

CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

30th July 2001

**PRESENT:-**

**Labour Group**

Councillor Bell (Chair) and Councillors Mrs. Mead, Mrs. Rose and Stone.

**Conservative Group**

Councillors Bladen and Douglas.

COS/1. **APOLOGY**

An apology for absence from the Meeting was received from Councillor Harrington (Labour Group).

COS/2. **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

A copy of Article 6 relating to Overview and Scrutiny Committees was circulated together with a copy of the Procedure Rules for Members' consideration. The documents were to be submitted to the Council at its Meeting on 9th August 2001 for formal adoption.

It was noted that in future, it was intended to refer to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee as the Corporate Scrutiny Committee and to the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee as the Community Scrutiny Committee.

With regard to the Terms of Reference, Members discussed the development of the Overview Committee as a third scrutiny committee. The Chief Executive advised that he would be discussing this proposal with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council following this meeting. Members questioned the availability of resources, for example, to pay travelling and subsistence costs to those persons requested to attend meetings. It was noted that there was currently no identified budget for scrutiny committees and therefore any such costs would need to be funded from another source.

Members discussed the Overview and Scrutiny rules and noted that the majority of items would be considered during the open session unless there was a specified reason for the matter to be raised in exempt. The preparation and presentation of evidence and reports for scrutiny committees was considered and it was felt that extra meetings might be required for certain issues such as the recent Best Value Review for Sheltered Housing. The 'Call In' process and procedure was explained with particular reference made to the record of decisions, the period of notice required for meetings and the options available for the Scrutiny Committee in determining those matters raised. Finally, the Committee considered arrangements for declaring when the "party whip" had been applied.

**RECOMMENDED:-**

**That the Terms of Reference, as amended be agreed subject to further comments being made by the Overview Committee and that they be recommended to the Council for approval.**

COS/3. **ANNUAL WORKPLAN (TO MAY 2002)**

Consideration was given to the draft work programme for the Corporate and Community Scrutiny Committees and the Overview Committee. The document suggested those Best Value Reviews, policy framework documents and special projects for responsive issues that each Committee should consider over the coming months. The Chair commended the draft programme and thanked officers for their assistance. He also circulated a pro-forma designed to provide an outline or focus for each item considered by the Scrutiny Committees.

**RECOMMENDED:-**

**That the Committee approves its draft work programme for the coming months and notes the draft work programme for the Overview Committee and Community Scrutiny Committee.**

COS/4. **TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Consideration was given to the start time for future meetings of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee. A general discussion took place and it was proposed that meetings should start at 4.30 p.m. in the future.

With regard to the way forward, it was noted that the Constitution would be considered further at the Council Meeting on 9th August 2001 with revisions to the document being highlighted. Councillor Bell proposed to make a presentation to that meeting, probably as a Member's Report, on the work undertaken to date.

It was agreed that the timing of events included in the draft work programme be considered by the Leadership and the Corporate Management Team and that the final draft plan for the Corporate Scrutiny Committee be considered at its next meeting. It was further proposed that a tutorial session be provided for Members on Best Value prior to the next round of scrutiny committees.

**RECOMMENDED:-**

**That future meetings of the Corporate Scrutiny Committees commence at 4.30 p.m. and that the proposals outlined above be approved.**

R. BELL

CHAIR

The meeting terminated at 5.25 p.m.

