

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

4th June, 2008

Scrutiny Co-ordination
Committee and
Substitute Members
Present:-

Councillor Arrowsmith
Councillor Bains (Substitute for Councillor Maton)
Councillor Charley
Councillor Clifford
Councillor Crookes (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Duggins
Councillor McNicholas (Substitute for Councillor Mutton)
Councillor Ridge (Chair)

Employees Present:-

P. Jennings (Finance and Legal Services Directorate)
J. Parry (Assistant Chief Executive)
C. Steele (Chief Executive's Directorate)
A. Townsend (Customer and Workforce Services Directorate)
J. Venn (Chief Executive's Directorate)
A. West (Chief Executive's Directorate)
C. West (Director of Finance and Legal Services)

Apologies:-

Councillor Maton
Councillor Mutton

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 16th and 23rd April, 2008, were signed as a true record.

3. Call-Ins Stage 1

The Committee noted that there had been no Cabinet/Cabinet Member meetings held during the week commencing 26th May, 2008, therefore there were no decisions open to call-in that week.

4. Cabinet/Cabinet Member Item of Urgent Public Business – Application for Capitalisation Direction

With reference to Minute 02/08 of the Cabinet the Committee considered a joint report that sought approval to apply for a capitalisation direction from Government in respect of any potential successful future claims for backdated equal pay costs. The direction would allow the Council to treat these revenue costs as capital expenditure and fund them from borrowing or capital receipts. The Committee noted that the report did not

change the Council's stance in seeking to appeal against the recent Equal Pay Claims Tribunal judgment and to continue to defend the current legal position in respect of equal pay legislation.

The Cabinet had considered the report at their meeting on 20th May, 2008, the nominee of the Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee had attended that meeting to agree that the matter was urgent and that call-in should not apply. The Committee noted that it had not been possible to bring the matter before this Committee prior to the consideration of the matter by Cabinet due to the break in meetings around the local election and Annual Meeting. The reason for urgency was to allow the application to be submitted before the deadline of 29th May, 2008.

The Committee questioned the officer on aspects of the report, in particular the process for deciding how the matter would be taken through the political management process and briefings given to all Elected Members.

RESOLVED that the Committee note the report and the reasons for urgency.

5. **Coventry City Council's Response to the Department of Communities and Local Government's Consultation on the Draft National "Participatory Budgeting Strategy"**

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive that set out the Council's response to the Government's consultation on the draft National Participatory Budgeting Strategy. Due to time constraints associated with the response, which was required to be returned by 10th June, 2008, retrospective Council approval for the response would be sought .

The proposals for participatory budgets or 'Community Kitties' would give local people a direct say in deciding how some of the local public service budget should be spent. The consultation sought views on the draft strategy as a plan to achieve the Government's ambition for participatory budgets to be in place in all Local Authorities by 2012. The draft strategy formed part of the Government's Empowerment Agenda and had clear linkages to the new Community Empowerment Bill that would be enacted in the next parliamentary session. The proposed response was appended to the report submitted.

RESOLVED that the Committee note the proposed response and have no further comments to make.

6. **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.

7. **Other Business**

There were no other items of public or private business.