

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

10th September, 2008

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Members

Present: -

Councillor Andrews (Substitute for Councillor Crookes)
Councillor Arrowsmith
Councillor Clifford
Councillor Duggins
Councillor Maton
Councillor Mutton
Councillor Ridge (Chair)
Councillor Smith (Substitute for Councillor Charley)

Employees Present: -

V. Clowes (Customer and Workforce Services Directorate)
J. Handley (Customer and Workforce Services Directorate)
J. Jardine (Chief Executive's Directorate)
J. McLellan (Customer and Workforce Services Directorate)
J. Parry (Chief Executive's Directorate)

39. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Charley (substitute Councillor Smith) and Councillor Crookes (substitute Councillor Andrews).

40. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

41. **Consideration of Call Ins – Stage 1**

The Committee noted that the deadline for call-ins for Cabinet and Cabinet Member decisions made during the week commencing 1st September, 2008, was 9.00 a.m. on Friday, 12th September, 2008. Any 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).

42. **Report Back on Conference – Small Print, Big Picture**

The Committee considered and noted a report by Councillor Clifford which detailed his attendance at the above conference held in London on the 22nd July, 2008.

43. **Report Back on Conference – Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities (CAAC)**

The Committee considered a report by the Deputy Director of City Development on the outcome of the above conference held in Lorient, France from the 8th –10th April, 2008, and 1st - 3rd June, 2008, in Auditorio Kursaal, San Sebastian, Spain.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and that the officers be requested to provide information on Council attendees at the conference to Members of the

Committee.

44. Report Back on Conference – Centre for Public Scrutiny 6th Annual Conference

The Committee considered and noted a report by Councillors Ridge and Clifford which detailed their attendance at the above conference held in London on the 10th June, 2008.

45. Outstanding Issues

There were currently no outstanding issues.

46. Work Programme 2008/09

The Committee considered and noted their Work Programme for the 2008/09 Municipal Year.

47. Coventry City Council's Response to the Ministry of Justice's Consultation on Week-end Voting

With reference to Minute 74/08 of the Cabinet, the Committee considered a report of the Director of Customer and Workforce Services, which contained a proposed response to the Ministry of Justice's consultation paper on Weekend Voting.

The Committee noted that the report submitted was also to be considered by the Council, at their meeting scheduled for 16th September 2008.

The report indicated that one of the Government's strategic aims was that people should be able to exercise their right to vote with ease and without unnecessary barriers. Its objective was to ensure that voting processes were accessible, convenient and easy to use without compromising security.

The consultation aimed to promote debate on the merits of moving the election day from a Thursday to a weekend and on the best way to do this.

The Government was also keen to hear views on advance voting at polling stations and the use of advance and remote voting over the internet/telephone, and whether these would be acceptable alternatives to election days being held on a Thursday or may usefully support election days at the weekend.

The Committee noted that current legislation required local elections in England to be held on the first Thursday in May. There was no statutory requirement for Parliamentary Elections to be on a Thursday but they could not be held on 'dies-non', i.e. weekends, bank holidays, etc. Any move of local or Parliamentary elections in England and Wales would mean elections held on different days in different parts of the UK. Under his current powers, the Secretary of State could set weekend voting for European Parliamentary elections, but the rules for the conduct of the election would need to be amended to allow weekend voting.

The consultation was in the format of a series of questions and the report submitted contained the detailed responses proposed.

RESOLVED that Committee concur with the decision of the Cabinet to recommend to the City Council to approve the response appended to the report for submission to the Ministry of Justice by the deadline of 26th September 2008.

(Note: This item was considered as urgent public business, the grounds for urgency being the need to allow Scrutiny to have an input to the report prior to its consideration by the City Council at their meeting on 16th September, 2008.)

48. Meeting Evaluation

The Committee briefly discussed the meeting to evaluate its effectiveness