



To: Business, Economy and Enterprise

Date: 12th October 2016

Subject: Select Committee Process Briefing

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To brief Members of the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board on the purpose and processes for the Select Committee on Public Transport

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board are recommended to note the content of the briefing note.

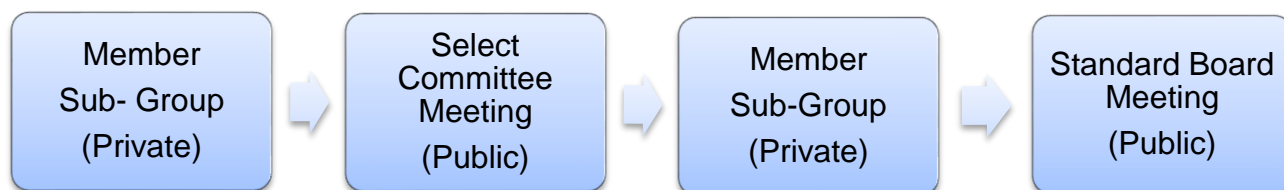
3 Information/Background

- 3.1 At their informal meeting on 8th June it was agreed that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board would hold a Select Committee Style meeting to address issues around public transport.

4 Purpose of the Select Committee and Identifying Key Lines of Enquiry

- 4.1 The purpose of the Select Committee is to hear evidence on a specific issue, in this case, Public Transport with regard to a key line of enquiry. It is important that the key line of enquiry is identified before the select committee meets so the correct background information can be provided and appropriate witnesses can be invited to give evidence.

5 Suggested Select Committee Process



- use agenda conference date and time
 - identify questions for witnesses
 - scope the select committee meeting
 - agree background information required
- briefing note from Council officers with background and current position circulated before the meeting
 - evidence from key witnesses
 - partner organisations
 - service user reps
 - commissioned services
 - Cabinet Members
- discussion of key messages
 - Identification of potential recommendations
 - draft minutes available
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- briefing note with recommendations from evidence
 - any other agenda items to be considered

6 Advisory Panel (Members Sub-Group)

- 6.1 This is a group of four Members (Brown, Lancaster, Mayer, McNicholas (chair) from the Board whose role it will be to clarify and finalise the key lines of enquiry and scope for the meeting. They will meet beforehand, using the date agreed for the agenda conference, and agree key questions for witnesses.
- 6.2 They will also meet at some point after the Select Committee the Advisory Panel to analyse the findings from the Committee and to finalise any recommendations that may arise from it for approval by the Board.

7 Background Briefings and Documentation

- 7.1 All Members will be provided with briefings and background documentation to provide information on the current position. Earlier Scrutiny Board Meetings will be used as briefing sessions with officers to enable Members to fact check, clarify information and also identify any other information and witnesses that may be useful.
- 7.2 Members have already received briefings on public transport in general and providing transport for an aging population. Future briefings at Scrutiny Board meetings will include buses and the rail story.

8 Questions at the Select Committee

- 8.1 Questions should be tailored to gain evidence from witnesses to answer the key line of enquiry for the select committee.
- 8.2 There are several guides² to questioning for scrutiny which apply to a select committee approach. The main points are:

² <http://www.swanseascrutiny.co.uk/2011/10/20/effective-questioning-for-scrutiny-a-checklist/>
<http://www.cfps.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Questioning-Skills.pdf>
[http://democraticservices.hounslow.gov.uk/\(S\(0h3e5g55hovmepf0iljgeh55\)\)/documents/s75010/Question%20Skills%20for%20Scrutiny%20Members.pdf](http://democraticservices.hounslow.gov.uk/(S(0h3e5g55hovmepf0iljgeh55))/documents/s75010/Question%20Skills%20for%20Scrutiny%20Members.pdf)

8.3 Questioning is a form of research

Questions need to have the clear purpose of answering the key line of enquiry and should be open in order to elicit the information from witnesses. Good quality questions will result in good quality evidence. Questions should be agreed beforehand at the pre-meeting.

8.4 The key line of enquiry should be the starting point

Every questioning session should have a clear theme that can be expressed as a single question such as 'how can this service be improved?', 'what should be our policy in this area?' or 'how well are services performing for this group of people?' Witnesses are called to help to answer these lines of enquiry so questions should be designed for each witness and what they might know.

8.5 Witnesses are sources of evidence for the key line of enquiry

The purpose of calling witnesses to scrutiny is to gather evidence not to put them on trial. Think about who is the best person to provide the evidence that the Committee wants and make sure enough time has been allocated for questioning. At meetings the aim should be for the witnesses to be talking during 80-90% of questioning sessions. The select committee will have an opportunity to discuss their views at the plenary session.

8.6 Witnesses should be prepared in advance

To be able to provide the evidence that the committee needs witnesses need to know why they are there and what the committee wants to know. Witnesses should be provided with the broad questions that the committee will be asking in advance so they can make sure they have the information to hand. Also, knowing what the Committee wants will help to ensure the witness avoids taking up valuable time covering other matters unnecessarily.

9 Proposed Programme of the Day

9.1 To ensure the smooth running of the day and to make best use of peoples' time it important that there is a clear programme. It is proposed that the sessions is themed and each witness has a time slot. The agenda could look something like this:

- Pre-meeting with Members to clarify roles and identify questioning order.
- Theme One
 - Questions to Witnesses
 - Officers and Cabinet Members
 - External service providers
 - Representation from service users
 - Findings and Recommendations
- Theme Two
 - Questions to Witnesses
 - Officers and Cabinet Members
 - External service providers
 - Representation from service users
 - Findings and Recommendations
- Etc.
- Plenary Session – Members to discuss the evidence presented and to identify conclusions and recommendations.

10 Reporting Stage

- 10.1 The key findings from the select committee will then be discussed at a meeting of the advisory panel and collated into a report which will come to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Board for approval by the full Board.
- 10.2 Depending on the outcome and content of the recommendations, this report may also go to the appropriate Cabinet Member/s for consideration.

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