

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MINUTES

Committee:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Date:	Tuesday, 31 May 2005
Place:	Civic Offices, High Street, Epping	Time:	7.30 - 8.13 pm
Members Present:	Councillors Mrs D Collins (Chairman) Mrs J H Whitehouse (Vice-Chairman) Mrs D Borton, M Colling, K Faulkner, Mrs A Grigg, F Maclaine, Mrs P Richardson, Mrs M Sartin and M Woollard		
Other Councillors:	Councillors Mrs J Davis, D Kelly, P McMillan, Mrs P Smith, D Stallan, C Whitbread and J M Whitehouse		
Apologies:	Councillors P Gode		
Officers Present:	J Scott (Joint Chief Executive), S G Hill (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and Z Folley (Democratic Services Assistant)		

1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed Members to the first meeting of the new Committee.

2. NEW OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES

The Senior Democratic Services Officer drew attention to the new procedural rules for Overview and Scrutiny. He advised that this meeting was about setting the scene for the new arrangements and agreeing the membership of panels. He also explained what could be expected from the next stage of the process.

The Committees attention was drawn to the main elements of the new structure. Members were reminded that under the arrangements Scrutiny Standing and Task and Finish panels had been established to undertake scrutiny reviews. It was noted that this Committee had been tasked with agreeing the Membership of these panels their terms of reference, work plans and reporting deadlines.

The Committee noted the main objectives of panels. The Senior Democratic Services Officer reported that Standing Panels would have a 'rolling programme' and consider ongoing and cyclical issues. Pro rata rules applied to Membership and all Members were welcome to attend meetings. Attention was drawn to reporting procedures, arrangements for the annual review of Standing Panel work plans and liaison arrangements with Portfolio Holders. It was reported that Task and Finish Reviews would be restricted to dealing with activities which were issued based, time limited, non cyclical with clearly defined objectives which they would report responses to within a set deadline. Pro rata rules did not apply to membership, however panels must consist of a minimum number of members to carry out its programme and not consist solely of a single party.

In terms of the role of the Committee itself, it was reported that the Committee could expect to liaise with the Cabinet about work plans, engage with external bodies and pre scrutiny work at its meeting during the week before Cabinet and deal with those items referred to the Committee by the work programme. Call in would continue and liaisons with the Cabinet would take place to discuss the wider work programme which would be approved and reviewed annually by the Committee.

In terms of recent developments it was reported that officers had discussed operational aspects of the arrangements and agreed that a Lead Officer be appointed to each panel to facilitate process. It was anticipated that Lead Officers would liaise on a regular basis with relevant Chairman to discuss work. They would also be meeting to agree terms of references of panels and priorities of reviews and their work plans.

The Committee were also updated on the progress made with the appointment of a Scrutiny Officer to support the structure. It was noted that the closing date for the post was 3 June 2005 and that interviews would commence in the next few weeks. He emphasised that the support provided by the new officer would contribute significantly to the system. It was noted that further developments on the post would be reported to the Committee.

In response to questions, Members were reminded that pro rata rules did not apply to the membership of Task and Finish panels. The Joint Chief Executive (Community) reported that they were open to any Members who wished to serve. He stated that it had been decided that Membership based on expertise rather than pro-rata requirements would facilitate the work of such panels. They also could provide the opportunity for new Members to gain expertise in chairing Committees which they otherwise might not get.

RESOLVED:

That the procedural rules for Overview and Scrutiny be noted.

3. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was reported that Councillor Mrs J Davis had been appointed to attend the meeting as a substitute for Councillor P Gode.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the:

- (a) Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group held on 11 May 2005;
- (b) Overview and Scrutiny Committee (1) held on 29 March 2005;
- (c) Overview and Scrutiny Committee (2) held on 5 April 2005; and
- (d) Overview and Scrutiny Committee (3) held on 7 April 2005

be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to '2004/06' being substituted by '2005/06' in recommendation 3 (Minute 43) of the minutes of the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee (2).

5. MATTERS ARISING

In relation to the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee (2) a member asked how any outstanding actions arising from the meeting would be dealt with. The Senior Democratic Services Officer undertook to speak to the Councillor to consider incorporating such activities into the work plan.

6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interests were made pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct.

7. APPOINTMENT OF STANDING PANELS - 2005/06

The Committee were asked to make appointments to Standing Panels in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny rules. The Committee were reminded that the Council had agreed pro rata applied to Standing Panels and that membership should be kept to a minimum to allow each Group to have representation . It was noted that on this basis it had been calculated that Panels would consist of 10 Members.

It was reported that nominations to Chairman and Vice Chairman to Standing Panels were excluded from the pro rata calculation rules required for such positions contained in the Council's constitution.

The Committee considered the nominations for the various positions. Despite the fact that Councillor Murray had not put his name forward for panel Membership, it was agreed that in view of the Councillors expertise on Housing issues he should be appointed Chairman of the Standing Panel on Housing Services. It was agreed that should he decline the invitation, the position would be reconsidered to at a future meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the appointments to Standing Panels annexed to these minutes be adopted.

8. APPOINTMENT OF TASKS AND FINISH PANELS - 2005/06

The Committee were asked to consider appointments to Task and Finish Panels. The Committee noted that four panels were to be set up and the matters they would review.

It was noted that any Member could be appointed to Task and Finish Panels. However Cabinet Members would not be able to serve on panels which bore directly on their Portfolio. In addition no panel could comprise of members of a single political group and restrictions on numbers did not apply.

