

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

11th January, 2006

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

Co-opted
Member Present:- Councillor Clifford

Cabinet Members
Present:- Councillor Foster (Cabinet Member (City Services))
Councillor Kelsey (Cabinet Member (Corporate and Customer
Services))
Councillor H. Noonan (Cabinet Member (Community Services))

Employees Present:- P. Barnett (Chief Executive's Directorate)
R. Hughes (Head of Corporate Policy)
C. Steele (Chief Executive's Directorate)
A. Townsend (Legal and Democratic Services Directorate)

Apologies:- Councillor Sawdon
Councillor Williams

153. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th December, 2006, were signed as a true record.

154. Call-Ins 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.

155. No Smoking Policy /Revision

With reference to Minute 141/05, the Committee considered a report of the Head of Human Resources which set out a revised no smoking policy for employees of the City Council. The report was scheduled to be considered by the Cabinet at their meeting on 7th February, 2006, and had been referred to this Committee in order that Scrutiny may consider the proposals and feed any comments into that Cabinet meeting.

The Officer reported that the revised policy built on the existing policy, which had been implemented in 1995, and which was silent on the issue of smoke breaks during paid employment. The new policy made it explicit that smoke breaks were not permitted during

paid working time and that employees were not permitted to smoke on Council property or in doorways. All recognised Trades Unions had been consulted on the revised policy with a view to seeking a collective agreement, although unfortunately it had not been possible to achieve this.

The Committee questioned the Officer on aspects of the report, in particular the EU Working Time Directive and VDU Usage Regulations, the potential for offering support to employees with other addictions, the enforcement of the Policy and the potential need to define areas outside City Council buildings where smoking was not permitted. The Committee were disappointed that it had not been possible to reach a collective agreement with the Trades Unions although it was noted that a meeting would be held with Cabinet Members on 17th January, 2006. The Committee felt that the current wording of the Policy did not make clear the difference between paid and unpaid breaks and requested that Officers look into rewording this element of the Policy. The Committee briefly considered how the Policy may apply to Elected members, Stella Manzie suggested that it would be useful if Members could set an example to staff and suggested that it may be appropriate to write to Members to assist with this. With regard to the proposal to not allow employees working in the open air to smoke, it was noted that this was included in order to ensure that all employees were treated consistently and fitted within the Smoke Free Coventry proposals and contributed to enhancing the image of the City Council.

RESOLVED that the Committee supports the revisions to the Policy and recommend to Cabinet:-

- (1) That clause 4.4 of the No Smoking Policy be made more explicit, i.e. that it is made clear that employees may smoke during unpaid breaks, but not during paid breaks.**
- (2) That clause 4.5 of the No Smoking Policy be made more explicit, i.e. that it is made clear that employees must not smoke during working hours.**
- (3) That consideration be given to ways to support employees with other forms of addiction.**
- (4) That the Chief Executive writes to elected members asking them to observe the policy.**

156. Report Back on the Work of Outside Bodies – Coventry Law Centre

The Committee considered a report of the Cabinet Member (City Services) which set out details of the work of the Coventry Law Centre over previous twelve months and included attendance records for the City Council's representatives at meetings of the Centre.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee recommend that the City Council continue to appoint to the Coventry Law Centre.

157. Report Back on the Work of Outside Bodies – Coventry Venture Capital Limited

The Committee considered a report of the Cabinet Member (Finance and Equalities) which set out details of Coventry Venture Capital Limited over the previous twelve months. The Committee were concerned that no meetings of the Board of Directors had been held over the previous twelve months and requested that research take be undertaken into the function of the Board of Directors and how this function was being carried out if no meeting were taking place. They also requested that clarification be given as to whether the City Council's appointment must be an Elected member or if it could, alternatively, be an Officer.

RESOLVED that the Officers be requested to research the issues identified above.

158. Report Back on the Work of Outside Bodies – Bonds Hospital Estate Charity Trustees

The Committee considered a report of Councillor Mrs. Johnson which set out details of the work of the Bonds Hospital Estates Charity Trustees over the previous twelve months and included attendance records for the City Council's representatives at meetings of the charity trustees.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee recommend that the City Council continue to appoint to the Bonds Hospital Estate Charity Trustees

159. Report Back on the Work of Outside Bodies – West Midlands Local Government Association Provincial Council

The Committee considered a report of the Cabinet Member (Corporate and Customer Services) which set out details of the work of the West Midlands Provincial Council over the previous twelve months and included attendance records for the City Council's representatives at meetings of the Council. The Committee were concerned that, given the nature of the meetings, the City Council's representatives had not been attending meetings.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee recommend that the City Council continue to appoint to the West Midlands Local Government Association Provincial Council.**
- (2) That the Officers be requested to establish why attendance records for the City Council's representatives at meetings of the Provincial Council were poor.**

160. Report Back on the Work of Outside Bodies – West Midlands Superannuation Committee

The Committee considered a report of the Cabinet Member (Adult Education and Libraries, Sport and Leisure) which set out details of the work of the West Midlands Superannuation Committee over the previous twelve months and included attendance

records for the City Council's representatives at meetings of the Committee. The Committee were concerned that the whilst attendance record for the City Council's representative at sub-group meetings was good, records for the Superannuation Committee itself were poor.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee recommend that the City Council continue to appoint to the West Midlands Superannuation Committee.

161. Report Back on the Work of Outside Bodies – Older Peoples' Partnership Board

The Committee considered a report of the Cabinet Member (Community Services) which set out details of the work of the Older Peoples' Partnership Board over the previous twelve months and included attendance records for the City Council's representatives at meetings of the Board.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee recommend that the City Council continue to make appointments to the Older Peoples' Partnership Board**
- (2) That in the future reports on the Older Peoples' Partnership Board need not be submitted to this Committee.**

162. Outstanding Issues

The Committee noted that there were currently no outstanding issues.

163. Work Programme 2005/2006

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