

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

15th June, 2005

Members Present:-
Councillor Mrs. Dixon
Councillor Duggins
Councillor Field
Councillor Mutton
Councillor Patton
Councillor Ridge
Councillor Sawdon (Chair)
Councillor Williams

Co-Opted members
Present:- Councillor Clifford

Employees Present:-
M. Byrne (Finance and ICT Directorate)
N. Clewes (City Development Directorate)
A. French (Finance and ICT Directorate)
C. Hinde (Director of Legal and Democratic Services)
J. Jardine (Legal and Democratic Services Directorate)
S. Morrison (City Services Directorate)
A. Townsend (Legal and Democratic Services Directorate)

11. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 11th May and 1st June, 2005, were signed as true records.

12. Call-Ins Stage 1

The Committee noted that no call-ins had yet been received this week. The deadline for call-ins for Cabinet and Cabinet Member decisions made during the week commencing 6th June, 2005, was 9.00 a.m. on Friday 17th June, 2005. Any call-ins received after this meeting and before that deadline would be considered for validity by the Chair of the Scrutiny Co-Ordination Committee in consultation with the Director of Legal and Democratic Services (paragraph 4.5.25.4 of the City Council's Constitution refers).

13. Report Back on Conference – City of Ostrava, Czech Republic

The Committee considered and noted a report of the former Lord Mayor, Councillor Gazey, that set out the background to a visit to the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the City of Ostrava.

14. Coombe Abbey – The Menagerie

Further to Minute 59/04, the Committee considered a short briefing note that updated the Committee on progress with the disposal of five properties associated with The Menagerie on the Coombe Estate. The Committee noted that disposals had now been completed for The Menagerie, Coombe Poole Cottage 1 and Coombe Poole Cottage 2. On completion the City Council's repair and maintenance responsibilities had

transferred to the new owners. The Menagerie gardens and outbuildings and Highlands remained in the ownership of the City Council and consideration was currently being given to the best way to market the properties. Members were concerned that The Menagerie had previously been vandalised. They felt that had the security measures to the building been more substantial, this may not have happened. They questioned what security was in place on the two buildings that remained in the ownership of the City Council. The officer explained that Highlands currently had a temporary tenant living in the property and there was therefore no concern as to the security of this building. With regard to The Menagerie barns and outbuildings it was noted that the properties were relatively self-contained and not as open as The Menagerie. The Rangers inspected the property on a weekly basis. It was noted that the buildings had not previously attracted attention and the officers did not feel there was a significant risk to the buildings. The officers indicated that, where possible, they would take steps to preserve the assets.

15. Best Value and Scrutiny Reviews – Tree Spraying Activities and Procurement Procedures

The Committee briefly considered a briefing note of the Director of Finance and ICT that set out the rules and regulations surrounding procurement and its monitoring. The officers indicated that the procurement strategy was currently under review. Members questioned the officers present on aspects of the report, in particular, monitoring compliance with contracts, the new contract for weed control and the potential for liquidated damages clauses.

RESOLVED that the officers be requested to provide an update on safeguards in place to ensure a similar situation does not arise again once the review work is completed.

16. Referral from the Cabinet Member (Community Services) – Consultation on the Mental Health Strategy for Older People

Further to Minute 10/05, the Committee considered a report of the Director of Social Services and Housing, which had previously been considered by the Cabinet Member (Community Services) and referred on to this Committee for them to determine how best Scrutiny could be involved in the consultation process. The officers had given thought to how best this could be achieved and were recommending that the consultation be considered by Scrutiny Board (2) who would work with Scrutiny Board (4) on the response.

RESOLVED that the consultation takes place as outlined above.

17. Listed Buildings – Medieval Precinct Wall to The Charterhouse

Further to Minute 141/04(a), the Committee considered a briefing note which set out the legal issues associated with the ownership of the medieval precinct wall to The Charterhouse. The Committee noted that the trustees receive DfES funding for the school which included responsibility for boundary maintenance. As a result it was felt that the school have the responsibility to maintain the wall which is part of the boundary of the school.

RESOLVED that the officers be requested to write to Bluecoat School indicating that the City Council believes that they are responsible for the

maintenance of the wall and that, if the repairs are not undertaken, that the City Council would carry out the repairs and seek to recover the costs.

18. 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.