

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

6th July, 2005

- Members Present:- Councillor Duggins
Councillor Field
Councillor McNicholas (Substitute for Councillor Patton)
Councillor Mrs. Maskell (Substitute for Councillor Mrs. Dixon)
Councillor Rudge (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Sawdon (Chair)
Councillor Williams
- Co-Opted
Member Present:- Councillor Clifford
- Cabinet Member
Present:- Councillor Ridley (Cabinet Member (Adult Education, Libraries,
Sport and Leisure))
- Employees Present:- S. Bennett (Legal and Democratic Services Directorate)
M. Collins (City Services Directorate)
C. Hinde (Director of Legal and Democratic Services)
A. Howitt (City Development Directorate)
M. Samuel (City Services Directorate)
C. Steele (Legal and Democratic Services Directorate)
J. Taylor (City Development Directorate)
C. West (Education and Libraries Directorate)
- Apologies:- Councillor Mrs. Dixon
Councillor Patton

27. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 15th June, 2005, were signed as a true record.

28. Call-Ins Stage 1

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services reported on the following call-in that had been received:-

29. Deployment of Neighbourhood Wardens 2005/06

The report had been called in by Councillors Batten, Clifford and Mrs. Lacy.

The reason for the call-in was "to better understand how the development of Street wardens will impact on areas in Westwood and Woodlands Wards. As Tile Hill South and Tanyard Farm have anti-social behaviour problems, will these areas be covered".

The Committee noted that the deadline for call-ins for Cabinet and Cabinet Member decisions made the week commencing 27th June, 2005, was 9.00 a.m. on Friday 8th July, 2005. Any further 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).

RESOLVED that the call-in detailed above be considered in detail by the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee at their meeting on 20th July, 2005 and that the Cabinet Member (Health and Housing) be requested to attend.

29. Report Back on Conference – 50th Anniversary of the Coventry/Saint-Etienne Twinning Relationship

The Committee noted a report of the former Lord Mayor, Councillor Gazey, on the above visit held between 11th and 12th May, 2005.

30. Coombe Abbey Boat House Restoration

Further to Minute 4/05, the Committee considered a briefing note of the Coombe Abbey Head Ranger which detailed the following five options for the Boat House:-

- Option 1 – Use of the Boat House as an arts and education studio – this work was estimated to cost an additional £10,000, raising the budget for the full restoration to £120,000, the additional cost to be met within the Park's revenue for the current financial year.
- Option 2 – Restore the Boat House to its original use.
- Option 3 – Market the Boat House in its current state to the private sector.
- Option 4 – Allow the building to deteriorate further.
- Option 5 – Dismantle the Boat House and rebuild it elsewhere on the estate.

The briefing note detailed the advantages and disadvantages of the above options.

The Committee questioned Councillor Ridley, Cabinet Member (Adult Education, Libraries, Sport and Leisure) and the employees on the options.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member be requested to proceed with Option 1 as detailed above.

31. Asbestos Management Action Plan – Progress Report

The Committee considered a report of the Director of City Services, which would be considered by Cabinet at their meeting on 12th July, 2005, and which detailed progress with regard to the City Council's arrangements for managing asbestos as required by the Asbestos Management Plan approved by Cabinet in April 2004.

The Committee questioned the employees extensively on aspects of the report, particularly in relation to:-

- The types of surveys undertaken on properties.
- Lessons learned from previous experiences and how the current system should reduce the risk of similar cases happening again.
- How robust procedures and protocols now in place were and how they would be implemented by officers.
- The importance of ensuring that information gathered was shared on a Council-wide property database.

RESOLVED that the Committee concur with the recommendations to be considered by Cabinet at their meeting on 12th July, 2005 and that the Cabinet be informed that the Committee place particular emphasis on the pursuance of a Council wide property database.

32. Scrutiny Review – Investigation into the Development and Funding of Coventry Transport Museum

Further to Minute 147/04, the Committee considered a report of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services regarding the investigation into the development and funding of Coventry Transport Museum. The Committee had been concerned at the escalating costs associated with the development of the Coventry Transport Museum, due largely to the cost of removing the asbestos found during the renovation project.

