

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

26th January, 2005

Members and Substitute

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

Cabinet Member

Present:- Councillor O'Neill (Cabinet Member (Finance and Equalities))

Employees Present:-

C. Hinde (Director of Legal and Democratic Services)
J. Nicholls (Head of Area Co-Ordination)
M. Sockett (City Services Directorate)
C. Steele (Legal and Democratic Services Directorate)
A. Townsend (Legal and Democratic Services Directorate)

Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Clifford.

86. Neighbourhood Management in Coventry – Proposals for Further Development

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive which presented proposals for consultation on the development of neighbourhood management in Coventry including proposals for warden services as well as neighbourhood consultation and engagement. It was noted that the report was scheduled to be considered by the City Council at their meeting on 22nd February, 2005.

The report set out proposals to restructure Area Co-ordination and linked services to create a neighbourhood management service based on the current three West Midlands Police Operational Command Unit areas. The Committee noted that although the report was included on the agenda for consultation purposes, it also fulfilled the requirement of the second part of item 3 on the outstanding issues report.

Members made the following comments on the report:-

- The consultation paper quoted the Best Value Review on Neighbourhood Working. Members pointed out that this review had not been completed and this was not reflected in the report.
- Members were concerned that residents had not had much time to respond to the consultation.
- Councillor Mutton indicated that he felt that it was wrong to link the changes in Area Co-ordination to the development of the warden scheme.

He supported the increase in wardens although not at the expense of capacity building.

- Members commented that the neighbourhood warden consultation exercise carried out in June and July 2004 and referred to in the paper had been undertaken as a separate exercise, this was not reflected in the paper.

Members went on to consider how the city was proposed to be split into three in line with the Police Operational Command Unit. It was noted that the boundaries of the Operational Command Unit cut across some wards that would therefore be split in terms of Neighbourhood Management, Members were concerned about the impact that this could have on communities. Members were concerned at the potential loss of Capacity Building Officers. The Cabinet Member indicated that he believed that this work could be addressed in alternative ways. Janice Nicholls explained that the City Council needed to deliver to the neighbourhood plans, getting this right across the whole city would bring benefits to all areas. Janice Nicholls highlighted that it was not just about Area Co-ordination/Neighbourhood Management but getting all departments to work together in the areas.

RESOLVED that the report be referred to Scrutiny Board (1) with the request that they consider in particular how the city should be split into three, alternative arrangements for capacity building and the results of the consultation process.

87. Best Value and Scrutiny Reviews – Scrutiny Board Review of the New Roads and Street Works Act (NRSWA)

The Committee considered a report of the Highways and Lighting Manager that updated the Committee on progress with the previous Scrutiny Board Review of the New Roads and Street Works Act.

Members questioned the employee on aspects of the report, in particular the levels of core testing trench reinstatements carried out by the utilities, any powers the City Council may have to require utilities to carry out core testing and the level of inspection failures. Members suggested that the LGA be approached to lobby Central Government to consider requiring the utilities to reimburse Local Authorities for sampling and testing cores from trench reinstatements.

RESOLVED that the report be amended to include the suggestion that the utilities reimburse Local Authorities for core sampling and testing trench reinstatements and a copy be forwarded to the LGA with the request that they lobby Central Government on the issue; members to be kept informed of any response from the LGA.

88. Petition – New Footway Between 215 and 315 Lentons Lane

Further to Minute 32/04, the Committee considered a report of the Director of City Services that had previously been considered by the Cabinet Member (City Services) (their Minute 24/04 refers) and addressed issues raised at the meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee on 20th October when the Committee had considered a call-in relating to a new footway between 215 and 315 Lentons Lane. The Committee noted that at his meeting on 20th January, 2005, the Cabinet Member made the following additional recommendation to the report:-

"The issue be considered as part of the new Highway Asset Management Plan and the new Highway Maintenance Programme."

Members were concerned that the scheme had previously been included in an early draft of the 2003/04 Highways Maintenance Programme but removed before Cabinet considered it. The works had not been put back into the programme and therefore remained outstanding. Members were concerned that residents had been promised that the works would take place and that although the issue would now be considered as part of the new Highway Asset Management Plan and the new Highways Maintenance Programme there was no firm date for the works to take place.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member be requested to attend a future meeting to discuss scheme prioritisation and the treatment of schemes included in the Highways Maintenance Programme for a particular year but not carried out.

89. **Call-In Stage 1**

The Committee noted that there were no call-ins received this week.

90. **Outstanding Issues**

The Committee considered and noted 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 items 2 and 3 be rescheduled to 9th February, 2005.

91. **Visits to View and Scrutiny at Other Authorities**

The employees explained that at the recent IDeA Scrutiny Workshop Bristol had been recommended as an example of an authority where scrutiny was working well. Several possible dates for a visit had been identified, the employees suggested that all Members should be approached to establish whether a visit would be worthwhile.

It was noted that, in addition, Councillor Ridge and Jonathan Jardine would be visiting Darlington to look at their arrangements for Health Scrutiny, this was a return visit following the attendance by Darlington at the recent conference held to launch the Breast Feeding Review.

RESOLVED that the employees be requested to contact all Members with details of the proposed visit and that arrangements be made to visit Bristol if sufficient Members express an interest.

92. **Benefits Improvement Plan**

The Committee noted that at his meeting on 19th January, 2005 the Cabinet Member (Finance and Equalities) had referred the report "Benefits Improvement Plan" to Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee with a view to them asking Scrutiny Board (1) to undertake the monitoring of the Plan (their minute 22/04 refers).

RESOLVED that the Benefits Improvement Plan be referred to Scrutiny Board (1) and they be requested to monitor the plan.

93. **City Development Directorate Review**

The Chair suggested that it would be useful to consider the above review prior to its consideration by Council on 22nd February, 2005.

RESOLVED that this item be included on the agenda for the meeting scheduled for 9th February, 2005 and the relevant employees be requested to attend.

94. **Brandon Wood Farm – Call-In**

Further to Minute 84/04, the Chair explained that the above item was due to be considered by Scrutiny Board (2) at their meeting on 3rd February, 2005. He suggested that in order to save employees time the item be deferred until after the issue had been considered by Scrutiny Board (2) to allow those Members calling-in the decision the opportunity to obtain all the information they require at that meeting.

RESOLVED that the above item be deferred until the issue had been considered by Scrutiny Board (2).

95. **Best Value Review – Provision of Community Centres – Request for Scrutiny to Review Coventry Development Plan Policy SCL14**

The Chair explained that at a recent meeting the Best Value Review Group – Provision of Community Centres had considered the above Development Plan Policy and had suggested that it might be appropriate to request the relevant Scrutiny Board to consider the issue and feed into the review of the Coventry Development Plan.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee did not wish the Scrutiny Board to consider the issue.