

SCRUTINY PANEL A

Meeting held in the Committee Room, Council Offices, Urban Road, Kirkby-in-Ashfield,

on Tuesday, 7th November, 2017 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor John Knight in the Chair;

Councillors Tony Brewer, Steve Carroll,
Cathy Mason, Lachlan Morrison, Paul Roberts
(substitute for Jim Aspinall) and
Helen-Ann Smith.

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Jim Aspinall and Kevin Rostance.

Officers Present: Mike Joy and Julie Robinson.

SA.7 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and Non Disclosable Pecuniary/Other Interests

Councillor Cathy Mason declared a Non Disclosable Pecuniary/Other Interest in relation to the Outside Body - Ashfield Homes Board. Her interest arose from the fact that she was currently a member of the Ashfield Homes Board.

SA.8 Minutes

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 12th September, 2017 be received and approved.

SA.9 Scrutiny Review of Outside Bodies

The Chairman informed Members that Councillor Jim Aspinall had recently been admitted to hospital. On behalf of the Panel, the Chairman expressed his best wishes to Councillor Aspinall for a speedy recovery.

The Chairman reminded the Panel that the topic to review the membership of Outside Bodies had been added to the 2017/18 Scrutiny Workplan to enable Members to consider the ongoing value such representation provides to the Council and it's local communities and also discuss how we feedback on activities from these organisations.

At this meeting the Chairman suggested that the Panel consider whether a broad classification of Outside Bodies should be adopted to define the relationship between the Outside Body and the Council. The three main categories of involvement being:-

- Strategic/Regional
- Statutory
- Community/Citizenship

The Scrutiny Manager circulated a list of the Outside Bodies that the Council currently appoints representatives to and the specific categories each Organisation had been assigned to.

The Chairman asked Members to note that going forward representation on the Outside Bodies deemed Statutory Bodies would need to continue so for the purposes of this exercise the Panel would only need to consider representation on those Bodies identified within the Strategic/Regional and Community/Citizenship categories.

The Scrutiny Manager also circulated to the Panel a draft record sheet that could be sent to each Outside Body, if Members agreed, in order to obtain specific details to assist the Panel in their review. The record sheet could include the following details:-

- Name of Outside Body
- Contact Information
- Aims and Objectives of their Organisation
- Does the Organisation have a Constitution?
- Number of meetings held each year
- How many representatives is the Council required to appoint?
- Are substitute representatives allowed?

The Scrutiny Manager reported that whilst a short telephone survey had been carried out to obtain information from some of the Organisations and Members currently appointed as representatives, a more in-depth record for each Outside Body would be extremely beneficial to assist the Panel in their review process.

Panel Members then took the opportunity to discuss the following:-

- The costs (if any) associated with the appointment of representatives to Outside Bodies and Officer time attending/supporting Outside Bodies;
- Obtaining further detailed information from all of the Outside Bodies would be beneficial to enable the Panel to have a better understanding of both the role of the organisation/representative and how this benefits the Council;
- The introduction of an effective feedback mechanism to ensure that information is shared on a frequent basis;
- Members to be made more aware of the work of each organisation to ensure that they can make informed decisions as to whether they would wish to be appointed to a particular organisation;
- Acknowledgment of the good work undertaken by the Community/Citizenship organisations and the potential benefit appointing to these organisations have;
- Extending an invite to current representatives and organisations to attend the next meeting to seek their views as to the value of their membership.

The Scrutiny Manager advised the Panel that as part of the ongoing research an understanding of the costs associated from appointing to an Outside Body was currently being undertaken. Such costs would include membership fees, travel and accommodation costs.

The Scrutiny Manager also added that with regard to representatives feeding information back following the attendance at meetings he would explore a number of options for Members to consider to ensure that the most appropriate reporting framework was introduced.

To conclude, the Chairman thanked Members for their comments and agreed that the additional information requested as part of the debate would be key to enable the Panel to put forward some potential recommendations regarding future appointments to Outside Bodies.

RESOLVED

that the Scrutiny Manager be requested to undertake the following in readiness for the next meeting of the Panel :-

- a) to undertake an additional capture data exercise (via a questionnaire) from all the Outside Bodies in relation to the role and remit of that Body;
- b) to produce a comprehensive list of all the Outside Bodies, to include any financial obligations for the Council, and encompassing the additional information acquired from the capture date exercise;
- c) to explore the introduction of an effective feedback mechanism to ensure that information is shared on a frequent basis;
- d) to extend an invitation to a number of representatives/organisations to present their views on their contribution/role and the work of the particular organisation.

The meeting closed at 7.00 p.m.

Chairman.