

Minutes

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

11th July 2012



Councillors	Present	Councillors	Present
P R Barlow	Yes	F Ricci	Yes
C A Cadman	Yes	W J Rose	Apologies
Dr R L Evans (Chairman)	Yes	A F Shelton	Apologies
P Horner	Yes	J S Sutton	Apologies
S A Howell	Yes	J R Swift	Yes
R P Ramage	Apologies		

7. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

INFORMATION: There were no declarations of interests.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, all councillors remained in the meeting for all items and took part in the debate and decision thereon.

8. **QUESTION TIME**

INFORMATION: There were no questions asked or statements made.

9. **MINUTES**

DECISION: That the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 30th May 2012 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

10. **TASK AND FINISH GROUP - SCRUTINY OF THE COUNCIL'S LAND AND PROPERTY INVESTMENT POLICIES**

INFORMATION: Members thought the report did not reach any conclusions and noted that it did not contain any recommendations. However, members also noted that there was no requirement for the report to do so.

In considering the report, Members queried the following:

- What the Council might do differently if a property similar to Mayland House (e.g., Grove House, Witham) potentially became available? For example, if an offer was made to surrender the lease, would the Council seek to negotiate a fund to cover the maintenance period or leave the Council exposed to a revenue cost?

- When the option of relocating the Council from Causeway House to Mayland House became available, that option initially looked attractive. Why did the Council decide not to pursue that option and to remain in Causeway House?

Subject to the report containing an addendum, members agreed that the report be referred to Council and to Cabinet.

DECISION: That subject to the report containing an addendum covering the above points, that the report be referred to Council and to Cabinet.

11. **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2012-13 – SCRUTINY OF THE BRAINTREE DISTRICT COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP.**

INFORMATION: Members agreed that the report contained a good range of topics and questions for scrutiny of Braintree District Community Safety Partnership (CSP) in September.

The following additions to the topics and questions were agreed:

- How does the CSP engage with local communities?
- What other resources does the Council provide to the CSP beyond holding the funds?
- Which Council objectives have been met through the outcomes and benefits from the CSP?
- Who are the partners in the CSP?

Members agreed that it would be helpful to receive the answers to the questions in advance of the Committee's meeting. In this way the Committee would gain the maximum from the scrutiny session with the CSP. It was agreed that the Member Services Manager would seek the answers in advance, if possible.

12. **TASK AND FINISH GROUPS - COMPOSITION OF TWO GROUPS AND CONSIDERATION OF ESTABLISHING A FURTHER GROUP**

INFORMATION: Members considered the Scrutiny Steering Board's recommendation that a third Task and Finish Group be established to review recycling and waste management and consider possible future targets for the Council. Members believed the Groups already established to be greater priorities for the Council. Members considered a review of recycling and waste management was a lower priority as the Council is performing well in this area although noted that the purpose was to consider further advancements.

Members were also concerned that establishing a third group might spread member scrutiny resources too thinly and not achieve the best results for the two groups already established.

Members therefore agreed that a third Task and Finish Group to consider recycling and waste management should not be established at this stage.

In considering the Scrutiny Steering Board's recommendations on the composition of the Task and Finish Group reviewing Affordable and Social Housing, and the Citizens Advice

Bureau and Braintree District Voluntary Support Agency members agreed with the recommendations.

DECISION:

1. That the Task and Finish Group reviewing Affordable and Social Housing has the following composition:

Councillors Banthorpe, Barlow, Cadman, Gibson, Horner, Kirby, Lynch, Mann, Rose, Shelton, Shepherd (11 Members).

Chairman of the Group: Cllr Barlow.

2. That the Task and Finish Group reviewing Citizens Advice Bureau and the Braintree District Voluntary Support Agency has the following composition:

Councillors Allen, Cadman, Canning, Cunningham, Elliott, Fincken, Howell, Johnston, Parker, Sutton, Swift, Rice, Wilson (13 members).

Chairman of the Group: Cllr Wilson.

3. That a Task and Finish Group on Recycling and Waste Management to review of possible future targets for the Council is not established at this stage.

13. **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - MEMBER DEVELOPMENT**

INFORMATION: Members agreed that a daytime member development session providing the following would be useful to Committee members:

- General refresher Overview and Scrutiny Committee knowledge;
- Recent development in Overview and Scrutiny for example, the impact of the Localism Act;
- Specific scrutiny skills: for example, questioning techniques, evaluating and analysing evidence.

It was agreed that Member Services Manager would arrange a member development based on the above in consultation with the Chairman.

14. **DECISION PLANNER**

DECISION: That the Decision Planner for the period 15th June to 31st October 2012 be received and noted.

The meeting commenced at 7.15pm and closed at 8.28pm.

Dr R L Evans
Chairman