

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

8th December, 2004

Members and Substitute

Members Present:-
Councillor Batten (Substitute for Councillor Patton)
Councillor Charley (Substitute for Councillor Mrs. Johnson)
Councillor Clifford
Councillor Mutton
Councillor Ridge
Councillor Sawdon (Chair)

Cabinet Members

Present:-
Councillor Arrowsmith (Cabinet Member (Urban Regeneration and Regional Planning))
Councillor Ridley (Cabinet Member (Corporate and Customer Services))
Councillor Taylor (Cabinet Member (Policy, Leadership and Governance))

Employees Present:-

D. Cass (City Development Directorate)
C. Dear (Chief Executive's Directorate)
D. Francisco (Finance and ICT Directorate)
D. French (Finance and ICT Directorate)
S. Iannantuoni (Chief Executive's Directorate)
T. Jones (City Development Directorate)
C. Pearson (City Development Directorate)
C. Steele (Legal and Democratic Services Directorate)
A. Townsend (Legal and Democratic Services Directorate)
J. Venn (Chief Executive's Directorate)

Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs. Johnson and Patton.

65. Authority for Attendance at Conferences Etc. – Delivering Sustainable Communities

Further to Minute 57(2)/04, the Committee considered a request for authority for attendance at conferences/seminars which had previously been considered by the Cabinet (their Minute 99(3)/04 refers) and had been called in by Councillors Batten, McNicholas and Lakha. The request sought approval for attendance by a mix of Members of the Majority Group and Employees at the "Summit 2005 – Delivering Sustainable Communities" Conference in Manchester between 31st January and 2nd February 2005.

The Members calling in the decision were concerned that no place had been allocated to an Opposition Member at the Conference; they felt it was the duty of Directors to notify the Opposition Groups of any relevant conferences and to bear in mind Opposition representation when identifying delegates.

The Cabinet Member explained that he expected Directors to notify Opposition Groups and that the omission of an Opposition Member at this conference was an oversight, a place had since been offered to the Opposition, with the fourth place being split between Officers.

RESOLVED that this Committee are satisfied with the revised arrangements, as outlined by the Cabinet Member.

66. Canley Regeneration – Development Strategy

Further to Minute 57(1)/04, the Committee considered a joint report which had previously been considered by the Cabinet (their Minute 98/04 refers) and had been called in by Councillors Batten, Duggins and Kelly. The report brought forward proposals for the regeneration of Canley in the context of previous Member consideration and recent community engagement and outlined in principle some development framework options, sought guidance on the potential elements of a regeneration package and sought approval to move forward on the preferred development option for the area.

Members questioned the Employees on aspects of the report in particular when communication/consultation would begin with the community. It was noted that work was currently ongoing to identify how best to engage local stakeholders including holding an Employee level meeting the following day to develop plans to allow meaningful discussions with Ward Members, residents and other stakeholders. A draft plan was being put together so that discussions with stakeholders/developers/key players in the area could commence.. Members referred to the recent Swanswell master planning exercise which had engaged all partners at the same time and was felt to have worked particularly well and suggested that a similar approach be taken with the Canley exercise. Members also requested that Ward Councillors be kept informed of the consultation timetable.

The Committee went on to consider the financial aspects of the report. Members acknowledged that the scheme could not be fully costed until the master planning exercise was complete; however, there was some concern that it was proposed to use prudential borrowing to "pump prime" the regeneration proposals. It was felt that, given the amount of money in question, the borrowing would be better funded from reserves than from prudential borrowing as this would be less expensive.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the Committee concur with the decisions of the Cabinet.
- (2) That a further report be prepared for the Cabinet Member and referred on to this Committee detailing the financial aspects of the scheme in more detail in particular the issue of borrowing to finance pump priming work.

67. Call-Ins Stage 1

The Committee noted that no call-ins had been received this week.

68. Coventry's Fourth Implementing Electronic Government Statement

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Finance and ICT which sought the Cabinet's approval to the City Council's fourth "Implementing Electronic Government Statement (IEG)", which had been considered by the Cabinet at their meeting on 7th December 2004 and had been referred on to this Committee.

The statement was the fourth in a series and was required to be submitted to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister by 20th December 2004. The City Council had previously obtained £750,000 in grants to implement Electronic Government. It was hoped that this statement would achieve a further £150,000. Members questioned the Employees on aspects of the report in particular the level of capital investment indicated in the report which they believed was excessive. It was noted that work was ongoing to reduce this level, that Employees were confident that the required outcomes could be achieved with a lower level of funding and that any bids for funding would be subject to the PPR process.

At the request of the Committee, the Cabinet Member undertook to involve the Shadow Cabinet Member in any consultation about the changes to the statement prior to its submission to the ODPM.

RESOLVED that the Committee concur with the decisions of the Cabinet.

69. Corporate Plan – Half Year Progress Review

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive which had been referred to this Committee following a request made earlier in the year. The report summarised progress against the objectives and targets of the Corporate Plan.

Members questioned the Employees about aspects of the report in particular the length of time members of the public were required to queue for a telephone to be answered by Housing Benefits staff. There was concern that disadvantaged people using this service were more likely to be using mobile phones which could be costly, particularly if they were in a queuing system.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the Committee concur with the decisions of the Cabinet.
- (2) That Employees be requested to prepare a short note on the telephone answering times in Housing Benefits.

70. Additional Academic Support for the Scrutiny Board (4) Health review of Distribution of G.P. Services in Coventry

Further to minute 140/03 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services on a proposal to approve expenditure of £2,080 from the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held budget to fund additional academic support for the Scrutiny Board (4) Review of G.P. services.

The Review of the Distribution of GP Services in Coventry has been launched by the then Scrutiny Board (5) (Health) on 8th October 2003, on 3rd December 2003 the Board approved a report that set out the procurement process for securing external support for the review. Following a competitive selection process, the Institute of Health at the University of Warwick was awarded the contract to support the review including the provision of advice and guidance on focus group data analysis. Although in accordance with the contract with the Institute of Health the Scrutiny Co-ordinator (Health) had received training on qualitative analysis, progress was slow and it had become apparent that work was proceeding at a slower rate than if the Institute of Health were carrying it out. There were also uncertainties regarding the quality of analysis undertaken by the Scrutiny Co-ordinator (Health). The Institute of Health had therefore been asked to quote for a contract variation for them to complete the focus group analysis so that the work could be completed satisfactorily on time.

The Institute of Health had quoted £260 per day for the work which included analysis of the focus group data and preparation of a written report and would take eight days, the total cost for the work was therefore £2,080.

RESOLVED that the proposal be approved.

71. **Outstanding Issues**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services that identified those issues on which further reports had been requested in order that Members could monitor progress.

RESOLVED that the progress on the issues be noted and that those items currently scheduled for December, 2004, be rescheduled to January 2005.

72. **2004 PPR**

The Committee discussed briefly a proposal in the 2004 PPR relating to its budget.

RESOLVED that this Committee expresses the view that its budget should continue to be maintained at its current level.