Procedure Rules allow for public participation and hopefully the subjects investigated by the Task Groups will generate public interest. **Suggest** the Council should advertise the topics being studied and seek public views and, if appropriate, participation.
- Should the Council set any limit to the number of Task and Finish Groups to which an individual backbencher can be appointed? There is no legislative limit.
- **Suggest** that members of the Scrutiny Panel should be eligible to sit on Task and Finish Groups the same as any other backbencher.
- Similarly, **suggest** that members of the Scrutiny Panel should be eligible to be appointed as Chair of a Task and Finish Group.

#### **5. Recommendation**

The Sub Group is Recommended to consider the report and to determine whether it wishes to pursue the new O and S system as indicated in outline in the report.

Steve Bore  
Scrutiny Manager

## APPENDIX B

### MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

#### BACKGROUND

At the meeting of the Group held on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2007, it was agreed that a further discussion paper with clear recommendations be submitted to the next meeting of the Group on the issues surrounding Member Development, with specific reference to the 2007 Induction Programme for new Councillors.

During the discussion at the last meeting, it was felt that issues such as Electronic Government, Planning, Personal Safety, Constituency Issues and the Complaints Procedure should all feature quite prominently in the induction programme and as early as possible.

It was also felt that there should be an opportunity to meet fellow Councillors and Senior Officers at the earliest opportunity. It was acknowledged that past induction programmes have been very intense, whilst it was accepted that new Members have a lot to learn in a very short space of time. It was therefore agreed that some of the main elements of the induction programme be brought together in a conference-style event with invites to all new and existing Councillors and Senior Officers. It is not intended that the Conference replaces the induction programme but supplements it enabling some issues to feature earlier in the overall programme and to make it less intensive. The bite size sessions identified in the attached conference programme will be supplemented with written guidance, where appropriate, and further information on any of the subjects can be made available upon request. All Senior Managers were recently contacted to ask if there were any specific issues they wished to be added to the induction programme and the responses have been fed into the timetable. The remainder of the Induction learning will be programmed into the timetable as usual. It is proposed that the Council Chamber here at Causeway House be the venue for the Conference using the Council meeting layout with the Groups seated together. This will act as a training tool for issues such as protocol at meetings and the use of microphones. It will also ensure that new Members will not be too daunted upon attending their first Council meeting, being that they will already be familiar with the setting. Workshops will be held around the building.

#### **DECISION :- That it be Recommended to Cabinet:-**

- (4) That a Member Seminar be held on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> May at Causeway House for all new and existing Councillors with invites also going to Members of PACT;
- (5) That the Senior Democratic Services Officer, in consultation with the Leader and the Chief Executive, puts together a programme of events in line with the views expressed by Members having considered the draft programme as set out in the report;
- (6) That a welcome letter to all newly appointed Councillors, setting out details of the Induction Programme, be handed out immediately after the results have been declared on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2007;
- (7) That Members of the Local Government Reform Cabinet Sub Group oversee the work surrounding the implementation of the Member Development Charter.

## DRAFT PROPOSED PROGRAMME

- 9.30 - 10.00am - **Registration and Refreshments.**  
[An opportunity also to have your photograph taken for your name badge and the website].
- 10.00am - **Welcome by the Chief Executive**  
[Allan to welcome Members and introduce himself & key officers]
- 10.10am - **Issues facing the Council**  
[An overview of the issues facing the Council now and in the future]
- 10.45am - **Personal Safety/Emergency Planning**  
[A brief canter over some personal safety/emergency planning issues]
- 11.00am - **WORKSHOP** {One of the 3 listed below}
- 11.30am - **Refreshment Break - Icons**
- 11.45am - **WORKSHOP** {One of the 3 listed below}
- 12.15am - **WORKSHOP** {One of the 3 listed below}

**MORNING WORKSHOPS**

**Partnership Working.**  
[A look at how the Council works closely with its partners]

**The Front Line Councillor**  
[The role of the Ward Member and constituency issues including the Complaints procedure and a brief overview of the Decision making structure]

**Protocol at Meetings**  
[An explanation of the protocol at Council meetings and other Committees including an overview of the Constitution]

- 12.45pm - **Question and Answer Session**
- 1.15pm - **Lunch and Networking - Icons**
- 2.00pm - **WORKSHOP** {One of the 3 listed below}
- 2.45pm - **WORKSHOP** {One of the 3 listed below}
- 3.30pm - **WORKSHOP** {One of the 3 listed below}

**AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS**

**Planning Applications**  
[An overview of the Code of Practice for Councillors engaged in the determination of Planning applications]

**Code of Conduct**  
[An overview of the Code of Conduct for Members]

**E-Government**  
[A summary of the Council's approach to e-government]

- 4.15pm - **Question and Answer Session.**
- 4.45pm - **Close and Refreshments**

The Induction Programme as a whole will be as follows:-

**12<sup>th</sup> May - Member Welcome Conference**

As set out above

**14<sup>th</sup> May - Member Evening**

General introduction to Chief Executive/Management Board /Displays identifying council services including talk on Member Allowances and how to claim expenses/benefit implications/ Signing of acceptance of office/photographs/car parking stickers and details of the Mentoring programme.

**24<sup>th</sup> May - Role of District Development Committee/ Local Development Framework [Members of DDC only]**

Pre-Brief before Committee including Local Plan and Area Committee referral process.

**30<sup>th</sup> May - Role of Overview and Scrutiny [Members of O&S only]**

Pre-Brief before Overview and Scrutiny Meeting

**29<sup>th</sup> May 2007**

**[Members of BAC only]**

**5<sup>th</sup> June 2007            The Role of Area Committees**

**[Members of HAC only]**

**22<sup>nd</sup> May 2007**

**[Members of WAC only]**

Pre-Brief before each Committee on the land use planning process.

**6<sup>th</sup> June - Role of the Licensing Committee [Members of Licensing Committee only]**

Pre-Brief before Licensing Committee on the Licensing/Gambling Acts and the hearing process.

**12<sup>th</sup> June - Planning Enforcement [All Members]**

Outlining the Council's planning enforcement procedures

**5<sup>th</sup> July - Media Training [All Members]**

Protocol on working with the media

**11<sup>th</sup> July - Code of Conduct [All Members]**

[A more in-depth look at the Code of Conduct for Members with an invite to all Parish Councillors]

**26<sup>th</sup> July 2007 - Charing for Effective Meetings [All current and potential Chairs]**

There will also be events planned during the year on

- **Measuring performance**
- **Understanding the budget process**
- **Working with partners**
- **Housing transfer.**

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