

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

8th November, 2006

- Members Present:-
Councillor Asif
Councillor Bains
Councillor Crookes (substitute for Councillor Lee)
Councillor Duggins
Councillor Mutton
Councillor Ridge (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Sawdon (Chair)
Councillor Williams
- Co-opted Member Present:-
Councillor Clifford
- Cabinet Member Present:-
Councillor H. Noonan (Cabinet Member (Community Services))
- Other Scrutiny Members Present:-
Councillor Gazey
Councillor Patton
- Employees Present:-
L. Bull (Community Services Directorate)
J. Bolton (Head of Community Services)
G. Carey (Legal and Democratic Services Directorate)
A. Davey (Community Services Directorate)
R. Hughes (Head of Corporate Policy)
R. Innes (Community Services Directorate)
J. Jardine (Chief Executive's Directorate)
S. Rudge (Community Services Directorate)
A. Townsend (Legal and Democratic Services Directorate)
- Apologies:-
Councillor Lee

105. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 11th and 18th October, 2006, were signed as true records.

106. **Disabled Facilities Grant**

Further to Minute 84/06, the Committee considered a report of the Director of Community Services which had previously been considered by the Cabinet Member (Community Services) (their Minute 20/06 refers) and had been called-in by Councillors Mutton, Clifford and Patton.

The report set out details of the measures that had been put in place to reduce the waiting time for disabled facilities grants. The Cabinet Member explained that two years ago there had been a three year wait for disabled facilities grants. In 2004, the previous

Cabinet Member had approved a report that detailed measures to reduce this wait; the measures had been successful and now the wait time had reduced to 12 months.

The Members calling in the report were concerned that, whilst they wished the wait list to reduce, they did not wish this to be at the expense of meeting people's needs. There were concerns that the report indicated that stricter guidance had been issued to occupational therapists to ensure that assessments provided the minimal adaptations necessary to meet people's needs and that this meant that occupational therapists were not allowed to use their professional judgement. The members calling in the decision were further concerned that this could impact on the ability of people to live a reasonable existence and have implications on other parts of the Community Services budget, for example if a person was denied a disabled facilities grant could they end up in a care home at a higher cost to the Local Authority?

The Cabinet Member confirmed that it was the Council's policy to allow people that wished to remain in their homes to do so and that if they wished to stay at home then funding would be available to support this, it was an issue of choice for the user. The Director confirmed that the policy had been approved in September 2004 and had not changed, there was no evidence that any people had been required to go into care over the last two years as a result of the policy. It was noted that often additional care packages were put into place while users waited for a disabled facilities grant, a reduction in wait times for disabled facilities grants would reduce the need for additional care packages, the target was to reduce the wait for disabled facilities grants to 30 weeks. With regard to the guidance to Occupational Therapists the Officers confirmed that Occupational Therapists worked to a strict Code of Practice, the guidance to Occupational Therapists was to ensure that the minimum adaptation necessary was provided rather not a restriction of their professional judgement. Service Users were able to 'top up' the grant or participate in an equity release scheme if they wished in order to carry out a more extensive scheme. Members were concerned that the equity release scheme was not appropriate for tenants of social landlords, and so was creating a two tier system.

The Committee noted that a report would be prepared for the Cabinet Member in February, 2007, on the progress with the review process; it was suggested that it could be appropriate to bring that report to this Committee.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the Committee concur with the decision of the Cabinet Member.**
- (2) That the report to the Cabinet Member on progress with the review process also be submitted to this Committee.**

107. Call-Ins Stage 1

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

Delivering Modernisation and Efficiencies in Social Care in Order to Balance the Budget in Learning Disabilities Services

The report had been called in by Councillors Mutton, Kelly and Clifford.

The reason for the call-in was, "To better understand how lowering people's income helps to promote independence".

The Committee noted that the deadline for call-ins for Cabinet and Cabinet Member decisions made during the week commencing 30th October, 2006, was 9.00 am on Friday 10th November, 2006. 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 22nd November, 2006 and that the relevant Cabinet Member be requested to attend.

108. **Outstanding Issues**

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

109. **Work Programme 2006/2007**

The Committee considered the Work Programme for the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee for the 2006/2007 Municipal year.

The Chair reported on a report that would be submitted to Cabinet on 12th December, 2006, relating to the expression of interest for the Swanswell Academy, which would require the agreement of the Chair of this Committee that call-ins would not apply to the decision.

RESOLVED that the report on the Swanswell Academy be submitted to this Committee on 6th December for them to understand the reasons for urgency and to agree that call-ins should not apply prior to the Chair attending the meeting of Cabinet on 12th December, 2006.

110. **Coventry Sports Trust**

This item was not considered by the Committee due to the absence of the relevant Cabinet Member.