

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD  
Havering Town Hall, Main Road, Romford  
27 November 2014 (7.30pm - 8.50 pm)**

**Present:**

**COUNCILLORS**

<b>Conservative Group</b>	John Crowder, Philippa Crowder, Jason Frost, Steven Kelly, Robby Misir, Dilip Patel and Carol Smith
<b>Residents' Group</b>	June Alexander, Nic Dodin, +Barbara Matthews and Barry Mugglestone
<b>East Residents' Havering Group</b>	Gillian Ford (Chairman) and Linda Hawthorn
<b>UKIP Group</b>	Lawrence Webb (Vice-Chair)
<b>Independent Residents Group</b>	David Durant and Graham Williamson

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Ray Morgon.

+Substitute members: Councillor Barbara Matthews (for Ray Morgon).

All decisions were taken with no votes against.

The Chairman reminded Members of the action to be taken in an emergency.

**1 BOARD MEMBERSHIP**

The membership of the Board was noted.

**2 MINUTES**

The minutes of the Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 8 September and the minutes of the Value Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 18 September were agreed as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

**3 OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD - TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Members considered a report that outlined the terms of reference of the Overview & Scrutiny Board.

The report outlined that the establishment of an Overview and Scrutiny Board would allow the co-ordination of work amongst the six Sub-Committees and that all Sub-Committee Chairmen would be members of the Board. The Board would need to consider how best work could be coordinated to avoid duplication of effort and how it could ensure that the effectiveness of scrutiny was monitored. Additionally, the Board would have a number of specific powers and responsibilities.

It would be the responsibility of the Board to deal with all requisitions or call-ins received of Executive Decisions. Clearly, it would seem appropriate for the relevant Sub-Committee Chairman to have close involvement in scrutiny of the requisitioned issue but Members should note the change to previous practice whereby all requisitions would now be considered at Board level. It may also on occasion be necessary to call a meeting of the Board at short notice in order to allow for timely consideration of a called-in decision.

Formal scrutiny of the Council's overall budgets would now be the responsibility of the Overview and Scrutiny Board with the previous twice-yearly (if required) joint budget meetings of the overview and scrutiny committees now becoming meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Board. The Overview and Scrutiny Board would also receive for scrutiny each set of performance reports that had been considered by Cabinet.

The functions of the former Value Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be taken over by the Overview and Scrutiny Board. The Board would therefore have the full scrutiny functions, including the establishment of any topic groups, within the following areas:

- Strategy and commissioning
- Partnerships with Business
- Customer access
- E-government and ICT
- Finance
- Human resources
- Asset Management
- Property resources
- Facilities Management
- Communications
- Democratic Services
- Social inclusion
- Councillor Call for Action

During discussions Members agreed that it would be useful in future if meetings of the Board could be synced in line with meeting of Cabinet to ensure that the latest performance indicator data was available for consideration.

Members also requested a list of the Council's policies and strategies and asked that the list be broken down into overview & scrutiny areas of

responsibility. Members were advised that there was a schedule of policies and strategies available that was being used to develop a policies and strategies framework.

Members agreed that all future topic group reports should go straight to Cabinet rather than through the Board to ensure there was no delay in Cabinet considering the findings.

Members were reminded that topic group recommendations needed to be specific and achievable to allow them to be considered for implementation following Cabinet consideration.

Following a previous strategic review of scrutiny it had been suggested that one topic group be set up at a time to allow for efficient officer support.

During the discussion Members agreed that as topic groups were not decision making bodies some topic groups could be set up and run without officer support and that the group's findings could be fed back to officers at the end of the scrutiny period.

Members agreed to continue with the former Value OSC's previously agreed topic groups of debt recovery and sickness absence management.

It was **AGREED** to adopt the terms of reference of the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

#### 4 **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD - WORK PROGRAMME**

Members considered a report that outlined a draft work programme for the municipal year for the Board. Following initial discussions with the Chairman, several standing items had been suggested including an update on the position with current topic groups run by the Sub-Committees and the scrutiny of the performance reports that were submitted to Cabinet. Space had also been allocated for Members of any Sub-Committee to refer matters to the Board that they felt merited scrutiny at the Board level.

It was also envisaged that brief updates on the work of each Sub-Committee would be given at each meeting of the Board. Members also noted that the Board would take over responsibility for scrutiny of the Council's overall budget proposals and its Financial Strategy.

Members also noted that the work plan was in draft form at this stage and Members were welcome to make any additions or changes to the proposals during discussion at the initial meeting of the Board or in the future.

During discussions a matter was raised which related to child protection and how the Police were reviewing twelve cases of possible Child sexual exploitation within the borough. Members expressed their concern that Children's Services may have been unaware of the problem.

It was agreed that officers would seek clarification of the situation and report their findings back to the Members of the Board directly before the next meeting.

Members **AGREED** the work programme.

## **5 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 1 2014/15**

Members considered a report which outlined the Corporate Performance Indicators for Quarter 1 2014/15.

Members discussed the current performance indicator monitoring and agreed that changes were needed to the reports in the future. Items mentioned for change were the colouring of the direction of travel of the indicators that needed to be made clearer for Members to consider. Members also felt it would be useful to ascertain what indicators were statutory and which were corporate.

Members also discussed the need for officers to state in their reasons what actions they planned to take to reverse a poor performing indicator and that the quality of the comments provided by officers needed to improve. There was also some discussion of the effectiveness of Heads of Service setting their own performance targets and what penalties were afforded if targets were not met.

Officers advised that if the yearly agreed targets were not met then additional funding could be lost affecting the next year's budget . Members noted that scrutiny could not change the targets but could only scrutinise performance.

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**Chairman**