

OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

27th February 2006

PRESENT:-

Labour Group

Councillor Harrington (Chair) and Councillors Lane and Murphy.

Conservative Group

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

OV/24. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 12th December 2005 were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

OV/25. **SCRUTINY REPORT**

The Chair distributed a copy of a report prepared by the Principal Policy Officer entitled "Summary of Recommendations to Council and Policy Officers". This was a list of subject areas and recommendations that Overview and Scrutiny Committees had considered from February 2004 to date. He then distributed a draft report prepared by himself and Councillor Murphy, entitled "Report on the Current Health of Scrutiny in South Derbyshire District Council – Is it Fit for Purpose?"

The Chief Executive advised that the starting point for understanding the role of Scrutiny was contained within the Constitution. The Chair added that the role of Scrutiny was clearly defined within the Constitution and these comments were fully supported by the Committee. It was noted that there had been issues surrounding communication between Scrutiny and Policy Committees and Councillor Murphy emphasised that it was important that the role of Scrutiny should be seen as being able to add value within the Council.

The Chair advised Members that he would like to complete, amend and finalise the draft report within the Meeting in order to be able to present it to Full Council on Thursday, 2nd March 2006. He added that everyone's input was vital and it was very important that the final report was agreed and endorsed by all Members of the Overview Committee. He then proceeded to examine each part of the report in detail, as follows:-

Introduction

It was agreed that the introduction would reflect the Scrutiny Committees' need to engage more widely. A number of minor amendments were made and agreed.

Contacts

Members of the Committee fully supported this section of the report, again with minor amendments. The Principal Policy Officer agreed to provide details and numbers of Members who had attended the away-day.

Are we fulfilling our purpose?

It was agreed that the Constitution principles and reference to the work programme would be included in the report as a further discussion point. In addition within this section, Councillor Murphy pointed out that the ODPM research that was quoted, was based on Fourth Option Councils and therefore relevant to the District Council.

SDDC Scrutiny Work Plan – Our Common Goals

Councillor Bladen felt that the Cabinet system lent itself better to the Scrutiny process. He also believed that Scrutiny was seen more as a Standards Board function than a Scrutiny function. Councillor Murphy added that one of the reasons for the report was that the Scrutiny function was not currently seen as a process that could add value. This section was agreed with minor amendments.

Development Areas

Minor amendments were made within this section, as agreed by the Committee.

Resources Officer Support, Structure, Budget

Minor alterations were agreed within this section.

Note: At 5.45 p.m. Councillor Lane left the Meeting.

It was agreed that the “Summary of Recommendations to Council and Policy Committees”, should be included within the report.

It was also agreed that a number of conclusions would be included in the report following the section entitled “Context”.

The Chair confirmed that the completed report would be presented to Full Council on 2nd March 2006. Once he and Councillor Murphy had made all the relevant amendments as agreed by the Committee, it would be e-mailed to all Overview Committee Members in advance of the Council Meeting. In the meantime, the Chair advised Members that they may still input into the report.

RESOLVED:-

That the report be submitted to Full Council on 2nd March 2006 for consideration.

K. HARRINGTON

CHAIR

The Meeting terminated at 6.30 p.m.