

CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

20th June 2005

**PRESENT:-**

**Labour Group**

Councillor Lane (Vice-Chair in the Chair) and Councillor Mulgrew.

**Conservative Group**

Councillors Atkin and Bladen.

**APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillor Murphy (Chair) (Labour Group) and Councillor Bale (Conservative Group).

COS/1. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 9th May 2005 were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

COS/2. **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS AND REPORTS**

The Chair welcomed Councillors Mulgrew and Bladen as new members of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee.

COS/3. **ANNUAL REPORT**

A draft Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees was circulated for consideration. The Chair commended the document and it was agreed that the report be referred to the Overview Committee and then to Council.

COS/4. **SPECIAL PROJECT – STRATEGIC PLANNING**

It was reported that the Chair had prepared a draft report for the Strategic Planning Special Project. The document was still to be circulated to all Members of the Committee and to Officers. Members discussed how best to consider this report, before its referral to Council. The options were to use the Scrutiny Awareness Day on 7th July 2005 or the next ordinary meeting on 1st August. The document could then be considered by the Council at its Meeting on 11th August 2005.

Reference was made to the contribution to this special project from the Leader of Chesterfield Borough Council. Members discussed parish council consultation arrangements on the budget proposals. Concern had been voiced by some parish councils over the current timing of the consultation as the budget proposals were effectively set.

Councillor Bladen spoke of the opportunity to have a single plan comprising information on the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA), the Council's longer term vision and priorities, together with Best Value information. The Head of Policy and Economic Regeneration reminded of the requirements for the Best Value Performance Plan and BVPI's, which would need to be accommodated in any such arrangements. She also explained the additional reporting requirements for those authorities that were not categorised as "excellent" or "good" under the CPA.

Members gave further consideration to the issue of parish council consultation. The Parish Forum provided a useful mechanism to gauge opinion and if there was a consensus amongst parishes, it would carry some weight. There was also a need to consider arrangements for the unparished urban core. In terms of the way forward, it might be prudent to undertake a pilot scheme for the first year and to build arrangements over a number of years, to achieve the longer term objectives. It was suggested that the special project be considered further at the Scrutiny Awareness Day, to enable a division of responsibility between the three scrutiny committees and to consider which elements could be achieved during the current year. There was a need for this project to be discussed by political groups before it was placed on the next cycle of scrutiny agendas and then considered by the Council at its meeting on 11th August 2005.

COS/5. **SCRUTINY AWARENESS DAY**

It was reported that a Scrutiny Awareness Day would be held at the Bretby Conference Centre on 7th July 2005. Items were being sought for the agenda and it was agreed that the Strategic Planning Special Project be included. The Chair suggested the consideration of how to monitor progress on issues referred by Scrutiny Committees. Councillor Bladen suggested a discussion on how the Council monitored the payment of Council Tax. The Head of Policy and Economic Regeneration provided information on the mechanisms in place for this and she offered to liaise with the Head of Revenues to provide further information on this matter. The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that whilst this was not monitored proactively, the Council did respond to complaints.

R. LANE

CHAIR

The Meeting terminated at 4.30 p.m.