

Cabinet Scrutiny Committee Meeting with MPs

Date: **Friday 23 July 2010**

Time: **10:00 am**

Venue: **Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich**

Persons attending the meeting are requested to turn off mobile phones.

Membership

Mr P Morse (Chair)

Mr T Adams
Mrs D Clarke
Mr J Dobson
Mr P Duigan
Mr T Garrod
Mr R Hanton
Mr P Hardy
Mr C Jordan

Mr M Kiddle-Morris
Mr G Nobbs
Mr R Rockcliffe
Mr M Scutter
Mr J Shrimplin
Mr T White
Mr M Wilby
Mr R Wright

Parent Governor Representatives

Mr P East
Dr L Poliakoff

Church Representatives

Mrs J O'Connor
Mr A Mash

**For further details and general enquiries about this Agenda
please contact the Committee Officer:**
Kristen Jones on 01603 223053
or email kristen.jones@norfolk.gov.uk

A g e n d a

1. To receive apologies and details of any substitute members attending

2. Members to Declare any Interests

Please indicate whether the interest is a personal one only or one which is prejudicial. A declaration of a personal interest should indicate the nature of the interest and the agenda item to which it relates. In the case of a personal interest, the member may speak and vote on the matter. Please note that if you are exempt from declaring a personal interest because it arises solely from your position on a body to which you were nominated by the County Council or a body exercising functions of a public nature (e.g. another local authority), you need only declare your interest if and when you intend to speak on a matter.

If a prejudicial interest is declared, the member should withdraw from the room whilst the matter is discussed unless members of the public are allowed to make representations, give evidence or answer questions about the matter, in which case you may attend the meeting for that purpose. You must immediately leave the room when you have finished or the meeting decides you have finished, if earlier.

These declarations apply to all those members present, whether the member is part of the meeting, attending to speak as a local member on an item or simply observing the meeting from the public seating area.

3. To receive any items of business which the Chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency

4. Meeting with MPs

(i) To consider any questions received from members of the Public and District Council Portfolio Holders (30 minutes has been allocated for this item)

(ii) To consider the suggested approach by the Scrutiny Support Manager and questions from Cabinet Scrutiny Committee members

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Please note: Following the meeting, there will be a sandwich lunch available in the Colman Room for Cabinet Scrutiny Committee Members and MPs.

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Head of Democratic Services

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The Working Style of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee

(adopted 31 July 2001 and re-affirmed on 7 June 2005)

Independence: Members of the Scrutiny Committee will not be subject to Group whipping arrangements

Member Leadership: Agendas and meetings will be member led.

A Constructive Atmosphere: Meetings will be constructive, and not judgmental. People giving evidence at a Committee meeting should not feel under attack. Experience has shown that an atmosphere of challenge and constructive enquiry is vital to the success of the scrutiny process.

Respect and Trust: Meetings will be conducted in a spirit of mutual respect and trust.

Openness and Transparency: The Committee's business will be open and transparent. In particular, the minutes of Scrutiny Committee meetings will explain the discussion / debate such that they can be understood by an outside reader.

Consensus: Committee Members will strive to work together and while recognising political allegiances, attempt to achieve consensus and agreed recommendations. However scope for minority reports will be permitted.

Impartial and Independent Officer Advice: Officer advice and support will be impartial and independent, as officers support all members of the Authority (and not just the ruling Administration).

Regular Review: There will be regular reviews of how the process is working, and a willingness to adapt if things are not working well.

Programming and Planning: The Committee will have a programme of work and plans for individual meetings. Before each piece of scrutiny work, the committee will agree about the extent of the work, what information they will need initially and which members and officers they wish to see.

Managing Time: Committee meetings will be kept to a reasonable length of time, up to two hours. Also, where it is possible to conduct the Committee's business by circulating information between meetings, this will be done.

Cabinet Scrutiny Committee Meeting with MPs

1. Background

- 1.1 Earlier this year Cabinet Scrutiny Committee agreed that it wished to hold a meeting with local MPs following the election in May. The objectives for this meeting were agreed as being:
- To seek better ways of working between the County Council and MPs in order to support the delivery of the County Council's strategic ambitions for the benefit of the people of Norfolk
 - To consider what MPs see as the significant issues affecting the County and what role they can play in addressing them
 - To consider the key issues being focused upon by MPs for their term of office and the implications/benefits for the people of Norfolk
 - To seek ways of improving liaison and communication between the County Council and Norfolk's MPs

- 1.2 At the time of writing the following MPs have confirmed their attendance at the meeting:

George Freeman MP
Norman Lamb MP
Brandon Lewis MP
Chloe Smith MP
Elizabeth Truss MP
Simon Wright MP

2. Format for the meeting

- 2.1 The meeting is not a formal 'scrutiny', rather an opportunity for County Councillors and MPs to determine how to enhance ways of working together for the benefit of the people of Norfolk. The Committee has decided to prepare questions in advance to enable all proposed areas to be covered, and ensure that all MPs have a chance to respond within the timescale allowed. However, at the start of the meeting each MP will be allowed a brief introduction.

Members of the public have been invited to put forward questions to MPs, with the proviso that the Chair will have the final decision on whether issues raised are appropriate to be put forward in the allowed timescale. A copy of the public questions will be available at the meeting.

3 Questions for MPs

3.1 At the last meeting, Cabinet Scrutiny Committee agreed some general areas for questioning. In light of the number of MPs attending and the limited time available, the Committee will focus upon the following areas for questioning:

- How the MPs intend to work together for the benefit of Norfolk people and to raise the profile of Norfolk issues?
- How MPs intend to engage with the County Council to lobby on the key areas for concern of the people of Norfolk and how the County Council can further support MPs in their work
- In light of the demise of regional bodies how do Norfolk's MPs intend to work with parliamentary colleagues in the Eastern region to promote regional issues?
- With changes to regional bodies, planning structures and funding reviews, how will MPs help in ensuring that an appropriate level of growth can be delivered sustainably for Norfolk and growth point areas for Norwich and Thetford. What would 'appropriate' be and how can environmental sustainability be assured?

In addition to the above issues, concerns around skills shortages and infrastructure within the County will also be raised as areas that Members consider to be major issues affecting the County. MPs will be asked to give their views on this. These concerns will be raised with the Government funding cuts and how this will impact on public services in Norfolk in mind.

4. Suggested Approach

It is suggested that the Committee considers the issues raised above as a framework for the meeting with MPs.

**Officer Contact: Karen Haywood
Scrutiny Support Manager
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