

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

Meeting: 1 June 2020

At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Councillor Lisa Smart (Chair) in the chair; Councillors Keith Holloway, Steve Gribbon, Wendy Meikle and Mark Roberts.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 13 March 2020 were approved as a correct record.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors and officers were invited to declare any interests which they had in any of the items on the agenda for the meeting.

No declarations were made.

3. CALL-IN

There were no call-in items to consider.

4. MANAGEMENT OF VIRTUAL COMMITTEES

The Head of Legal and Democratic Governance and Monitoring Officer submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) detailing the work that had taken place to enable the Council to hold committee meetings virtually whilst still adhering to its statutory duties and the regulations that came into force on 4 April 2020, in the light of the guidance issued by the Prime Minister at the end of March 2020 on social distancing and attendance in the workplace for essential business only.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- Consideration needed to be given to the practical application of the Council Meeting Procedure Rules to remote meetings and whether there was need to amend, revise or supplement these to account for the particular requirements of meetings undertaken 'virtually'.
- It was important that training for committee chairs on chairing remote meetings should be offered as soon as possible.
- It was important that all members were able to sign into Microsoft Teams using their network credentials, rather than as a 'guest' to ensure that they had the full suite of options and features of the software available to them.
- It was advantageous for committee chairs, in particular, to be able to see as many members in the room as possible. It was noted that the Microsoft Teams app for iPads only permitted a member to view a maximum of four participants.

- There needed to be clarification on the rules around the muting of participants and ejecting of members from the room.
- The work towards transitioning to an alternative platform for remote meetings was welcomed.
- Clarity was requested on the process that would be followed in the eventuality that a committee chair experienced technical difficulties and lost their connection with the meeting.
- Consideration needed to be given the practicalities of accessing committee papers delivered electronically through modern.gov app and the use of Microsoft Teams. It was commented that many members did not have multiple devices to facilitate this.
- Democratic Services would undertake training sessions with members of scrutiny committees in advance of each meeting taking place.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the thanks of the Scrutiny Committee be expressed for the work that had taken place in a short period of time to facilitate and deliver remote committee meetings.

5. REINVIGORATING SCRUTINY - PLANS FOR THE YEAR

The Chair reported that this item had been placed on the agenda at her request to allow the Scrutiny Committee to give consideration to the development of a scrutiny work programme for 2020/21, and with regard to the progress that had been made towards completing those elements from the 2019/20 work programme that remained outstanding.

The Chair commented that there had been significant change since the 2019/20 work programme had been set, and in particular, as a result of the impact of the coronavirus pandemic that may give rise to legitimate questions on whether it was appropriate to continue some of the work that was commenced.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- That for the first scrutiny rounds of the Municipal Year an item be included on the agendas for each of the scrutiny committees requesting that members give consideration to the development of a work programme for the forthcoming year.
- It was important that each scrutiny committee took responsibility for the design of their own work programme.
- Consideration needed to be given to the value of continuing some of the work that was outstanding from the previous year.
- The potential for coordinated pieces of scrutiny work taking place across scrutiny committees was welcomed.
- It was requested that for reports that are submitted to more than one scrutiny committee, the element of the report that was within the purview of that committee was clearly highlighted.
- There may be value in re-evaluating the relationship between the Council and local health partners to ensure that this was working effectively.
- It was noted that all scrutiny committees would be receiving an update on the Council's response to the coronavirus pandemic on those areas within their respective remits.

RESOLVED – That the approach to developing a comprehensive scrutiny work programme for the forthcoming Municipal Year be noted.

6. SCRUTINY INVOLVEMENT IN RECOVERY PLANNING

The Chair reported that this item had been placed on the agenda at her request to enable the Scrutiny Committee to give consideration to the role of the wide scrutiny function in recovery planning post-Covid-19.

The Chair stated that greater scrutiny generally led to better decision-making and outcomes.

The Statutory Scrutiny Officer reported on the work that had taken place thus far, and stated that each Scrutiny Committee would receive an update on the work that had taken place so far in this regard to enable committees to have a discussion about recovery planning for the future.

RESOLVED – That it be noted that Scrutiny Committees would be fully engaged in the recovery planning process.

The meeting closed at 6.34 pm