

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF SCRUTINY PANELS REVIEW TASK AND FINISH PANEL
HELD ON MONDAY, 29 SEPTEMBER 2014
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT 7.00 - 8.00 PM**

Members Present: K Angold-Stephens (Chairman), Mrs R Gadsby, Mrs M Sartin, D Stallan (Housing Portfolio Holder) and Mrs J H Whitehouse

Other members present:

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

Officers Present S G Hill (Assistant Director (Governance & Performance Management)), S Tautz (Democratic Services Manager) and G. Nicholas (National Management Trainee)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs. A. Grigg.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Mrs. M. Sartin be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Panel for the remainder of the municipal year.

4. SCOPE OF REVIEW AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

Members were reminded that, at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 25 February 2014, the establishment of the Task and Finish Panel to review the structure of the existing framework of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Standing Panels, had been agreed.

A review of the Council's overview and scrutiny arrangements had been undertaken in 2013/14 and the new management structure had been finalised in December 2013, resulting in a reduction from seven service directorates to four. A proposal for a suggested new scrutiny panel structure aligned to each of the directorates, which had not been considered as part of the overview and scrutiny review, had been deferred by the Committee in February 2014 for further consideration.

The Panel considered draft terms of reference for the review and welcomed Gareth Nicholas (National Management Trainee), who was leading the officer support for the review during his initial six-month placement with the Council. Members noted that the review was only to address the possible future structure of the scrutiny panel

framework and that wider constitutional aspects (unless the Panel identified any matters that affected the constitution) and the operation of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee itself, were excluded from the scope of the review exercise, having already been considered by the earlier review.

In undertaking the review, Members intended to gather evidence and information from relevant stakeholders, and agreed to invite the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of each of the existing scrutiny panels to attend the next meeting to discuss the operation of the current framework. In the meantime, officers would also seek the views of service directors in relation to the review and identify options for a future framework in discussion with other local authorities and representative organisations.

The changes to the management structure of the Council also presented the Panel with an opportunity to consider the workloads of the existing scrutiny panels. Members therefore agreed that some comparison of the terms of reference of each panel should be undertaken as part of the review, in order to ensure that panels have balanced and achievable work programmes. The review was also to consider appropriate scrutiny arrangements for some elements of the functions of the Governance Directorate and how these interrelated with the terms of reference of the Audit and Governance Committee and the Standards Committee, as this was an area of concern expressed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee when the directorate-aligned proposal had been considered earlier in the year. The Panel intended to discuss these matters with the Chairmen of the Audit and Governance and Standards Committees. The Panel also wished to consult with all members in relation to the review and would report progress with regard to the review to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a regular basis.

The review was due for completion in February 2015 to allow time for a final report to be considered by the Committee and the Council during March/April 2015, with a view to the agreement of any necessary constitutional changes and the introduction of the preferred Overview and Scrutiny Panel structure at the commencement of the next municipal year.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be recommended to agree the proposed terms of reference and scope for the Panel's review of the structure of the existing of overview and scrutiny panel framework.

5. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**RESOLVED:**

That future meetings of the Panel be held at 7.00pm on the following dates:

20 October 2014
25 November 2014
20 January 2015