

**PROTOCOL COVERING ADVANCE WRITTEN QUESTIONS ON REPORTS TO
THE SPECIAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ON
17 FEBRUARY 2009**

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this protocol is to set out the process by which Members of the Committee, other Non-Cabinet Members and members of the public may submit advance written questions. It also sets out how supplementary oral questions and further oral questions from the Committee or Non-Cabinet members attending the meeting will be dealt with. Oral supplementary or other oral questions will not be allowed from members of the public attending the meeting.
- 1.2 The meeting will be held entirely in open session with members of the public and the press being present. Members are therefore being requested to ensure that all questions for discussion at the meeting avoid information that will remain exempt or confidential under the “Access to Information Rules”.
- 1.3 The terms of reference outline the scope of the scrutiny review which is for Members to provide constructive comment to improve the draft multi-agency transformation plan. Because the terms of reference are limited to matters directly relevant to the transformation plan, other issues and information within the categories outlined in paragraph 1.4 below are not relevant to the business of the special meeting.
- 1.4 Members are reminded that certain information has only been disclosed to a very few Members with a specific “need to know”. Such information will not be supplied to Overview and Scrutiny Members because the “need to know” for purposes of this special meeting is not considered to apply to the categories of information below. These categories of information are:
- (i) information identifying individuals in the Baby P case including his family members, and
 - (ii) details of collaboration between child protection agencies outside what has been stated in the published “executive summary” of the Serious Case Review (SCR) report, and
 - (iii) sensitive personal data and details of any disciplinary action against Council staff.

In relation to staffing matters, Members should bear in mind paragraph 9(2) in the Council’s Miscellaneous Standing Orders (Part 4, Section C of the Constitution) which prevents Members discussing any individual employee or former employee subject to outstanding disciplinary/appeal/grievance proceedings as such discussion could affect these proceedings.

- 1.5 The terms of reference outline the scope of the scrutiny review which is for Members to provide constructive comment to improve the draft multi-agency transformation plan. Because the terms of reference are limited to matters directly relevant to the transformation plan, other issues and information within the categories outlined in paragraph 1.3 above are not relevant to the business of the special meeting. In particular, information from the non-published parts of the old SCR is of very limited value given that a further independent SCR is to be conducted.

- 1.6 Any questions received from Members that are outside of the terms of reference of the review, will be returned to the Member asking whether they would wish to re-submit as a Member's Enquiry to be answered through the existing procedures.
- 1.7 Questions received from members of the public that are outside the terms of reference, will be returned asking them if they would wish to resubmit them using the Council procedure for questions under the Freedom of Information Act.

2.0 PROCESS

- 2.1 The agenda and report(s) for the meeting will be circulated on **Monday 9th February 2009** to Members and then made available to the public. The timescale for the development and release of the transformation plan is tight. The papers for scrutiny include the draft transformation plan and further revisions may occur after the 9th but also prior to the meeting. If so, such late papers will be distributed to Members and made available to the public once they are received or, if very late, tabled at the meeting itself. The admission of late papers will be subject to the Chair's consent.
- 2.2 **Advance written questions** in relation to the transformation plan should be submitted as soon as possible but must be by **no later than 10am on Thursday 12th February 2009**, using the approved template enclosed at Appendix 1. Advance written questions should be submitted by hand or by e-mail to:

Helen Jones, Member Services,
Non-Cabinet Committee Section,
River Park House
Wood Green
N22 4HQ

Helen.jones@haringey.gov.uk

Advance written questions received after the deadline, but before 4:00pm on Friday 13th February 2009 will receive an oral response at the meeting. If it is not possible to provide an oral response a written answer will be provided within 10 working days of the meeting. Advance written question received after 4:00pm on Friday will not receive a response and will be returned to the sender. If they choose Members may resubmit returned questions as a Members Enquiry and members of the public may resubmit returned questions as a Freedom of Information Request.

- 2.3 Written replies for advance written questions meeting the deadline will be circulated by **5:00pm on Monday 16 February 2009**, the previous working day to the meeting. The replies will also be available at the meeting and placed on the Council's web site. If any of the written answer contains "exempt/confidential" information that can be released to the Member (and possibly other Members) but not placed in the public domain, this will be clearly stated in the reply with the

relevant restrictions on circulation. As explained above, the intention is not to disclose or debate any exempt/confidential information at the special meeting.

- 2.4 The public will not be able to ask supplementary questions. Members who have submitted advance written questions will be able to ask **ONE** supplementary question for elucidation, which must be related to the original question. The Committee will hear supplementary questions in the order that the original questions were received as far as possible, if a large number of questions are received which are similar it is proposed that these be grouped. The Chair will decide the number of supplementary questions allowed in respect of answers to any grouped questions. If there are any written questions that cannot be provided with a written response these will either be answered orally at the meeting or will receive a written response after the event.
- 2.5 When all supplementary questions on advance written questions are exhausted, the O&S Committee Chair will invite oral questions. These must be from Committee Members and those Non Cabinet Members attending the meeting. However priority will be given to Committee Members. Members of the public will be precluded from asking any oral questions at the meeting.
- 2.6 There will be no formal limit to the number of oral questions taken, however the actual number taken will be at the discretion of the Chair of the meeting.
- 2.7 As is the case with all Committee meetings under paragraph 56 of the Committee Procedure Rules (Part 4 Section B) the Chair has the right to rule on any procedural matters arising during the meeting including the order of proceedings and the admissibility of individual questions. Advice will be provided by the Monitoring Officer or his representative.

Appendix 1

O & S 3000608 -

Page/ Point	Question/Observation	Answer (Where applicable)