

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

9th July, 2008

Scrutiny Co-ordination
Committee Members

Present: - Councillor Arrowsmith
Councillor Charley
Councillor Clifford
Councillor Crookes (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Duggins
Councillor Maton
Councillor Mutton
Councillor Ridge (Chair)

Employees Present: - P. Barnett (Chief Executive's Directorate)
J. Jardine (Chief Executive's Directorate)
U. Patel (Customer and Workforce Services Directorate)
C. Steele (Chief Executive's Directorate)

14. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

15. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 4th and 18th June, 2008 were signed as true records.

16. **Consideration of Call-Ins Stage 1**

The officers reported on the following call-in that had been received: -

Cultural Services Inspection Report

The report had been called in by Councillors Skipper, Mutton and McNicholas.

The reason for the call-in was, "To understand better how the criticisms of Coventry City Council in the report (listed below) but not all covered by the recommendations and the action plan will be responded to.

'....the use of technology and pricing to increase participation is underdeveloped.'
(p13)

'....information about service users is not gathered across all cultural services.'
(p13)

'Cultural Services has a limited approach to service consultation and does not maximise resources'. (p14)

'Technology is not being used to full effect to increase access and promote cultural services and activities' (p14)

'...benchmarking is not embedded into the service to inform setting of fees and charges and recovery rates are not monitored across services.'

'....the contribution culture is making to other agendas such as community safety may not be valued and built into future plans' (p17)

'Benchmarking to assess value for money and improve service delivery is underdeveloped'. (p19)".

The Committee noted that the deadline for call-ins for Cabinet and Cabinet Member decisions made during the week commencing 30th June, 2008, was 9.00 a.m. on Friday 11th July, 2008. 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 Customer and Workforce 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 23rd July, 2008, and that the relevant Cabinet Member be requested to attend.

17. Scrutiny Board Work Programmes

The Committee considered proposed work programmes for the four Scrutiny Boards for 2008/2009 Municipal Year. It was noted that these were subject to change during the year in order to respond to changing circumstances and that the Committee would receive quarterly updates on the work of each Scrutiny Board over the course of the year. The work programmes were appended to the report and an updated work programme for Scrutiny Board (1) was tabled at the meeting.

The Council's Constitution places the responsibility on each Scrutiny Board to plan its own work programme. It also places responsibility on the Committee to consider the work programme of the Boards to ensure that there was no duplication in the work programme topics identified by each Board and that overall the work programmes represented an efficient use of the Board's time. In considering the work programmes, the following comments were raised:

Scrutiny Board (1)

The Committee noted that this year the Board planned to invite partner organisations and other agencies to share their best practice on how they tackled sickness levels. It was noted that West Midlands Police would be invited to attend a meeting as they had successfully decreased their staff sickness levels. It was suggested that it would be a good idea to invite Whitefriars to a meeting, as their sickness levels were relatively low and their workforce was made up of a combination of officers and operational staff.

Scrutiny Board (2)

The Committee noted that some areas of work listed within the work programme for Scrutiny Board (2) potentially crossed with Scrutiny Board (4), such as teenage pregnancy. It was being proposed that the two Boards would work together on this under a heading of sexual health and teenage pregnancy.

Scrutiny Board (3)

The Committee noted that the Board would be embarking on a review of 'verge parking' this year and that officers were in the process of scoping the review.

Scrutiny Board (4)

The Committee commented on the particularly heavy workload this Board appeared to have. It was noted however, that the Board covered substantial portfolios.

The Committee went on to debate other topics/issues that impacted the work of the Boards. They briefly discussed the following:

- All Boards had very difficult and tight workloads.
- Consideration needed to be given to how the Council's partners might be scrutinised.
- This year there would be a concerted effort to try and get Scrutiny into the community which would give members of the public a greater opportunity to get involved in the whole scrutiny process.
- In order to facilitate this, the role of communications and publicity in relation to the work of scrutiny needed to be given greater consideration.
- Youth service provision across the city could be a potential topic for a review group to consider in greater detail.

It was emphasised that these were initial work programmes only and that further detailed work would need to be done.

RESOLVED that the work programmes for Scrutiny Boards (1), (2), (3) and (4) be approved and that the comments made above be taken on board where appropriate.

18. **Outstanding Issues**

There were currently no outstanding issues to report on.

19. **Meeting Evaluation**

The Committee briefly discussed the meeting to evaluate its effectiveness and had no comments to make.

20. **Other Business**

There were no other items of public or private business.