

10 JULY 2017

**BOROUGH, ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE EXECUTIVE
ADVISORY BOARD**

10 July 2017

* Councillor Jenny Wicks (Chairman)
Councillor Angela Goodwin (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Nils Christiansen	* Councillor Julia McShane
* Councillor Andrew Gomm	* Councillor Bob McShee
* Councillor Liz Hogger	Councillor Mike Parsons
* Councillor Gordon Jackson	* Councillor Mike Piper
* Councillor Nigel Kearse	* Councillor Matthew Sarti

*Present

BEI1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillors Nils Christiansen, Angela Goodwin and Mike Parsons submitted apologies for absence.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 23(j), Councillor David Goodwin attended as a substitute on behalf of Councillor Angela Goodwin, and Councillor Tony Rooth attended as a substitute on behalf of Councillor Mike Parsons.

**BEI2 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT AND DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE
PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest.

BEI3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 03 April 2017 and 20 April 2017 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

BEI4 12 MONTH REVIEW OF COUNCIL'S REVISED GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Democratic Services Manager reminded councillors that, following a scrutiny review of the Council's governance arrangements in 2015, the Council had introduced, with effect from January 2016, a hybrid arrangement involving two Executive Advisory Boards (EABs) and a single Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC). The Council had also agreed that the new arrangements should be reviewed after a 12-month period of operation.

As part of the 12 month review, a seminar for all councillors was held on 07 March 2017. Comments from that seminar, together with recommendations from the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee (15 June 2017) had resulted in a set of recommendations to be considered by this Board, as well as the OSC and the Society EAB, prior to final consideration by full Council on 25 July 2017.

The Board went on to discuss each recommendation.

The Board agreed that webcasts allowed for transparency and public engagement, and referred to Part 3 of the Constitution of this Council, where the protocol for the operation of EABs specified that they would enable greater involvement and engagement of councillors and the public in significant Executive decisions. Where it was necessary to discuss exempt or confidential material at an EAB meeting, this could be done in private session, or task

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groups could be set up to provide a forum for more detailed discussion. The Board recognised that topics discussed at EAB were often at an early stage of development, and agreed that this could be made clear to webcast viewers to prevent potential misunderstandings. The Board acknowledged that members of the public could have an interest in policy development, and continuing the webcasts would give the public an opportunity to contribute and engage at an early stage. Webcasts were available to watch for six months on this Council's website, providing complete and authentic records that allowed members, and the public, to catch up on meetings after the event. The withdrawal of the webcasting facility might disadvantage some residents, for example, those with a long way to travel, or with limited mobility.

The Board suggested that meetings between the Executive and the EAB/OSC chairmen and vice-chairmen should be on a six-monthly rather than annual basis in order to have a continuity of relationship. The purpose of these meetings was to put forward ideas and suggestions for the Work Programme, and for that reason, the Board also recommended that a representative from CMT should attend.

The Board discussed the recommendation that OSC members should have an opportunity to put written questions to lead councillors in advance of meetings, but made it clear that this should be in addition to being able to raise questions at meetings.

In respect of the most appropriate way to present matters at EAB meetings, the Board agreed that it was important for officers to be involved and engaged, and that dialogue could be encouraged by having officers as well as lead councillors present. The terms of reference for the EABs stated that relevant Executive members would attend meetings in a non-voting, observing capacity; however, the Board suggested that active dialogue was necessary, and therefore lead councillors should be fully involved in discussions. The most beneficial, constructive discussions to date were those where lead councillors had taken an active role, supported by officers who were able to provide clarity and detailed knowledge.

The Board discussed task groups to research and review areas for policy development, and agreed that any such groups would be subject to consideration of staff resources. The Board also suggested that lead councillors should be invited to participate in an ex officio capacity.

In respect of the recommendation that the focus for public engagement should be aimed more at OSC than EABs, the Board disagreed, and recommended that it be removed from the list of recommendations to be considered by full Council.

The Board agreed that EABs had an important part to play in policy development, and that the public should be involved as early as possible. Proactive measures for public engagement were relevant to EABs as much as to OSC, and the public should be alerted to both EAB and OSC agenda topics via press releases and social media.

