



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

DRAFT MINUTES

Westminster Scrutiny Commission

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a meeting of the **Westminster Scrutiny Commission** held on **Tuesday 28 June 2016** at 7.00pm in Committee Rooms 3 & 4 - 17th Floor, City Hall.

Members Present: Councillors Ian Adams (Chairman), Brian Connell, Antonia Cox, and Barrie Taylor.

Also present: Councillor Ian Rowley.

1. MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 The Commission welcomed Councillor Antonia Cox, and also welcomed Councillor Ian Rowley.
- 1.2 Apologies were received from Councillor Andrew Smith.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 No declarations were received.

3. MINUTES

- 3.1 The Commission agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2015 as a correct record.

4. UPDATE AND QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION WITH THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

- 4.1 The Commission received an update on current and forthcoming corporate issues from Charlie Parker (Chief Executive), who also responded to questions.
- 4.2 The Chief Executive commented on progress on the implementation of the *Westminster Way* programme, which had now been attended by approximately 1,000 members of staff. Over 200 members of staff had

attended the Westminster Way Awards at Porchester Hall in April, which had celebrated those who had demonstrated their commitment to delivering excellent services to Westminster's residents and stakeholders. The Chief Executive confirmed that a more comprehensive resume on the programme would be presented to the Commission at the end of the year.

- 4.3 The Chief Executive also commented on progress in the devolution of powers from Central Government to London Councils; and in deals relating to employment, skills and health. It was anticipated that Westminster would take part in the second series of Health Pilots that were to be staged through the London Health & Care Collaboration Agreement to test devolution.
- 4.4 The Chief Executive informed the Commission that he had attended a meeting with the Leader of the City Council and the new Mayor of London, where issues discussed had included issues such as the work of the West End Partnership; affordable housing; and legislation relating to pedicabs. The Mayor had asked for regular meetings with the Leader to discuss Westminster's agenda.
- 4.5 The Commission highlighted the need for an effective workforce strategy, and noted that an interim people strategy had been put in place for the current calendar year. The Chief Executive confirmed that a new Director of People Services had now been appointed, and that proposals for a more comprehensive strategy would be brought to the next meeting of the Commission in November, for input prior to being finalised and put into effect.
- 4.6 The Commission discussed the implications of the Brexit decision on Westminster, and noted the potential financial impact on areas such as planning fee income, acquisitions, and on public expenditure arising from a Government budget. Members noted that the Brexit decision could also have service implications for issues such as Sustainability & Transformation Plans in the NHS; housing and planning; and community cohesion and stability.
- 4.7 The Commission discussed the governance and accountability that needed to be in place for any Tax Increment Funding received in connection with major projects such as pedestrianising Oxford Street, and agreed that consideration should be given to involving partners and statutory organisations in public scrutiny of the work of the West End Partnership.
- 4.8 Members commented on public accountability in Tri-borough working and the role of scrutiny, and asked to receive a regular review. The Chief Executive confirmed that a more detailed synopsis of Tri-Borough working would be submitted to a meeting of the Commission later in the year, when the Leader of the City Council would also be present and be able to take part in the discussion.
- 4.9 Members discussed ongoing difficulties being experienced with Agresso, and agreed that the Managed Services Programme should remain on the Commission's agenda. The Chief Executive confirmed that the programme was continuing to improve, although work was ongoing; and agreed to provide Members with a briefing on the discussions that had taken place with schools, and on the subsequent action that had been taken.

