

ORGANISATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 27 MARCH 2019

I N D E X

Page No	Minute No	Heading
1	654	Apologies for Absence
1	655	Declarations of Interest
1	656	Minutes of Last Meeting
2	657	Scrutiny Review - Governance
4	658	Scrutiny Review – Write Ups
4	659	Scrutiny Review – Job Evaluation and Associated Benefits
5	660	List of Key Decisions – Issue No 83
5	661	Work Programme
5	662	Additional Urgent Items
5	663	Date of Next Meeting

ORGANISATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 27 MARCH 2019

Present:

Councillor D Skinner Chair
Councillor T Mansbridge Vice-Chair
Councillor B Wright Councillor L Robinson

Also Present

Councillor R Smith - Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance
S Gordon - HR and OD Manager
S Veerman - Overview and Scrutiny Manager
D Stanton - Governance Officer

654 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence was received from Councillor J Barry.

655 Declarations of Interest

Members were requested to declare the existence and nature of any disclosable pecuniary interest and/or other interest, not already on their register of interests, in any item on the agenda and withdraw from the meeting at the appropriate time.

656 Minutes of Last Meeting

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of the Organisation Scrutiny Committee held on 16 January 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

657 Scrutiny Review – Governance

Members were reminded that the purpose of the Scrutiny Review was to look into the communications and marketing policies of the Council, to ensure the service was effective.

The Committee continued the review by hearing from Councillor R Smith, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance; who was asked to address a series of questions.

What do you think of the Council's communications with the public?

It was stated that overall, the Council was communicating well with the public. Members noted a variety of media which was used, including the website and posters that provided key information to residents.

Councillor R Smith credited the strengths of individual teams and their efforts in effective communication, such as the Sharley Park Leisure Centre, which had used social media sites to advertise lessons, and share important service information. Despite the increased popularity of social media, she felt that the public's preferred method of contact was by telephone.

The Committee was also informed about the Council's newspaper which was proving popular and was well-read by residents. The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance commented that these methods were proving effective.

What do you think of the Council's communications with Councillors?

Councillor R Smith discussed a variety of internal contacts available to Councillors who were on hand to assist with queries, such as the Governance Team. It was stated that they had a wide range of contacts, and were able to inform Members of important and useful information that they may find useful.

The Committee discussed the Members Portal System, and the use of iPad. The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance acknowledged that IT difficulties had made the site difficult to access and made document viewing for some not ideal. It was hoped that these issues would be resolved in a timely manner.

What do you think of the Council's communications with staff?

Members heard that the Extranet was a popular tool used to keep staff informed, and provided an interactive platform to improve employee and employer relations.

The Committee heard that the Council had a good relationship with the Union's, and that the Human Resources department worked closely to ensure that if any issues were to arise, they would be resolved in a timely and effective manner.

Members noted that a staff survey had recently been completed via an independent company, and the Authority was expecting the results shortly. Councillor R Smith commented that there had been clear efforts to enhance the channels of communication, as it was important employees were valued and listened to.

As Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance – how do you ensure the service is performing?

The Committee heard that monthly meetings take place between the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, the Strategic Director – People, and the Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer, to provide updates on the relevant service areas. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss new ideas, and to inform Councillor R Smith that the services were performing effectively.

Members noted that other performance indicators were used, such as Performance Management Updates, and a Citizens Panel Survey. It was stated that these methods gave a good overview into how the service was performing.

Do you have any suggestions for how the service could be improved?

Councillor R Smith informed the Committee that 'live chat messaging' had recently been introduced, which tended to be more popular with younger residents. Members noted that social media tended to work well, so it was possible that this could be used by other departments.

The Portfolio Holder and the Committee discussed the quality of designs, and the importance of publishing recognised and professional NEDDC branding, and the vital role of the Communications department in upholding those high standards.

Members considered the effectiveness of the Councillors newsletter, and discussed ways in which Members could become more engaged with the publication. The Portfolio Holder suggested that a survey could be sent to Councillors, in order to collate opinions and improve the newsletter. The Committee also made enquiries towards communication between Members and officers, and concerns were raised in regards to Councillors not being fully informed of issues within their own Ward. Members commented that whilst the relationship between Councillors and officers was good, it was important that their democratic legitimacy was recognised.

The Committee discussed the ongoing IT difficulties that some Members were experiencing with iPads, and possible alternatives going forward.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee thanked the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance for attending the meeting, and her contribution towards the Scrutiny Review.

658 Scrutiny Review – Write Ups**Write ups**

The Committee considered evidence that was gathered by interviews as part of the review into the communications and marketing policies of the Council. A number of both strengths/good practice and areas for improvement /recommendations were identified.

Strengths/good practice

The Committee were happy with the summary of strengths /good practice provided by the Overview and Scrutiny Manager and agreed these should be included in the report.

Areas of improvement/recommendations

- Increased resources
- SAMT – cascade information down from Senior Management to Junior officers
- Updating news stories that mean something to residents
- Portfolio identified
- Regular meetings with the Derbyshire Times where appropriate
- Clear direction
- Awareness from officers that designs should be done through the Communications Department
- Members should be informed of what is happening in their ward
- Officers should recognise that Councillors have democratic legitimacy

659 Scrutiny Review – Job Evaluation and Associated Benefits

The Committee received an update on progress on the Job Evaluation and Associated Benefits Action Plan. This included an Employee Health and Wellbeing and Morale update by the HR and OD Manager, so that Members could consider the progress against the Action Plan Targets.

The update set out a number of key themes;

- Improve impact of location of Council Offices
- Provision of seating in external areas
- Improve general maintenance of the Mill Lane Offices
- Support for health and wellbeing and reducing stress
- Ways in which job opportunities can be maximised for staff
- Evaluation exercise to assess use of agency staff
- Effective communication be undertaken for any changes

Within these themes, Members heard of a number of actions taken by the Authority, such as the facilities available in the staff room; a daily lunch

wagon; a Health and Wellbeing Framework; Apprenticeship Programmes; and activity sessions.

RESOLVED – That;

- (1) Progress against the Action Plan Targets be noted.
- (2) The Job Evaluation and Associated Benefits Action Plan be signed off as sufficient progress against the Action Plan Targets has been met, and no further action is required.

660 List of Key Decisions – Issue No 83

The Committee considered Issue No 83 of the List of Key Decisions which set out the major decisions being taken over the next few months.

RESOLVED – That the List of Key Decisions Issue No 83 be noted.

661 Work Programme

The Committee considered the Work Programme for the Organisation Scrutiny Committee 2018/19 which set out the items that the Committee would consider over the forthcoming year.

RESOLVED – That the Committee noted its work programme for the 2019/19 municipal year.

662 Additional Urgent Items

There were no additional urgent items for discussion at this meeting.

663 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next scheduled meeting of the Organisation Scrutiny Committee is 17 April 2019.
