

**Briefing Note – Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee
1st February, 2006**

Quarterly Report on the Work of Scrutiny Board (3) – October to December 2005.

Scrutiny Board 3 has had a busy second quarter with four meetings being held, along with a visit to the Ricoh Arena.

Business Vitality Programme

This scheme was introduced in 2003 to encourage small niche businesses to open in Coventry city centre. The scheme has been monitored by Members throughout its operation and has been considered a success. The Board has requested that the Cabinet Member investigate the scheme being extended, or replicated in some way in the future.

Engineering Framework Contract – Performance Review

Following a special meeting earlier in the year, the Board scrutinised the performance review of Jacobs Babbie and the Framework Contract performance for 2004/05. Improving performance in this area of operation has encouraged the Board, and Members concluded this work by agreeing with the recommendation for the Framework Contract to be renewed.

City Centre Topic

To start this topic, the Board considered a report on a Visioning Exercise being undertaken currently in City Development, which will identify the key issues for the future development of the city centre. The Board will shortly receive information on the results of a Retail Study carried out by consultants, and a Residential Study carried out to support the current city centre work. Work is primarily concentrating on the mix of commercial, retail and residential in the city centre, and how the City Council works to obtain the right mix.

Preliminary meetings have been held with representatives of the commercial sector, which will lead to the full Board taking evidence on this Review in due course,

This work has been re-scoped slightly as a result of the decision to conduct a Best Value Review into how the City is marketed.

Ricoh Arena (incl. Green Travel Plan / Parking)

The Board have conducted a site visit to the new home of Coventry City Football Club, and whilst noting a number of issues which remained to be resolved were very impressed with the new stadium and associated facilities. The Board have expressed an interest in conducting a further visit when work is deemed to have been completed. The Work Programme also includes a review of the Green Travel Plan, and the related Residents Parking Zones. This is due to be considered shortly.

Use Classes Order, Casinos

The Board were consulted on a report detailing potential impacts of these regulations on the proposed Arena resort casino and other developments.

Corporate Review of Sport & Leisure Facilities

Having previously received a presentation on the proposed consultation on a review of Sports & Leisure facilities in the City, in November the Board considered the disappointing response to the consultation. Notwithstanding the welcome addition of community sports facilities to the Ricoh Arena development, much work remains to be done on modernising the City's sports facilities and the Board will consider this as an issue for its 2006/07 Work Programme.

Waste Strategy

The City Council's developing Waste strategy continues to be of interest to the Board and Members have reviewed the progress towards establishing a new Waste Strategy. The Board has also scrutinised the Cabinet Member for City Services proposals to extend doorstep collection of recyclables.

Highway Maintenance Programme

The Board has reviewed progress towards delivering the City Council's ambitious Highway Maintenance Programme, and found work to be largely on schedule, and on budget. Where various schemes have proved un-deliverable officers have successfully brought forward alternative schemes to ensure that the budget is being used effectively.

Decriminalisation of Parking

The Board's Work Programme for this year included a six-month review of the establishment of the decriminalisation of parking in Coventry. With the creation of the City Council's Parking Services unit the Council took on a potentially difficult new responsibility. The Board were delighted with the first six month's performance and whilst making several suggestions for the future development of the service, congratulated all officers involved.

Mobile Library Services, Library Standards

The Board has reviewed the proposals for the use of the new Mobile Library Service vehicle. The Board also requested an update on the new 2006 Library Services Standards, and found that the City Council met nine out of ten Standards, with work being undertaken to ensure at the next review, all standards are met. The Board has requested an update on progress towards meeting the final standard (relating to young people's use of libraries).

Coventry Smart Card Trial

The Board has received a further update on the results of the Travel Coventry Smart Card trial. Whilst development work remains ongoing the Board was pleased to note that

in principle WMPTA has agreed that Smart Cards will be introduced across the West Midlands.

Grass Verge Parking / Dropped Kerbs

A long-standing item on the Board's Work Programme has been Grass Verge Parking, and the City Development Directorate has recently commissioned a series of proposals from consulting engineers to establish a new set of policies for this problem.

Over the next month, Scrutiny Board 3 will be establishing a short "task and finish" Review Group to review these draft proposals and also to consider some recent work by the City Services Directorate to establish new policies for the granting of permissions for dropped kerbs.

January 9th, 2006.

Briefing Note Author

CLlr Cliff Ridge
Chair of Scrutiny Board (3)

Peter Barnett
Scrutiny Co-ordination Group

Background Information -the minutes and agendas of Scrutiny Board (3) October – December 2005.

Contact: 02476 831172
Email: peter.barnett@coventry.gov.uk
Web: Coventry.gov.uk/scrutiny