

CESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee
Held on Thursday, 3rd July, 2008
In the Fred Flint Room, Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach

PRESENT

Councillor A Thwaite (Chairman)
Councillor A Richardson (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors G Baxendale, S Conquest, P Edwards, Mrs B Howell, Mrs L Smetham, A Barratt, S Broadhurst, M Davies and Ms O Hunter

Also Present

Councillor Mrs D Flude

Apologies

Councillors R Menlove

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED:- That Councillor A Thwaite be appointed Chairman for the ensuing year.

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED:- That Councillor A Richardson be appointed Vice Chairman for the ensuing year.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were reported.

4 PUBLIC SPEAKING

There were no questions from members of the public

5 KEY ISSUES IN SCRUTINY

The Committee considered a report of the Cheshire East Governance Lead Officer regarding a framework for scrutiny arrangements, particularly in view of additional powers introduced by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (LGPIH) and the requirements for Health Scrutiny. It was anticipated that such work would include the development of a scrutiny structure, relationship building and member development.

Over recent years, Scrutiny's role had been strengthened through legislation and Government Guidance. The level of expectation regarding its activities and outputs had increased. In addition it is anticipated that the effectiveness of scrutiny arrangements would be an important factor in the Comprehensive Area Assessment.

Some of the key internal roles for scrutiny at a strategic level would include holding the Cabinet to account and providing an operational framework for the Councillor Call for Action and for Local Petitions arising from the LGPIH Act 2007.

External Scrutiny – of LAA Partners, Health Services etc – would underpin the Authority's community leadership role. Acknowledging the Authority's statutory role in relation to Health Scrutiny from April 2009 and the anticipated consequential work-load, the Committee unanimously resolved to recommend the establishment of a separate Health & Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee.

In order to undertake its role the Committee would need to produce a work programme for the Civic Year. Issues which would need to be addressed included an ongoing programme of training and development and resources available to the Scrutiny function. It was felt that the Scrutiny Committee should be supported by trained and experienced Scrutiny Officers.

RESOLVED: - a. That the report be received.

b. That Council be recommended to appoint a Health & Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee at the earliest opportunity

6 SCRUTINY TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

The Committee received a verbal update from the Lead Officer for Member Development on opportunities for scrutiny training. The Cheshire & Warrington Innovation Programme organised various training opportunities which included an accelerated learning forum for Chairmen and Vice Chairmen, and training on specific skills such as questioning and chairing a meeting. Other initiatives were also available which included working with a coach/facilitator who would attend Committee meetings as a "critical friend", role play sessions and electronic training. Visits to other local authorities were also suggested as well as basic training in scrutiny best practice for all members of the Committee.

It was reported that the County Council's Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Select Committee had extended a standing invitation to a representative of this Committee to attend its future meetings as part of the Induction process. It was agreed that notice of the meetings should be circulated to all Committee Members and those who could, would attend as observers.

RESOLVED: - a. That a basic training session in scrutiny best practice be held in August for all Scrutiny Committee members.

b. That the Lead Officer for Member Development submit a report to the next meeting outlining a proposed training programme for Scrutiny Committee members

7 DATES & TIMES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

RESOLVED:- a. That the next meeting of the Committee be held on either the 7th or 14th August 2008 to be preceded by a basic training session on scrutiny best practice.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.10 pm

ANDREW THWAITE
CHAIRMAN