
MEETING	SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
DATE	25 FEBRUARY 2008
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS GALVIN (CHAIR), BLANCHARD (VICE-CHAIR), KIRK, MOORE, SCOTT, SIMPSON-LAING, R WATSON AND D'AGORNE (SUBSTITUTE)
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLORS TAYLOR
IN ATTENDANCE	COUNCILLOR MERRETT

39. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they might have in the business on the agenda.

Councillor Scott declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 4 [Education Scrutiny Committee – Interim Report for School Governors Review (Part A)] as he was a School Governor.

Councillor Moore declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 4 [Education Scrutiny Committee – Interim Report for School Governors Review (Part A)] as he was a School Governor.

Councillor Simpson-Laing declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 4 [Education Scrutiny Committee – Interim Report for School Governors Review (Part A)] as she was a School Governor.

Councillor D'Agorne declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 4 [Education Scrutiny Committee – Interim Report for School Governors Review (Part A)] as he was a School Governor.

Councillor Blanchard declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 4 [Education Scrutiny Committee – Interim Report for School Governors Review (Part A)] as he was the Chair of the York Board of Young Enterprise, a charity which works with local schools.

40. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Management Committee held on 28 January 2008 and the minutes of the Highways Maintenance Scrutiny Committee held on 30 January 2008 be signed as a correct record.

41. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

42. EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - INTERIM REPORT FOR SCHOOL GOVERNORS REVIEW (PART A)

Members considered a report which set out progress with the School Governors Review and requested additional funding of £650.00 to cover the print, postal and database costs in relation to a survey intended to confirm the validity of the information currently held on the Governance Service database and identify any other information pertinent to the objectives of this review.

The Chair of the Education Scrutiny Committee reported that they had sent out 1090 surveys and had received 1050 back.

RESOLVED: (i) That the information in the report be noted.

 (ii) That additional funding of £650.00 be awarded to the Education Scrutiny Committee to help with the costs of the survey.

REASON: To ensure work can proceed as planned for this review whilst complying with scrutiny procedures, protocols and workplans.

43. FINAL REPORT FOR PART B OF THE HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE PROCUREMENT AND PFI AD-HOC SCRUTINY REVIEW

Members considered the final report for Part B of the Highways Maintenance Procurement & PFI Ad-hoc Scrutiny Review.

Members felt that this scrutiny topic had given them valuable knowledge regarding the Highways Public Finance Initiative (PFI) and thanked all of those that had contributed to it.

RESOLVED: (i) That Members agreed the following findings of the Highways Maintenance Ad-Hoc Scrutiny Committee:

- There had been an impact on the repayments to the Venture Fund caused by the delays in implementing the actions agreed as part of the Best Value Review.
- The delays were not unnecessary
- The total savings made in Highways Maintenance since the Best Value Review are significantly higher than those identified therefore there has been no financial loss to the Council caused by the delays in the procurement process.

- (ii) That a report be prepared for the Executive showing the findings of this Scrutiny Review.¹

Action Required

1. Submit item on to Executive Forward Plan and prepare a GR report for the Executive.

44. TRAFFIC CONGESTION AD-HOC SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE - REQUEST FOR FUNDING

Members considered a report that informed them of the alternative options for gathering responses of York residents on the subject of traffic congestion, together with details of funding sources. Members had requested this information at a previous meeting.

The Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager updated that there was no European funding available to support local transport research.

The Head of Marketing and Communications had been consulted on alternative options and he made the following comment:

‘A distinction between consultation and research needs to be drawn. The research team define research as ‘the collection and analysis of data to provide greater understanding’ while consultation is defined as ‘a process of dialogue that leads to a decision.’ Our understanding is that scrutiny members are looking to understand attitudes to congestion and that is not directly linked to a decision therefore, this is research rather than consultation. As scrutiny is not in itself a decision making body (and consultation needs to be part of a defined decision making process) consultation would not be appropriate.’

The Council’s tailor-made research tool is the citizen’s panel talkabout, which is representative of all sections of the city and is also established for research purposes. The Marketing and Communications team would therefore recommend the best way for scrutiny members to gain an understanding of attitudes to congestion would be through a talkabout special, which would cost around £6000.00.

Members discussed the differences between holding a talkabout special and sending a survey to all residents through the Your Ward/Your City route. Some Members thought that the talkabout panels were not comprised of a good socio-economic cross-section of the community; they also questioned how much could be achieved for £6,000. Officers commented that it would be possible to ask more in-depth questions by using the talkabout facility.

The Chair of the Traffic Congestion Ad Hoc Scrutiny Committee believed that these issues were relevant to the whole of the York public and therefore everyone should be consulted which is why it was necessary to request the £17,000 to enable full consultation to take place.

RESOLVED: That the Scrutiny Management Committee request that the Executive be asked for £17,000 to undertake a survey of York residents in the Your Ward publication.¹

REASON: To ensure Members are in a position to undertake effective consultation in this review area in accordance with budgetary provision and procedures.

Action Required

1. Submit an item on to the Executive Forward Plan and prepare a report to the Executive. GR

Councillor J Galvin, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.05 pm and finished at 5.45 pm].