

CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AGENDA

6.30pm

Monday
23 July 2007

Havering Town Hall
Main Road, Romford

Members 6: Quorum 3

COUNCILLORS:

Robby Misir (C)
Robert Benham
Fred Osborne
Vacancy

Ray Morgon (VC)
Linda Hawthorn

For information about the meeting please contact:
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NOTES ABOUT THE MEETING

1. HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Council is committed to protecting the health and safety of everyone who attends meetings of its Committees.

At the beginning of the meeting, there will be an announcement about what you should do if there is an emergency during its course. **For your own safety and that of others at the meeting, please comply with any instructions given to you about evacuation of the building, or any other safety related matters.**

2. MOBILE COMMUNICATIONS DEVICES

Although mobile phones, pagers and other such devices are an essential part of many people's lives, their use during a meeting can be disruptive and a nuisance. Everyone attending is asked therefore to ensure that any device is switched to silent operation or switched off completely.

3. CONDUCT AT THE MEETING

Although members of the public are welcome to attend meetings of the Committee, they have no right to speak at them. Seating for the public is, however, limited and the Council cannot guarantee that everyone who wants to be present in the meeting room can be accommodated. When it is known in advance that there is likely to be particular public interest in an item the Council will endeavour to provide an overspill room in which, by use of television links, members of the public will be able to see and hear most of the proceedings.

The Chairman of the meeting has discretion, however, to invite members of the public to ask questions or to respond to points raised by Members. Those who wish to do that may find it helpful to advise the Committee Officer before the meeting so that the Chairman is aware that someone wishes to ask a question.

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT THE CHAIRMAN MAY REQUIRE ANYONE WHO ACTS IN A DISRUPTIVE MANNER TO LEAVE THE MEETING AND THAT THE MEETING MAY BE ADJOURNED IF NECESSARY WHILE THAT IS ARRANGED.

If you need to leave the meeting before its end, please remember that others present have the right to listen to the proceedings without disruption. Please leave quietly and do not engage others in conversation until you have left the meeting room.

AGENDA ITEMS

1 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman will announce details of the arrangements in case of fire or other events that might require the meeting room or building's evacuation.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS
(if any) - receive.

3 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Members are invited to declare any interests in any of the items on the agenda at this point of the meeting. Members may still declare an interest in an item at any time prior to the consideration of the matter.

4 TOPIC GROUPS

To agree the topic groups to be carried out by the Committee during 2007/08.

5 URGENT BUSINESS

Other business may be considered at the meeting if the Chairman agrees that the circumstances justify consideration on the grounds of urgency. The reasons for this will be recorded in the minutes.

Cheryl Coppel
Chief Executive



MEETING	DATE	ITEM
CORPORATE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	23 JULY 2007	4

POSSIBLE AREAS FOR SCRUTINY

At the last Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 19 June 2007 the following items were raised for consideration as topic group subjects for 2007/08:

- **Performance Monitoring Information Packs:**
The topic group could consider what information the committee would wish to receive within the Information Packs relating to its portfolios.
- **Sickness Monitoring:**
The topic group could consider reviewing the sickness levels and look at ways of reducing them. If Members chose this as a Topic, they should be aware that Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertook a similar review and reported to Cabinet in 2004.

The following items were submitted for consideration at the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 26 September 2006. The Committee may wish to consider these as possible areas for scrutiny for 2007/08.

FINANCE AND COMMERCIAL

Financial Services

- **Using our procurement to benefit the community:**
The topic group could consider reviewing how much the procurement processes of the authority assists the local economy. This could involve assessing how much Council business goes to local businesses, whether the Council promotes and enables this and what more can be done.
- **Financial management skills within the Council**

The topic group could consider the financial management skills within the council and if these could be improved. This could cover officers and members; be general or selective in certain service areas.

Exchequer Services

- Approach to addressing arrears
The Annual Letter from the Audit Commission recommends the Council continue to actively manage arrears. Arrears can be for Council Tax, Business Rates or general debt e.g. social services, commercial rent etc. This topic group could review the overall debt management strategy; specific recovery cycles for specific types of debt e.g. Council Tax and ways of improving collection rates. This could involve comparisons with other Councils as well as identifying new initiatives to promote payment.
- Improving performance on NNDR
Business Rates (NNDR) are collected on behalf of the Government. Despite significant improvements having taken place on collection rates, the Council's performance compared to other boroughs has not been good. There is a specific action plan and the Council is also looking at a partnership arrangement with Barking and Dagenham which is a high performer on collection.

Land & Property Services

- Our approach to community buildings
The Council has a number of Community Buildings which are used by various community organisations who pay a rent to the Council. The lease arrangements can differ and the authority needs to undertake a review of arrangements. A topic group could contribute to this review
- DDA compliance
The Disability Discrimination Act places a number of responsibilities on local authorities. The Topic Group could consider the Council's compliance with this in respect of buildings and other areas e.g. staff.

Business Systems

- Maximising use of systems/system exploitation
The Council has a number of systems which are used to deliver services. The Group could consider the Council's use of one or more systems to assess if there is full use/exploitation of the system capability by reviewing and comparing usage.
- Community use of web/internet site
There is a drive to increase customers accessing services and information on the internet. The Group could review what is currently available; how this could be improved and what actions could be taken to improve this means of access.
- Performance information/management systems

The topic group could continue the work undertaken by a previous topic group which reviewed management and performance information systems to Members.

PUBLIC REALM

Customer Services

- Telephone system.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

- StreetCare call-centre
Whether this could be integrated with Environmental Health as well as catering for calls concerning issues connected with parks (grass-cutting, litter, vandalism)
- Scimitar House – hot-desking
Review the position and success
- Best Value Performance Indicators – review of.
- Elections Service/elections process

Is it reasonable to expect the same staff who have been manning polling stations from early morning, to have to be part of the count? Also, to conduct a review of the postal vote – why had residents received postal voting ballot papers when they had not been requested? In addition, to compare Havering's Electoral Services with the way elections are organised and managed in other councils.

- Vacancy control
- Capital Spend monitoring – the borough spending plan.
- Review of leases and outside organisations
- To continue the Performance Management and Information topic Group.