

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW TASK AND FINISH
PANEL
HELD ON THURSDAY, 31 OCTOBER 2013
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT 7.00 - 8.35 PM

Members Present: K Angold-Stephens (Chairman), , Ms H Kane, Mrs M Sartin (Chairman of the Council), G Waller (Safer, Greener and Transport Portfolio Holder) and Mrs J H Whitehouse

Other members present:

Apologies for Absence: Mrs A Grigg (Asset Management and Economic Development Portfolio Holder) and D Stallan (Housing Portfolio Holder)

Officers Present A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer) and I Willett (Assistant to the Chief Executive)

11. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

It was noted that Councillor H Kane was substituting for Councillor A Grigg and Councillor G Waller was substituting for Councillor Stallan.

12. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The notes of the meeting held on 08 July 2013 were agreed.

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct.

14. DRAFT FINAL REPORT

The Panel considered their draft final report, considering each section in turn and amending where necessary. They noted that:

1. The main Overview and Scrutiny Committee had queried the need for a revised seating plan when an outside body was giving a presentation. They thought this was still an idea worth exploring and thought that it should be trialled for a nine month period to have enough time to revert to the old system if necessary.
2. They would also like it stressed in the report that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be the ones to identify who they saw and not just have repeated presentations on an annual basis.
3. Paragraph 3.5 should be reworded as at the present it sounded too much like O&S was there to do the Cabinet's bidding and it should be a two way process.

4. Paragraph 3.6 should be strengthened to say that the relevant Portfolio Holder should attend every relevant Standing Panel if at all possible and not just any special meeting arranged to question the PH specifically.
5. Paragraph 3.12 should be altered to read that any scrutiny decision (by standing or T&F panels and the main O&S Committee) should be reported on six months down the line. Also if a recommendation is made to a portfolio holder then he should attend the next meeting to tell the committee if he agreed with their recommendations and if so what they were going to do to implement the recommendations (or not). This should only be a verbal report, with a main written report coming back in six months time.
6. Paragraph 3.13 the words “in consultation with the O&S Chairman or Vice Chairman” when the officer agenda planning group considered the work programme.

Call-in Procedures

1. In Paragraph 3.19 it should be made clear that officers would take email notifications of a call-in and accept a hard copy later than the five day deadline.
2. Paragraph 3.20 - To reword the sentence beginning “At present the arrangement is that...” to make it clear that only the first five signatories of the call-in would be given the opportunity to speak at the beginning of the call-in session, followed by the PH. Any other signatory can to speak during the general discussion that follows.
3. Paragraph 3.21 – the last sentence in this paragraph to add the words “to sit” so that it reads “...relevant Director and the Portfolio Holder being asked to sit together...”
4. The new seating arrangements to also be trialled for a 9 month period.

External Organisations

1. Paragraph 3.22 - That the words “line of questioning” replaces the word “tactics” in the second sentence of this paragraph.
2. Paragraph 3.26 – Again, the new seating arrangements be put in place for a trial period of nine months.

Budget Scrutiny

1. Paragraph 3.26 (should be 3.29) – that the word “by” replace the word “in” in the second sentence in this paragraph; so that it reads “...look at the financial issues papers by September.”

Scrutiny of Key Performance Indicators

1. Paragraph 3.29 – to add “if more in depth analysis was thought appropriate then it should go to the appropriate Standing Panel.”
2. It was noted that there was nothing to stop the individual Standing Panels asking to look at their own KPIs if they wanted to.

Safer Communities

1. Noted that the term 'Safer Communities' was no longer in use and it should now be called 'Community Safety'.
2. Also noted that we could ask if we could help the PCC publicise his meetings in our district.

General

That the report be signed off using just the Chairman's name.

Appendix 1

Paragraph 2(e) – the sentence starting “that in terms...” be reworded as it was confusing.

Paragraph 2(e) – that from “whether at Overview and Scrutiny Committee...” this be moved to form a separate additional point (f).

The word Standing – as in Scrutiny 'Standing' Panel was deemed un-necessary and the term should be dropped as it did not add anything to the description of the panel titles.

Paragraph 3(d) – that the word “requests” replace the word “submissions”.

Paragraph 7 – should not be “2013” but “of each year”.

Paragraph 11 (g) – that the follow up review be carried out after six months only, and not at three and six months.

Paragraph 19(d) that the website be added to the Forester and local press releases.

Appendix 2 to be amended in line with the above comments:-

Consideration of call-in - Paragraph 3.4(c) – to make it clear that it means the lead signatory and the following four signatories of the call-in.

The Panel queried section 4 of Appendix 2 “Who may sit on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee” and asked about the status of the assistants to the Portfolio Holders and their ability to sit on the O&S Committee and Standing Panels. This would be considered by officers and reported back.

RESOLVED:

The Panel agreed that Mr Willett take away the comments made at this meeting and alter the final report and email it around to the Panel members for comments and agreement.