- 4.10 Other issues discussed included the West End Partnership; the effects of the Accountable Care Programme; and the direction of travel for Tri-Borough working.
- 4.11 Councillor Ian Rowley attended the meeting to address the Commission, together with Councillor Taylor, on the scrutiny function of the Adults, Health & Public Protection Policy & Scrutiny Committee. They suggested that structurally, this Committee had two very different parts to its portfolio and statutory duties in each. The Health and Adult Social Care world was going through major transformation and it was proving difficult for the Scrutiny Committee to fulfil its statutory functions given the scale of service transformation.
- 4.12 Specific issues relating to accountability and governance had arisen from a series of fundamental changes in the NHS and Public Health, which the City Council had a statutory duty for scrutiny and consultation. In addition to Health, the Scrutiny Committee's portfolio also included areas of statutory responsibility in Public Protection.
- 4.13 Councillor Rowley considered that the existing system could not work due to the Committee having an unmanageable workload with only six meetings a year; and with the work programme tending to be weighted towards Health which could lead to important issues such as serious youth violence in the north of the borough not being subject to scrutiny. Councillor Rowley also suggested that some topics were difficult to consider adequately in one meeting.
- 4.14 The Chief Executive acknowledged that this was an inherent pressure on the scrutiny function that was not confined to Westminster, and that resources to support Health Scrutiny had diminished in line with available funding. Local authorities had been taking a conscious decision on the key statutory issues that they wished to scrutinise, and had often considered contributing to policy development to be a better use of available time rather than considering performance retrospectively.
- 4.15 The Commission noted that these issues were not specific to the City Council, and that the challenge was how to effectively manage the limited resources that were available. The Chief Executive considered that the Scrutiny function at Westminster worked well and had a high level of Member involvement, and the Commission acknowledged the need to focus on work which had potentially more valuable outcomes, rather than focussing on process. The Commission agreed that more use could be made of Task Groups, and that joint working with other boroughs and partners on the scrutiny of common issues could enable resources to be shared.
- 4.16 Muge Dindjer (Policy & Scrutiny Manager) commented that a publication was available the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) which addressed these issues; and that funding was available from the scrutiny budget that would enable the City Council to work with the CfPS. The Policy & Scrutiny Manager also

suggested that clear roles and protocols needed to be developed for the relationship between the Scrutiny and Executive functions.

5. THE SCRUTINY FUNCTION AND WORK PROGRAMMES FOR 2016-17

- 5.1 Muge Dindjer (Policy & Scrutiny Manager) presented a report which updated the Commission on the work programmes and Task Groups for Scrutiny Committees, which had been considered and accepted during the June cycle of meetings. The report also reminded the Commission of the budget held to support the Scrutiny function which could be used for research or Member development. An additional paper on Public Protection Data and Information had been circulated to Members of the Commission at the request of the Adults, Health & Public Protection Scrutiny Committee for the discussion on the Scrutiny Function and Work Programmes.
- 5.2 The Commission noted that the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) was undertaking work on how Scrutiny could make the most impact during challenging times and transformation on the delivery of services, and the Policy & Scrutiny Manager suggested that an independent facilitator be asked to take this forward with Westminster's Councillors.
- 5.3 The Commission acknowledged that different local authorities undertook scrutiny in different ways, and agreed that it was beneficial to look at the models being used. Members also suggested that the Commission had its own work programme, which would enable individual Scrutiny Committees to see what was being done.

6. TERMINATION OF MEETING

- 6.1 The Meeting ended at 8.38 pm.

CHAIRMAN: _____

DATE _____

<i>Actions Arising</i>	
Item 4 Chief Executive	The Chief Executive to present a more comprehensive resume on the Westminster Way programme to the Commission at the end of the year.
Item 4 Chief Executive	The Chief Executive to submit proposals for a revised Westminster Workforce Strategy at the next meeting of the Commission in November, for input prior to its being finalised and put into effect.
Item 4 Chief Executive	Consideration to be given to involving partners and statutory organisations in the scrutiny of the work of the West End Partnership.
Item 4 Chief Executive	The Chief Executive to present a more detailed synopsis of Tri-Borough working at a meeting of the Commission later in the year, when the Leader of the City Council would also be present and be able to take part in the discussion.
Item 4 Chief Executive	<p>The Chief Executive to provide Members with a briefing on the discussions that had taken place with schools regarding ongoing problems with Agresso, and on the subsequent action that had been taken.</p> <p>The Managed Services Programme to remain on the Commission's agenda.</p>
Item 4 Chief Executive	Clear roles and protocols to be developed for the relationship between the Scrutiny and Executive functions.
Item 5 The Scrutiny Function and Work Programmes for 2016-17	An independent facilitator be asked to take forward work on how Scrutiny could make the most impact during challenging times, and during the transformation of the delivery of services.
Item 5 The Scrutiny Function and Work Programmes for 2016-17	To establish a Work Programme for the Westminster Scrutiny Commission.