

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE**2nd November, 2005**

- Members Present:- Councillor Clifford (Substitute for Councillor Patton)
Councillor Mrs. Dixon
Councillor Duggins
Councillor Field
Councillor Mutton
Councillor Ridge
Councillor Sawdon
Councillor Williams
- Other Scrutiny Board
Member Present:- Councillor Gazey
- Cabinet Members
Present:- Councillor Blundell (Cabinet Member (Children's Services)
Councillor Taylor (Cabinet Member (Policy, Leadership and
Governance))
- Employees Present:- P. Barnett (Legal and Democratic Services Directorate)
J. Hill (Education and Libraries Directorate)
C. Hinde (Director of Legal and Democratic Services)
R. Hughes (Head of Corporate Policy)
C. Steele (Legal and Democratic Services Directorate)
A. Townsend (Legal and Democratic Services Directorate)
C. West (Education and Libraries Directorate)
- Apologies:- Councillor Patton

103. Call-Ins Stage 1

The Committee noted that no call-ins had been received yet this week. The deadline for call-ins for Cabinet and Cabinet Member decisions made during the week commencing 24th October, 2005, was 9.00 a.m. on Friday 4th November, 2005. Any call-ins received after this meeting and before the 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 5.4.5.25.4 of the City Council's Constitution refers).

104. Budget Setting Process

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Corporate Policy that set out proposed arrangements to enable Scrutiny to contribute to the 2006/07 budget setting process. The Committee noted that, as part of the budget setting process, the Cabinet were required to publish initial budget proposals with a consultation period of eight weeks giving Scrutiny the opportunity to respond to the initial proposals, Cabinet would then consider the response from Scrutiny in the production of the final proposals.

Previously, the consultation with Scrutiny had taken the form of a joint meeting of all Boards following the agreement of the initial budget proposals by Cabinet. It was felt

that this meeting, whilst meeting the requirements of the Constitution, had not necessarily served its purpose.

The Committee went on to consider the proposed process for the 2006/2007 budget setting process, set out in the report submitted, paying particular attention to the role of Scrutiny. The Committee suggested that the procedure be amended so that the consideration of the Medium Term Financial Strategy by Scrutiny Board (1), currently proposed to take place on 14th December, 2005, after the initial consideration of the strategy by Cabinet, be brought forward so that the Scrutiny Board consider the document prior to Cabinet with any comments made being referred onto Cabinet. They further suggested that in January 2006 the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee, rather than Scrutiny Board (1), consider the initial budget proposals with their comments referred on to Cabinet.

RESOLVED that the budget setting procedure for 2006/2007 be amended in line with the comments set out above.

105. Report Back on the Work of Outside Bodies – Local Government Association General Assembly

The Committee considered a report of the Cabinet Member (Policy, Leadership and Governance) which set out the details of the work of the Local Government Association General Assembly over the previous 12 months and included attendance records for the City Council representatives at meetings of the Assembly.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee recommend that the City Council continue to appoint to the Local Government Association General Assembly.

106. Report Back on the Work of Outside Bodies – Local Government Association Rural Commission

The Committee considered a report of Councillor Mrs. Rutter which set out details of the work of the Local Government Association Rural Commission over the previous 12 months and included attendance records for the City Council's representatives at meetings of the Commission. The Committee then debated the merits of the City Council's attendance at the meetings of the Commission particularly as Coventry was not a rural authority.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee recommend that the City Council continue to appoint to the Local Government Association Rural Commission.

107. Report Back on the Work of Outside Bodies – Soothern and Craner Educational Foundation

The Committee considered a report of the Cabinet Member (Policy, Leadership and Governance) which set out details of the work of the Soothern and Craner Educational Foundation over the previous 12 Months and included attendance records for the City Council's representatives at the meetings of the Foundation. The report recommended that the City Council should continue to appoint representatives to the Foundation but suggested that consideration should be given to reducing the number of representatives to

two from three. The charity had been contacted and had indicated that whilst two City Council representatives would be acceptable they were concerned that if both representatives submitted apologies there would be no City Council representation at the meeting, the Committee noted that the foundation only met once per year.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee recommend that the City Council continue to appoint three representatives to the Soothern and Craner Educational Foundation.

108. Update Report – Plas Dol-y-Moch Outdoor Education Centre – Refurbishment Work

The Committee considered and noted a report prepared by the New Opportunities Fund PE and Sport Capital Projects Officer which set out an update on the progress being made with the refurbishment works at Plas Dol-y-Moch Outdoor Education Centre in North Wales. Given the distance the Centre was located from Coventry it was felt that the project was progressing very well, it had been necessary to rethink the project management process slightly, site visits were now taking place on a weekly basis. The officer explained that given the age of the building, unforeseen problems were to be expected when the building was opened up, a significant culvert acting as a drainage channel for water running from the hill and earlier fire damage have both been discovered and the works adjusted to accommodate. Work was approximately five weeks behind programme but £40,000 under budget. Negotiations were under way to try and pull back the delay, it was proposed to add back in additional work which had been removed at the tender stage to soak up the underspend and enhance the project. It was noted that the Centre had been fully operational during the building works with children being housed in caravans during this period.

The Committee questioned the officer on aspects of the report, in particular whether the caravans were hired or leased and the proposals for them once the building works were completed and the reasons for the omission of the ground source heat pump from the scheme.

The Chair thanked the officer for the useful report and indicated that no further reports were necessary.

109. Outstanding Issues

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

110. Work Programme 2005/2006

The Committee considered and noted the Work Programme for the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee for 2005/2006.

111. Swanswell Initiative – Land Disposal to City College

With reference to Minute 94/05, relating to the above report which had been considered the previous evening by the City Council it was noted that Councillor Sawdon had given assurances to the members of the public present at the Council meeting that the

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee would monitor the issue of the rehousing of the tenants of the properties built for the disabled to ensure that they are adequately rehoused in the area, if they wish to stay there, and that their properties are replaced before they are moved to vacate their existing properties. The Committee briefly considered the best way to achieve this.

RESOLVED that the Director of City Development be requested to attend the meeting of the Committee scheduled for 16th November, 2005 to discuss the plans for this element of the Swanswell Initiative.

112. West Midlands Fire Service – Arrangements for Night Time Fire Cover

Further to Minute 99/05, the Chair tabled a letter received from Mr. R Hulland responding to questions raised at the meeting on 2nd November, 2005.

RESOLVED that the officers be requested to contact the Fire Service to obtain further details of the response times associated with the five incidents attended in the West Midlands by appliances from Warwickshire.