

FINANCE & PROCEDURES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 27 March 2002

Minutes of the meeting of the **Finance & Procedures Overview & Scrutiny Committee** held on **27 March 2002** when there were present:

Cllr P D Stebbing – Chairman

Cllr T G Cutmore
Cllr J R F Mason
Cllr R A Pearson

Cllr S P Smith
Cllr Mrs W M Stevenson

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mrs J Hall.

OFFICERS ATTENDING

P Warren Chief Executive
J Honey Corporate Director, Law, Planning & Administration
D Deeks Head of Financial Services
M Martin Committee Administrator

123 OVERALL WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive, which detailed topics for consideration by this Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with a view to agreeing the priorities for the work programme and timetable.

Members noted that:-

- Overview & Scrutiny Committees can set their own Agenda.
- Council could be asked to provide timeframes and deadlines when referring an item to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
- there would be a need to review the work programme regularly.
- additional meetings may need to be set where items were of an urgent nature, had been called in as a result of a decision taken by a Policy Committee or which may require detailed consideration.
- there could be a standard item on the Agenda which would provide Members with a progress report.

Members noted and agreed the priorities for the work as follows:-

Items to be considered before Summer recess

- Scheme of Delegation
- Financial and Contract Standing Orders
- Fees and Charges
- White Paper on Local Government
- Council's Policy on Early Retirement
- Consultation with Chambers of Trade
- Carer's Allowance

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- Out of Pocket Expenses for Advisers

Items to be considered in the Autumn cycle

- Council's Budget
- Monitoring of the Corporate Plan and Best Value Performance Plan
- Financial Services Best Value Review

Early 2003

- External Auditors' Management Letter

Ongoing Items

- Audit Reports

124 SCHEME OF DELEGATION

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Law, Planning & Administration) which invited Members to consider the Council's Scheme of Delegations with a view to improving it to meet the needs of the streamlined Committee system. At the request of Council, particular consideration needs to be given to the delegations surrounding the planning function.

Guidance from the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions states that it is essential that the Constitution contains a record of the allocation of responsibilities and delegation to Policy and other Committees or to officers in order to support transparency and accountability.

Appended to the report was a table fulfilling the requirements of Article 7 of the Constitution and which provided examples of how responsibility for delegations might be recorded. This had been used as the basis for the current delegations to Committee. Members noted that the model Constitution was intended to operate on a "by exception" basis.

Concern was expressed by Members that in planning it was often not possible to refer a matter to the Planning Services Committee or to Council. Members interface with residents and need to be able to demonstrate that their concerns can be addressed.

Members agreed that:-

- the report should include a broad band of delegations, concentrating on the checks and balances, for scrutiny by the Committee.
- examples from other Authorities of this type of delegation should be included in the Corporate Director's report on a draft scheme.

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- the planning function could form part of a separate report taken once the consideration of the recommendations from the Planning Best Value Review has taken place.

Resolved

- (1) That a draft Scheme of Delegation be considered at the next meeting of this Committee.
- (2) That the delegations relating to the planning function would form a separate report to be addressed following consideration by Members of the Planning Best Value Review report. (CD(LPA))

The meeting ended at 8.50 pm.

Chairman

Date