



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

MINUTES

WESTMINSTER SCRUTINY COMMISSION

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a meeting of the Westminster Scrutiny Commission held on Tuesday 6th July at 7.00pm in Committee Rooms 5, 6 & 7, 17th Floor, City Hall, 64 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6QP

Present: Councillors Ian Adams, Alan Bradley, Angela Harvey, Andrew Havery, Audrey Lewis, Sarah Richardson and Barrie Taylor

Apologies: None

1. MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 Councillor Audrey Lewis nominated Councillor Sarah Richardson as Chairman. This was seconded by Councillor Havery and agreed by the Commission.
- 1.2 **RESOLVED:** That Councillor Sarah Richardson be appointed as Chairman of the Westminster Scrutiny Commission.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

- 2.1 None declared.

3. MINUTES

- 3.1 The following issues were raised:
- 3.2 Minute 3.3: Members requested that the written update on the current plan for IT support for Integrated Street Management and Premises Management be re-circulated.
- 3.3 Minute 3.4: Sam Mowbray, Head of Members' Services, confirmed that a proposal regarding the development of Ward Bulletins had been sent to the Chief Executive for consideration.
- 3.4 Minute 3.5: Members were concerned that they had not yet received any information about a comprehensive knowledge management strategy. This

had been raised by the Commission during discussions with the Chief Executive at a number of meetings.

- 3.5 Minute 3.6: The Commission commented that the corporate website was still in need of vast improvement as information was out of date and hard to find. Sam Mowbray commented that whilst the website had improved, it was acknowledged that there was still work to be done to ensure the pages were accurate and the number of pages reduced. The Commission also asked if any consideration had been given to improving the Members Information Portal (MIP) and was informed that the MIP was currently very labour intensive and that consideration was being given to putting the MIP on the same platform as the WIRE which would give Members access to the Council directory as well as a @westminster.gov.uk email address.

3.6 **Action points**

- 3.6.1 The Commission requested a copy of the proposal regarding Ward Bulletins.
- 3.6.2 The Commission asked for a more detailed note of the discussions had with the Leader at the April meeting (minute 5.5).
- 3.7 **RESOLVED**: That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 April 2010 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4. **WORK OF THE WESTMINSTER SCRUTINY COMMISSION 2010-2011**

- 4.1 Sam Mowbray, Head of Members' Services introduced the report which set out proposals for scrutiny development and put forward a series of suggested items for the Commission to consider over the forthcoming year.
- 4.2 The Commission discussed the proposals set out in the report:
- Young People's Scrutiny Panel. Some Members felt that engagement with young people, including the establishment of a Young People's Panel, was a decision for the Children and Young People P&S Committee and not for the Commission to decide. Discussion was had as to whether the panel would be representative of all young people across the City and whether it would segregate young people from society further. Members felt that if a young people's panel was established then an argument could be made for establishing other panels such as an older people's panel. Other Members were in favour of the proposals and felt that it would offer a valuable insight, act a 'sounding board' for both issues specific to young people and more corporate topics as well as help shape services so that young people were given what they needed. After some discussion the Chairman suggested that instead of establishing a Young People's panel, guidance on engaging young people in scrutiny activity being undertaken by all P&S Committees could be sought from the Children and Young People P&S Committee as appropriate.
 - Scrutiny bulletin. Whilst there was an agreement in principle the Commission agreed that it needed to focus on the monitoring of

recommendations and outcomes to help scrutiny to be taken more seriously and become more visible.

- Approach to the scrutiny of major contracts. The Commission welcomed the development of a protocol for scrutinising major contracts. Members discussed arrangements for the scrutiny of major contracts given that although it was in the remit of the Finance & Resources P&S Committee, the subject of the contract often fell to another P&S Committee whose Members would have better knowledge of the service and service users needs.

4.3 Other topics which the Commission added to its work programme for the year included the Census, corporate property, procurement and the Comprehensive Spending Review. Members also agreed an approach to other cross-cutting issues and that the number of Commission meetings should be determined by its work programme.

4.4 **Action points**

4.4.1 Members requested that a contracts protocol be developed by Scrutiny and Legal officers.

4.4.2 The Commission requested that a briefing outlining the scrutiny function, including joint and external scrutiny arrangements and the role of petitions, be sent to all Members of the Council.

4.4.3 Members asked officers to develop a proposal for a quarterly scrutiny bulletin, taking their comments into consideration.

4.5 **RESOLVED:** That:

- 1) the following topics be added to the Commission's work programme for 2010-11: 2011 Census, procurement, corporate website, corporate property and the Comprehensive Spending Review;
- 2) due its cross-cutting nature, scrutiny of the Olympics and Paralympics continue to fall to the Built Environment, Business, Enterprise and Skills P&S Committee but that the Chairman would involve other Committees as appropriate and report back to the WSC;
- 3) the Built Environment, Business, Enterprise and Skills P&S Committee also leads on scrutinising the Council's Go-Green initiative, keeping the WSC informed of its work in this area;
- 4) a young people's scrutiny panel would not be established by the Commission but that the Chairman of the Children and Young People P&S Committee consider establishing a Panel under his Committee and guidance on engaging young people in scrutiny activity being undertaken by all P&S Committees would be sought from the Children and Young People P&S Committee as appropriate;

- 5) the Finance & Resources P&S Committee continue to lead on the scrutiny of major contracts but that the Chairman consult the Chairman of the P&S Committee(s) relevant to that particular contract;
- 6) any decision to hold meetings outside of City Hall be at discretion of individual P&S Committees;
- 7) the Leader and the Chief Executive jointly attend question and answer sessions with the Commission; and
- 8) the number of Commission meetings be reviewed and possibly increased, should the work programme require.

5. EXEMPTIONS TO CALL-IN

- 5.1 Ellie Simpkin, Committee and Scrutiny Officer, briefly introduced the report which advised the Commission of the occasions during the last municipal year on which the call-in provisions had been exempted by the Chief Executive due to special circumstances.

5.2 Action Points

- 5.2.1 Members requested that a comparison with other London Boroughs regarding the number of exemptions made to call-in be carried out.

- 5.3 **RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

6. TERMINATION OF MEETING

- 6.1 The meeting ended at 20.35.

CHAIRMAN _____

DATE _____