The report detailed a chronology of the development of the Transport Museum from when it first opened in 1980 through to the present day. This included grants approved for the Museum and the demolition of the Matterson's building and subsequent discovery of asbestos in various parts of that building between 2002 and 2004.

In order to ensure that lessons had been learned from the experiences of the Motor Museum Development Project and that procedures had been put in place to improve the way that major projects were managed, a report had been commissioned to demonstrate this. The report indicated that the following six key changes had been adopted as a consequence of the learning experience from the Transport Museum development and other major projects:-

- (1) There was greater clarity about project lead, project manager and project management processes. In the original Museum project, there were different projects happening in the building at the same time, led by different people using different contractors. Now there was one client and one project manager who would oversee the whole project, with the project team involving all relevant people meeting on a regular basis.

The Council had now adopted a more robust project management process set out in a "Project Toolkit". A Programme Office had been established to improve project management skills, to ensure that best practice programme and project governance arrangements were followed and to support corporate decision making. However, despite all this, there would

inevitably be some occasions when the original project plans would have to be changed for bona fide reasons.

- (2) All key funders meet together to endorse new projects and to resolve key issues, to ensure that there is unanimity of purpose. This had happened recently in relation to the Belgrade and Herbert Art Gallery schemes.
- (3) There was now a greater focus on risk awareness and risk management: for example within the Arena scheme there were monthly reports from all project managers on risks and how these were being addressed. There was also a corporate risk register which included major projects whose failure might have corporate repercussions and this was monitored regularly by the Management Board and Cabinet.
- (4) There was more emphasis on asbestos surveys, assessments and management. An asbestos register for Council buildings was being compiled and there were clearer ground rules for what had to be done on Council buildings in terms of the whole identification, risk appraisal and then management of asbestos.
- (5) There were now two Project Champions who manage and direct complex high profile projects.
- (6) Member Advisory Panels were now set up to oversee key projects.

During the course of their investigation, the Committee were continually frustrated at the fact that crucial pieces of information could not be found and consequently the investigation had to be abandoned. The Committee were also concerned that there appeared to be no information about the scale of the asbestos problem in the Museum building available at the beginning of the development project and consequently there was no provision made for this in the original cost of the project. Each time asbestos was discovered additional costs were incurred, for which additional funding had to be found.

In relation to identifying areas where asbestos might be found in buildings earmarked for renovation or conversion, the Committee reiterated the view of the Scrutiny Review of Asbestos Management that members of the public should be invited to contribute any information which might help to do this.

The Committee were, in the main reassured by the procedures now put in place for the management of large scale projects, including the Asbestos Management Action Plan (Minute 31/05 above refers).

The Committee expressed their thanks to the Director of Legal and Democratic Services for a well written report.

RESOLVED that the following recommendations be made to the Cabinet:-

- (1) **That they ask officers to examine current practices relating to the permanent retention of documents (including survey reports and particularly legal documents) connected with key projects, with a view to revising them to ensure that such documents are retained**

permanently and that this Committee be informed of progress in relation to this.

- (2) That officers be requested to ensure that a comprehensive asbestos survey is carried out at the beginning of any large scale project, involving building renovation/conversion, so that any resurging costs can be built into the financial projects for the scheme, noting that this action may be covered within the Asbestos Management Action Plan (Minute 31/05 above refers).

33. **Scrutiny Board Work Programme**

Further to Minute 23, the Committee noted the work programmes for Scrutiny Boards (1), (2), (3) and (4).

34. **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.

35. **Submission of Expressions of Interest for Two Academies in Coventry**

The Committee considered a joint report, which had been referred to them by the Cabinet at their meeting on 28th June, 2005 (their Minute 34/05 refers).

The Committee gave consideration to the way in which Scrutiny should be involved in the consultation period on the proposals.

RESOLVED that the issue be referred to Scrutiny Board (2) with the Committee's suggestion that that Board sets up a Sub-Group to give further consideration to this issue, to which all interested Councillors and other relevant organisations be invited to be a member of.