

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

10th August, 2005

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

Other Members Present:
Councillor Gazey
Councillor Ms Hunter

Employees Present:- C. Hinde (Director of Legal and Democratic Services)
R. Hughes (Head of Corporate Policy)
C. Sinclair (Legal and Democratic Services Directorate)
C. Steele (Legal and Democratic Services Directorate)

Apologies:- Councillor Field
Councillor Patton

48. Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings held on 6th and 13th July 2005 were signed as true records.

49. Call-In Stage 1

The Committee noted that no Cabinet/Cabinet Member meetings had been held during the previous week and that there were, therefore, no decisions open to call-in.

50. Night Time Use of Fire Appliances

Councillor Mutton reported his concerns regarding the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority's proposal to reduce the number of night time fire appliances from 7 to 6 between the hours of midnight and 8.00 am in the Coventry area. He was particularly concerned that the reduction would result in the need for more cover to be drafted in from other areas in the West Midlands.

RESOLVED that Councillors Foster, Matchet and Mulhall (the Council's representatives on the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority), together with a senior officer from that authority, attend a future meeting, in order to satisfy the Committee that the proposals would provide sufficient night time cover for the area.

51. Local Vision Proposals put Forward by the ODPM

Following the Members' seminar "Local:Vision – A New Strategy for Local Government" which was held on 1st August 2005, the Committee considered how it would wish to respond to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM).

The Committee questioned the Head of Corporate Policy on aspects of the Strategy including issues relating to Local Strategic Partnerships overseeing public expenditure, separate roles for community councillors and their concerns that this would create a 2-tier system of councillors, the future of elected mayors and the development of the scrutiny process.

The Committee agreed that it was important that a response was given to the ODPM, that this be progressed formally through to Cabinet and the Council and that the Committee keep a watching brief on the progress of the Strategy.

Following discussion, it was proposed that, before a response be drawn up, an appropriate Government Minister be invited to a future meeting to answer questions on the Strategy; that if this were not possible, then the West Midlands Local Government Association Overview and Scrutiny Network be asked to consider arranging an event to which the Minister might be invited; and that if this were also unsuccessful, questions be forwarded to the appropriate Government Select Committee.

RESOLVED the proposals outlined above be approved.

52. 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.

53. Work Programme 2005/06

The Committee noted the Work Programme 2005/06, which included an additional item on 'Improving the Council's forward planning of decision-making processes' which had been scheduled for January 2006.