

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **23rd June 2015**.

Present:

Cllr. Chilton (Chairman);
Cllr. Michael (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Farrell, Feacey, Howard, Knowles, Krause, Link, Sims, Webb, Wedgbury.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 1.2(iii) Councillor Webb attended as a Substitute Member for Councillor Burgess.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Adby, Burgess, Miss Martin.

Also Present:

Personnel Officer, Member Services and Scrutiny Manager, Member Services & Scrutiny Support Officer.

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Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Committee held on the 24th March 2015 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

43 Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2014/15

The Chairman advised that the Council's Constitution required the O&S Committee to make an annual report to Full Council. This was the report for the Municipal Year May 2014 – March 2015.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted, and presented to Full Council on 16th July 2015.

44 Sickness Absence 2014/15

The Personnel Officer introduced this item and drew Members' attention to the continuing downward trend in sickness absence, albeit marginal. He noted that ABC's sickness absence figures were healthy in comparison with other Kent local authorities and national statistics. However, he assured Members that there was no complacency, and that sickness absence figures were regularly monitored, and managers were offered continual support in terms of advice and training.

The Chairman noted that the Portfolio Holder had been unable to attend the meeting, but she had tabled a statement. Members considered the sickness absence figures showed that the Council had a strong handle on sickness absence, particularly in view of the fact that the figures were distorted by long term illness. In answer to a question, the Personnel Officer confirmed that reasons for absence were analysed, with a particular emphasis on stress related absence. He also advised that all long term sickness cases had now been concluded and staff had either departed from the organisation or had been managed back to work. Members confirmed that they would continue to welcome an annual sickness absence report to the Committee.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted, and the Committee receive a further report in a year's time.

45 Future Reviews and Report Tracker

The Chairman questioned whether Members would be willing and able to attend daytime meetings of the Committee. Several Members said they were working during the daytime and would not be able to attend daytime meetings, so it was agreed that the Committee would continue to meet at 7pm. However, it was noted that the Council Chamber was considered too large for the Committee, and it was agreed that future meetings should take place in one of the other Committee Rooms. It was noted that the proposed meeting of 28th July would now take place on 21st July. Some Members requested that the Committee meeting of 27th October should be changed due to half-term and the Member Services and Scrutiny Manager agreed to look at alternative dates and advise Members of the Committee in due course.

The Chairman advised Members that volunteers would be required for the formation of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group in July, and he asked any interested Members to contact the Member Services and Scrutiny Manager. Members suggested that the following items be added to the Report Tracker:

- Parish competencies – the Chairman responded that the Boundaries Commission would be covering this issue.
- Quality Bus Partnership – the Chairman said he would welcome a brief information report to the July Committee meeting when it could be decided whether to pursue the issue further.
- Emergency Room handling of the recent explosion in Little Knoll/Oak Tree Road – the Chairman considered this was a suitable one-off item for scrutiny and it was agreed to add this item to the Report Tracker.
- Implementing the Social Value Act 2012 and procurements falling under that Act – one Member considered that it would be useful to consider how the Act was being implemented and whether the Council were deriving all available benefits. The Chairman said he would like to receive a brief information report summarising the current situation, with a view to further investigations in due course.

The Chairman noted that Cabinet were also likely to ask the Committee to consider various items over the coming year.

Resolved:

- i) That the Committee meeting scheduled for 28th July 2015 be moved to 21st July 2015.**
- ii) That the Committee meeting scheduled for 27th October 2015 be brought forward to an earlier date.**
- iii) That the items 'Quality Bus Partnership', 'Emergency Planning' and 'Implementing the Social Value Act 2012' be added to the Future Reviews and Reports Tracker.**

Queries concerning these Minutes? Please contact Rosie Reid:
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