

OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

1st October 2001

PRESENT:-

Labour Group

Councillor Bell (Chair), Councillor Richards (Vice-Chair) and Councillor Harrington.

Conservative Group

Councillor Bladen.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillor Routledge (Labour Group) and Councillor Mrs. Robbins (Conservative Group).

OV/2. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meetings held on 31st July and 9th August 2001 were taken as read, approved as true records and signed by the Chair.

OV/3. **REPORT OF MEMBER**

Councillor Richards reported that he, along with Councillors Southerd and Lemmon, had recently attended a Scrutiny Training Course in London. This related mainly to County Councils but several matters were relevant to this Council and a report would be submitted to the Committee in due course. It was noted that the Civic Car had been utilised on this occasion to minimise travelling expenses.

MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE

OV/4. **REPORTS OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

Members discussed the proceedings of the first Meetings of the Community and Corporate Scrutiny Committees. It was acknowledged that, as these Committees had only recently been introduced into the Committee system, Members and Officers would be on a learning curve for a considerable period. Both Committees had discussed Best Value Reviews and it was felt that this had been a useful exercise in discussing the general issues on the Reviews with appropriate Officers.

The Council's Policy and Best Value Manager felt that the structure of Agendas would improve and it was noted that training on Best Value was required urgently. Unfortunately, the Community Scrutiny Committee had considered the Best Value Review on Cleansing the Environment at the end of the Review and accordingly, any action which could have been taken on this matter was limited in the short term as this was now to be considered by the Best Value Inspectorate. She advised that both Scrutiny Committees

would shortly be considering several substantial items as routine matters and Officers attending the Meetings to date had found the forum very useful.

The Chair felt it necessary to make the Scrutiny function visible throughout the Authority and it was noted that an item on Scrutiny was now placed on every Policy Committee Agenda. He also encouraged Members of this Committee to attend Policy Committee Meetings and to date, he considered that the introduction of the Scrutiny function had proceeded as well as could have been expected. The Review of the Sheltered Housing Service by the Committee had been a particularly sensitive matter to consider at the first two Meetings of the Overview Committee.

OV/5. **WORK PROGRAMMES**

The Committee reviewed the Work Programmes for the Scrutiny Committees together with the programme for this Committee. The Policy and Best Value Manager reported on the present position on each Review and matters for consideration at future Meetings were determined accordingly. Members expressed a particular interest in reviewing budgetary and financial implications, including the apportionment of central costs. It was felt that, due to the volume of forthcoming matters, consideration of special projects should remain open and be considered further at the beginning of the year. The Work Programme for this Committee should also be left as flexible as possible.

RESOLVED:-

That the revised Work Programmes, copies of which are attached at Annexe 'A' to these Minutes, be approved.

OV/6. **BEST VALUE TRAINING**

The Policy and Best Value Manager advised that a suitable date would be arranged for Best Value Training for all Scrutiny Members, possibly prior to a future Meeting of this Committee.

R. L. BELL

CHAIR

The Meeting terminated at 5.25 p.m.