The Board suggested that progress on matters previously considered by EABs should be reported back to them when appropriate. The terms of reference for the EABs stated that they should advise the Executive at an early stage about the formulation and development of policies and projects. The Board indicated that appropriate review periods would be agreed at its meetings, and then incorporated into the Work Programme.

The Board agreed that refresher training for senior leaders would ensure that there was full understanding of the roles of the EAB and OSC, and there was an expectation that new officers would be provided with training to ensure they understood the EAB/OSC processes, including the role of scrutiny and the Scrutiny Officer.

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The EABs provided opportunities for backbench members to participate in early-stage policy development, and membership of one EAB did not preclude membership of the other. Similarly, members were also able to participate in an EAB and the OSC, although, as a rule, members should not be involved in scrutinising a decision in which they have had direct involvement. However, it was preferable to have as wide a membership across the EABs/OSC as possible, whilst making best use of members' special interests and areas of expertise. Ideas for topic selection could also be invited from partners to broaden the scope of issues the Board may wish to consider.

RESOLVED:

That the following recommendations be submitted for consideration by full Council on 25 July 2017:

- (1) That the Council continues the public webcasting of meetings of the EABs.
- (2) That a bi-annual meeting between all members of the Executive and the EAB and OSC chairmen and vice-chairmen, together with one representative from the Corporate Management Team, be established to discuss topic areas for future work programmes and to discuss how the EABs and OSC could make a more effective contribution to the decision-making process.
- (3) That, in order to improve the arrangements for topic selection and agenda planning, the Executive/CMT be requested to provide suggestions for topic areas for EABs drawn from the (revised) Corporate Plan Action Plan for consideration at future work programme meetings and to have a CMT (as well as Executive) representative attend those meetings.
- (4) That the approach to the development of the O&S Committee work programme be broadened, by amending O&S Procedure Rules to introduce a more flexible approach to topic selection through replacing the topic selection flow chart in OSC Procedure Rules with the PAPER tool.
- (5) That, in addition to raising questions at meetings, OSC members should have an opportunity for putting written questions to lead councillors attending OSC meetings in advance so that written answers may be prepared.
- (6) That lead councillors should normally present matters, with officer support, for discussion at EAB meetings and engage actively in a dialogue with the EABs regarding those matters, and that the terms of reference of the EABs be amended accordingly.
- (7) That EABs be encouraged to set up task groups to research and review areas for policy development, subject to consideration of implications for staff resources and to the appropriate lead councillors attending meetings of such task groups in an ex officio capacity.
- (8) That more proactive measures for public engagement in respect of the work of the OSC and the EABs be established by:
 - (a) inviting suggestions for the OSC work programme from the public and partners as well as officers and councillors, and
 - (b) alerting the public about OSC and EAB agenda topics on days leading up to the meeting, on the day of the meeting and action agreed at the meeting through press releases/social media.
- (9) That progress on matters previously considered by EABs be reported back to them when appropriate.
- (10) That a briefing note be provided to those officers invited to attend OSC meetings to ensure there is full comprehension of the process, including the role of scrutiny and the Scrutiny Officer.

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BEI5 PROGRESS ON COUNCILLOR INVOLVEMENT IN THE PREPARATION OF THE BUDGET

The Democratic Services Manager explained that both EABs had agreed to establish a politically balanced Joint EAB Budget Working Group in September 2016, comprising four councillors appointed by each EAB. The Board agreed to continue with this arrangement, and was asked to appoint three Conservative members and one Liberal Democrat member to a new Joint EAB Budget Task Group.

RESOLVED:

That Councillors Nils Christiansen, Colin Cross, Mike Piper and Matt Sarti be appointed to the Joint EAB Budget Task Group for 2017-18.

BEI6 PROGRESS WITH MATTERS PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED BY THE BOROUGH, ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE - EXECUTIVE ADVISORY BOARD

The Board heard that a draft of the Design Guide was being finalised and it was hoped to include a progress update at the next meeting.

BEI7 EAB WORK PROGRAMME

The Board was asked to submit suggestions for topics to include within the current Work Programme.

The meeting finished at 8.29 pm

Signed

Date

Chairman