



## **SCRUTINY**

**4.30 p.m. - 6.05 p.m.**

**11 September 2008**

Present: Councillors Stephenson (Chair), Watkins (Vice-Chair), Blower, Cannell, Driver, Fairbairn, Fisher, Jeraj, Little (A), Offord and Ramsay

Apologies: Councillors Bradford and Gihawi

### **1. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the Scrutiny Committees held on 5 and 12 June 2008.

### **2. EXECUTIVE FORWARD AGENDA**

The Chair explained that the Executive Forward Agenda would be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee on a regular basis so that members could identify any potential issues for scrutiny.

The Scrutiny Officer pointed out that the Executive Forward Agenda was a working document and referred to changes that had been made since the Scrutiny Agenda had been despatched. In particular the report on Equalities Standard Level 2 which had been scheduled to go to Executive on 15 October would now be delayed until the end of the year. This meant that the item on the draft Scrutiny Work Programme for 9 October would also need to be deferred.

**RESOLVED** to -

- (1) note the Executive Forward Agenda;
- (2) ask officers to look at the possibility of more clearly identifying exempt items on the Forward Agenda.

### **3. SETTING A SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME AND TOPICS**

The Chair referred to the report and commented on the issues to be taken into account when setting the Committee's work programme. She referred to a suggestion that the Committee might look at the way in which the Planning Department communicated with the public. She had discussed this suggestion with

the Chair of the Planning Applications Committee and the Head of Planning who had agreed to hold informal discussions with members of the Planning Applications Committee in the first instance to decide whether this was something they would wish to refer to Scrutiny.

During discussion members identified the following items for inclusion in the future Scrutiny Work Programme:-

- Post Offices (what additional Council services could be provided through the Post Office?)
- Cycle provision (how can we significantly increase the amount of safe cycling in the City?)
- Allotments
- Credit Unions
- Norwich Castle Gardens (options for improving the area in the longer term with young people to be involved in the review)
- Cemetery capacity (options for the future)
- Environmental Strategy (pre-Scrutiny prior to Executive)
- Economic Development Partnership with UEA (pre-Scrutiny prior to Executive)
- Neighbourhood Management Pilots (pre-Scrutiny prior to Executive)
- Participatory Democracy Working Party (how do we improve participation in public life linked to community and youth engagement and tenant participation? Might want to review work being done on elections and engagement in the unitary bid)
- Living wage
- Citywide parking permits (to involve disabled parking)
- Public toilets (accessibility, cleanliness and safety)
- Heartsease Academy Review (possibly after an initial period of operation)

The Chair pointed out that it might be sensible for some issues to be considered through smaller working groups who could then report their findings to the main Committee. The Scrutiny Officer said that he would update the Work Programme to include the issues identified at the meeting. This would include initial scoping to reflect the issues raised. This could then be refined at the next meeting as appropriate.

**RESOLVED** to ask the Scrutiny Officer to update the Committee's Work Programme taking into account the discussion minuted above and report back to the next meeting.

#### **4. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH ACT 2007 - IMPLICATIONS FOR SCRUTINY**

The Scrutiny Officer presented the report and answered questions about the extension of local authority scrutiny powers under this legislation.

Discussion took place on the need for clear procedures to be followed in relation to the Councillor Call for Action to ensure that it was only used where other options had been exhausted. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services pointed out that such procedures could be drawn up once the relevant regulations were available. He would hold a briefing for all members at this time. The scheme would also need to be publicised to residents.

**RESOLVED** to -

- (1) include the Safer Norwich Partnership Plan and regular Safer Norwich Partnership performance data updates on the Scrutiny Work Programme;
- (2) take up the role as the referral body for Councillor Call for Action once the relevant regulations have been passed;
- (3) note that a briefing will be held for all members on the Councillor Call for Action at this time.

#### **5. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE TO THE NORFOLK COUNTY STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP JOINT SCRUTINY PANEL**

**RESOLVED**, having considered the report, to appoint the Chair as the Council's representative on the Norfolk County Strategic Partnership Joint Scrutiny Panel with the Vice-Chair as substitute for the current civic year.

#### **6. NORFOLK HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED** to defer consideration of this item to the next meeting in the absence of Councillor Bradford.

CHAIR