Members were also asked to appoint a Chairman and Vice Chairman to each Panel.

RESOLVED:

That the appointments to Task and Finish Panels annexed to these minutes be adopted.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A member asked whether Members would in future receive all agendas for scrutiny or be able to select which agendas they received. The Head of Democratic Services reported that this matter would be considered as part of the Member connectivity review.

In terms of topics for review, a Member suggested that the operation of this years election in the District needed to be reviewed. It was noted that this matter would be referred to the Standing Panel on Constitutional Affairs.

It was also suggested that the Chairman of the Task and Finish Panel on Traveller issues liaise with appropriate officers as soon as possible to arrange a meeting of the Panel.

It was noted that the next meeting would consider the work of panels in detail.

RESOLVED:

That the Standing Panel on Constitutional Affairs undertake a review of the operation of this years Parliamentary and County Elections.

CHAIRMAN

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS – MEMBERSHIPS 2005/06

(a) Standing Panels

(i) Housing

Lead Officer: A Hall

Conservative Group (4) : Mrs R Gadsby, Mrs A Grigg, Mrs J Lea, Mrs S Perry

Independent Group (1) : R Chidley

Labour Group (1) : P Gode

Liberal Democrats Group (2) : L Martin, Mrs J H Whitehouse

LRA Group (1) : K Angold- Stephens

BNP Group (1) : T Richardson

Ind Soc (1) : S Murray

(ii) Constitutional Affairs

Lead Officer: I Willett

Conservative Group (4) : D Bateman, J Demetriou, R D'Souza, D Stallan

Independent Group (1) : R Morgan

Labour Group (1) : Mrs J Davis

Liberal Democrats Group (2) : Mrs P Brooks, Mrs A Haigh

LRA Group (1) : J Markham

BNP Group (1) : Mrs P Richardson

(iii) ICT and E Government

Lead Officer: A Scott

Conservative Group (4) : M Colling, Mrs D Collins, P McMillan, Mrs M Sartin

Independent Group (1) : Mrs D Borton

Labour Group (1) : S Barnes

Liberal Democrats Group (2) : F Maclaine, Mrs K Rush

LRA Group (1) : M Cohen

BNP Group (1) : T Farr

(iv) Finance and Performance Management

Lead Officer: T Tidey

Conservative Group (4) : Mrs D Collins, Mrs R Gadsby, A Green, J Hart

Independent Group (1) : R Chidley

Labour Group (1) : S Barnes

Liberal Democrats Group (2) : R Goold, J M Whitehouse

LRA Group (1) : K Faulkner

BNP Group (1) : T Farr

(v) Environmental and Planning

Lead Officer: J Preston/J Gilbert

Conservative Group (4) : P McMillan, Mrs M Sartin, Mrs P Smith, D Stallan

Independent Group (1) : Mrs D Borton

Labour Group (1) : M Boatman

Liberal Democrats Group (2) : D Kelly, M Woollard

LRA Group (1) : A Lee

BNP Group (1) : T Richardson

(b) Task and Finish Panels

(i) Externally funded Leisure and Youth Provision

Lead Officer: D Macnab

Conservative Group : M Colling, Mrs D Collins, Mrs A Grigg, D Stallan

Liberal Democrats Group : Mrs P Brooks, Mrs A Haigh, L Martin, K Wright

LRA Group : A Lee

Independent Group : R Chidley

Labour Group : Mrs J Davis

BNP Group : T Richardson

(ii) Register of Development Proposals (incorporating Roads/Pavements and Parking in Residential Areas)

Lead Officer: J Scott

Conservative Group : A Green, J Hart, Mrs J Lea, Mrs S Perry

Liberal Democrats Group : D Kelly, F Maclaine, K Rush, G Stollar,
Mrs J H Whitehouse, M Woollard

LRA Group : K Angold- Stephens

Labour Group : Mrs J Davis

Independent Group : Mrs D Borton

BNP Group : Mrs P Richardson

(iii) Travellers (Paynes Lane and Wider Issues)

Lead Officer: J Gilbert/J Preston

Conservative Group : Mrs D Collins, P McMillan, Mrs P Smith,
Ms S-A Stavrou

Liberal Democrats Group : Mrs P Brooks, J M Whitehouse

LRA Group : K Faulkner

Independent Group : Mrs D Borton

BNP Group : T Richardson

(iv) Member Training

Lead Officer: I Willett

Conservative Group : J Demetriou, R D'Souza, Mrs M Sartin, D Stallan

Liberal Democrats Group : F Maclaine, Mrs K Rush

Independent Group : R Morgan

Labour Group : Mrs J Davis

BNP Group : Mrs P Richardson

(c) Chairmen/Vice-Chairmen

Housing:

Chairman : S Murray
Vice Chairman : Mrs R Gadsby

Constitutional Affairs:

Chairman : R Morgan
Vice Chairman : Mrs P Brooks

ICT and E Government:

Chairman : F Maclaine
Vice Chairman : M Cohen

Finance and Performance Management:

Chairman : J M Whitehouse
Vice Chairman : A Green

Environment and Planning:

Chairman : D Stallan
Vice Chairman : M Woollard

Externally funded Leisure and Youth Provision:

Chairman : Mrs A Grigg
Vice Chairman : A Lee

Travellers:

Chairman : P McMillan
Vice Chairman : Mrs D Borton

Register of Development Proposals:

Chairman : F Maclaine
Vice Chairman : K Angold-Stephens

Member Training:

Chairman : Mrs M Sartin
Vice Chairman : Mrs K Rush

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