

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

10th October, 2007

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee and Substitute Members Present:-
Councillor Arrowsmith (Chair)
Councillor Clifford (Substitute for Councillor Maton)
Councillor Crookes (Substitute for Councillor Ms. Hunter)
Councillor Duggins
Councillor Lee
Councillor Mutton
Councillor Ridge
Councillor Williams

Employees Present:-
R. Hughes (Head of Corporate Policy)
J. Jardine (Chief Executive's Directorate)
C. Steele (Chief Executive's Directorate)
D. Taylor (Interim Head of Democratic Services)
A. Townsend (Customer and Workforce Services Directorate)

Apologies:-
Councillor Ms. Hunter
Councillor Maton

55. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

56. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 5th September, 2007, were agreed as a true record.

57. 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 1st October, 2007, was 9.00 a.m. on Friday 12th October, 2007. Any call-in 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 Customer and Workforce Services (Paragraph 5.4.5.25.4 of the City Council's Constitution refers).

58. Quarterly Report on the Work of Scrutiny Board (1) (Finance, Procurement and Value for Money, Community Cohesion and Equalities, Customer, Workforce and Legal Services, Audit Issues)

The Committee considered and noted a report of Councillor Williams, Chair of Scrutiny Board (1), that provided an update to the Committee on the work undertaken by Scrutiny Board (1) during the period June to September, 2007. The Committee noted that the Board had made a change to the way that they were approaching their work on sickness absence. Previously all Directors had been requested to attend meetings of the Board, work this year was concentrating on those service areas where absence levels

were particularly high and a meeting had already been held with the Director of City Services to understand what was being done to reduce the high levels of sickness in three particular service areas within his directorate. The Committee noted that the Audit Commission had done some work in this area and it was hoped to be able to take this work to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Board (1) Audit Sub-Group.

59. Quarterly Report on the Work of Scrutiny Board (2) (Children, Learning and Young People)

The Committee considered a report of Councillor Lee, Chair of Scrutiny Board (2), that provided an update to the Committee on the work of Scrutiny Board (2) during the Municipal Year to date. The Board had been extremely busy over the period under consideration, a special meeting had been held to consider the proposal to accelerate the opening of the Grace Academy, other areas of work included visits to children's homes and the emergency closure of schools. The Committee noted that the work of the Building Schools for the Future Review Group was ongoing.

With regard to the emergency closure of schools the Chair outlined to the Committee the approach being taken and indicated that a meeting would be held shortly with all those stakeholders to ensure that the policy adopted suited all parties. There were concerns that OFSTED absenteeism statistics treated closures of schools decided by Headteachers differently to closures by Local Authorities although it was noted that the closure of schools by Local Authorities was technically illegal.

RESOLVED that Scrutiny Board (2) be requested to investigate how OFSTED absenteeism statistics associated with bad weather school closures are calculated.

60. Quarterly Report on the Work of Scrutiny Board (3) (City Development, City Services, Climate Change, Sustainability and Housing)

The Committee considered and noted a report of the Chair of Scrutiny Board (3) that updated the Committee on the progress of Scrutiny Board (3) compared to their agreed work programme. The Chair emphasised that it had been a busy period, the Board had an additional portfolio to scrutinise. Work to date had centred on the CV One Business Plan, Commercial Portfolio Property review and IKEA store opening. Future business included proposals for urban traffic management controls and the Pest Control Service.

61. Quarterly Report on the Work of Scrutiny Board (4) (Community Services, Health (Policy and Inequalities), Culture, Leisure and Libraries and Neighbourhoods)

The Committee considered and noted a report of the Chair of Scrutiny Board (4) that set out the work undertaken by the Scrutiny Board for the municipal year to date, this had included:-

- The annual report of the Joint Director of Public Health
- Consultation on the City Council's Cultural Strategy
- Review of proposals for dementia day services
- Culture, Leisure and Libraries Charging Review

- Cabinet Member Strategic Plans
- Question and answer session on the financial position of UHCW
- West Midlands Ambulance Service Consultation

The review previously established on the experiences of older people in hospital after discharge, which had utilised user researchers, was now complete; the resultant work was good and was being used by UHCW as a basis for a research funding application to the Department of Health. The use of user researchers for this piece of work had worked very well and was being considered for other reviews.

A general discussion ensued as to the workloads for the four Scrutiny Boards. There was general agreement that the workload for all the Scrutiny Boards was heavy particularly since the number of Boards had been reduced, it was highlighted that Scrutiny Board (4) had initially been established to just scrutinise health but was now required to also consider at other areas.

62. Outstanding Issues

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

63. Work Programme 2007/08

The Committee considered and noted the Work Programme for the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee for the 2007/08 Municipal Year.

64. Other Business

There were no other items of public or private business.