

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16 January 2009

9.00 a.m. – 12.50 p.m.

PRESENT

COUNCILLORS

Linda Pailing (Chair)

Nick Churchill
Edna Stevens

Mark Gough

Patrick McClarnon

APOLOGIES

Tony Durcan
Michael Garnett
Joshua Jolles
Nick Macy

SUBSTITUTES

Bob Davis substitute for Tony Durcan
Muriel Jolles substitute for Joshua Jolles
Lee Dangerfield for Michael Garnett
Robert Thurston substitute for Nick Macy

37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

38. CALL-IN OF DECISION OF POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE UNDER STANDING ORDER PART 4 SECTION 15

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE 18 DECEMBER 2008

WELFARE RIGHTS & ADVICE SERVICES – MINUTE 97

The Chair explained that witnesses would be called up to answer each of the points detailed in the Call-In notices received from Councillors Linda Pailing, Nick Macy, Tony Durcan and Edna Stevens

It was asked that a document from the Public Law Project be shared with the Committee as it would have a bearing on proceedings. Mike White, Head of Governance, explained that all the points raised within the document are being referred to in the course of this meeting. Mike White, Head of Governance, advised that the document was pre-

litigation correspondence and would not be circulated to the Committee as it may have a detrimental effect to the Council with regard to future legal proceedings.

39. **WRITTEN EVIDENCE**

The Committee received the following written evidence:-

- * Minutes of the Welfare Rights and Advice Working party held on 26 March 2008, 14 May 2008, 25 June 2008, 28 July 2008 and 8 December 2008.
- * Letter from Steve Templeman, Regional Contracts Manager for the Legal Services Commission, concerning the decision taken by Harlow Council's Policy and Resources Committee on the 18th December 2008.
- * Letter from Mark Fraser, Director of Advice and Service Development concerning the decision taken by Harlow Council's Policy and Resources Committee on the 18th December 2008.
- * Agenda (pack) of the Policy and Resources Committee on the 18 December 2008
- * Report "Welfare Rights and Advice Services" presented to Policy and Resources Committee 18 December 2008.
- * Minute 97 of Policy and Resources Committee on 18 December 2008.

40. **EVIDENCE FROM WITNESSES**

The Committee questioned the following witnesses:-

Councillor Lorna Spenceley

Councillor Chris Millington

Councillor Mark Wilkinson

Councillor Tony Hall

Councillor Simon Carter

Lynn Seward – Head of Community Service

Andrew Murray – Head of Housing

Sue Jones – Head of Welfare Rights and Advice

41. **DETERMINATION OF CALL-IN**

Members considered the evidence they had received and deliberated how to deal with the call-in.

RESOLVED that

- (a) the call-in be rejected on the grounds that all the relevant information was available to the Policy and Resources Committee.

42. **MATTERS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE