

OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

27th June 2005

**PRESENT:-**

**Labour Group**

Councillor Harrington (Chair) and Councillors Lane and Murphy.

**Conservative Group**

Councillor Bladen (Vice-Chair) and Councillor Mrs. Hood.

**In Attendance**

Councillor Atkin.

OV/01. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 16th May 2005 were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

OV/02. **REPORTS TO POLICY COMMITTEES**

The Head of Policy and Economic Regeneration circulated extracts of Policy Committee Minutes, which reported on items referred by Scrutiny Committees. The Meeting was reminded of the duty of Policy Committees to report back to Scrutiny Committees within a period of three months. It was noted that to date, no feedback had been received on several reports.

The report to Environmental and Development Services Committee related to a Car Parking Study, which had been undertaken by the Community Scrutiny Committee. The Chair explained the elements covered by the study. This was in reply to a question from Councillor Atkin about the provision of 'Park and Ride' schemes. It was discussed how best to progress this matter, and it was decided to include this issue on the next Community Scrutiny Committee Agenda. It was also agreed to remind the Environmental and Development Services Committee of the need to report back.

The Housing and Community Services Committee had received a report about a number of housing and community issues. The Chair explained the background to the report. Again, it was noted that no formal feedback had been received from the Policy Committee and it was agreed to consider this matter at the next Community Scrutiny Committee. Reference was also made to play equipment and a 'PPG 17' study. Particularly, Members referred to the safety of play equipment, insurance risks and the potential for claims.

Councillor Murphy then referred Members to issues referred by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee. The Finance and Management Committee had received the Review of the Budget Proposals. It was again noted that no feedback had been received. Councillor Murphy reviewed specific issues included in this report and particularly Gershon issues and the shifting resources project. He reminded Members of the visit to Chesterfield Borough Council and of its work to identify a baseline position. The Councillor then explained his efforts to gather information regarding staffing in each section

of the Council and which of the Best Value Performance Indicators each of these sections was responsible for. He also raised concerns with regard to the process presently being followed by the Council and the perceived a lack of progress.

Councillor Lane was disturbed that Scrutiny Committees had to take the lead in such matters, as he felt that this was a matter for Corporate Management Team and Policy Committees. Councillor Bladen commented about resistance to change. The Chair spoke on the role of Scrutiny to date and the possible need to become more assertive in the future. As an example he explained that there was an intention to make the Overview Committee more proactive.

Members discussed the need for more open policy debate at the full Council Meeting. The Head of Policy and Economic Regeneration outlined a project to look at this issue.

Councillor Murphy then referred to the objectives for the planned 'away day' and in particular the setting of the Scrutiny Committees Work Programmes.

The Head of Policy and Economic Regeneration gave an update on Member training. A meeting was to be held on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2005 and a report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Overview Committee.

#### OV/03. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chair referred to the 'away day'. The Head of Policy and Economic Regeneration commented that this would provide an opportunity to consider the work programmes for the forthcoming year. There was an opportunity for more synergy between the two Scrutiny Committees and to balance planned studies against the Scrutiny Committees 'holding to account' role.

The Chair sought suggested work programme items at this stage. He wished to ensure that all Scrutiny Members were involved, for example in presenting reports to Policy Committees.

The Head of Policy and Economic Regeneration noted that Councillor Bambrick (Vice-Chair of Community Scrutiny Committee) was also a scrutineer at Derbyshire County Council. The Officer commented that this provided an opportunity for dialogue on the scrutiny roles performed by each Council and could provide added value. Councillor Murphy pursued this and suggested that Members and Officers from Derbyshire County Council be invited to attend the Scrutiny 'away day'. This would provide a good networking opportunity.

Councillor Atkin referred to a recent article in a local government publication about anti-social behaviour. The Chair noted these comments but suggested that Councillor Atkin might wish to refer this matter to the appropriate policy committee.

K. HARRINGTON

CHAIR

The Meeting terminated at 4.40 p.m.