

Quarterly Report on the Work of Scrutiny Board (1) – October to December 2006

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee identified four themes for Scrutiny Boards to bear in mind when doing their work in 2006/2007. This note shows the work done by the Board during the period October to December, in the light of these themes.

Relevance

The Board considered a report on the Medium Term Financial Strategy before it was considered by the Cabinet, giving it the opportunity to comment before decisions were taken. The Board supported the recommendations in the report and made a number of suggestions about marginal changes relating to the preciseness of language, clarity of understanding and the level of detail provided in the report, which were accepted by the Cabinet.

Public Engagement

The Board has not involved the public in its work during this quarter.

Value for Money

In December the Board received the first progress report on the work being done to implement the Council's Value for Money Strategy.

Achieving Improvement

1. The Board held a meeting in December to plan for the meetings with its relevant Cabinet Members in January/February. Members decided the questions they wished to ask and gave them to the Cabinet Members in advance of those meetings. This was to enable them to give informed responses and did not preclude supplementary questions being asked at the meetings.
2. The Board received reports following up the work of the task and finish group set up to examine the process for installing the new Benefits IT system. These reassured them that the installation was on target for February/March and that disruption for customers would be minimal.
3. The Board received a report on the current scope of Section 106 planning agreements, future proposed changes and Coventry's approach to planning obligations. The report also gave information relating to funding available at 30th September, 2006 and agreements made between April 2005 and March 2006.

The Board asked for an annual report on this issue.

4. The Board's Audit Sub-Group has had 2 meetings. One was an informal meeting to discuss the approach to its work and the reports it wished to receive. At its first formal

meeting the Sub-Group decided its work programme and considered reports on internal and external audit work.

5. The Board were given information they had requested on how the legal work relating to contracts is carried out within the City Council. They have asked for more information on options for how this work might be done in the future.
6. The Board has continued to monitor the capital and revenue programmes.

Councillor Andrew Williams – Chair, Scrutiny Board 1

Corinne Steele, Scrutiny Co-ordinator