

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday 24 February 2003

PRESENT:

Councillor LACEY O.B.E (Chairman), and Councillors BELSEY (Deputy Chairman), MARSH (as substitute for Slater), SKILTON, STANLEY, Mrs TESO and WILLIAMS.

(An apology for absence was received from Councillor Slater).

37. MINUTES. The minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2002 were submitted and approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

38. EMERGENCY PLANNING. The Committee considered the report of the Joint Review Board regarding the outcome of the Countywide review of Emergency Planning.

County Councillor Gadd, Peter Davidson, Project Manager, East Sussex County Council and Councillor Jon Harris, Eastbourne Borough Council were in attendance to answer Members questions.

Members were advised that in March 2002, as part of the ongoing review of services provided by East Sussex County Council, the Audit and Best Value Scrutiny Committee commissioned a best value review of emergency planning facilities in the county. A Joint Best Value Review Board (the Board) was established comprising 4 elected members from East Sussex County Council (ESCC) and 1 elected member from each of the District and Borough Councils. The Board was supported by an Officer Project Team made up of officers from the ESCC and from the respective Emergency Planning Departments of each District and Borough Council. (Appendix 1 to the report detailed the membership of the Board and Officer Project Team.)

The Committee discussed various aspects of the review including; determination of risks levels, funding available to deal with acts of terrorism, the development of ICT, training of all Members in emergency planning issues, alternative operations rooms and locations, dealing with large scale inundation of sea water and finally, achievability of target dates set for the completion of recommendations within the review (Strategic and Operational recommendations were detailed within the report at paragraph 13).

RESOLVED: That County be advised that the Scrutiny Committee are in support of the recommendations detailed within the report.

39. TENDER PROCEDURES. The Committee considered the report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services regarding the progress on reviewing the Council's Contract Procedure Rules together with work carried out in preparing a Procurement Code of Practice.

Members were reminded that in November 2002, the Scrutiny Committee established a Task Group to review the tender procedures of the Council. The Tender Procedure Task Group was also asked to review the arrangements for the opening and witnessing negotiated tenders.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services had circulated a supplementary report prior to the meeting reporting the outcome of the Task Group meeting held on 14 February 2003.

Members were advised that the Group was halted because consensus was not accepted regarding the requirement for a chairperson and the Task Group was therefore unable to review the Council's Tender Procedures.

The Committee were informed that the work of the officers in reviewing the Contract Procedure Rules would

continue, concluding with the Council's adoption of the Rules.

A widespread consultation exercise would be carried out with key officers during the remainder of February and March 2003. The Members of the Task Group had previously received copies of the proposed Procedure Rules and the Head of Audit also stated that copies of the proposed Procedure Rules would be provided to all Members of the Scrutiny Committee, and written comments should be submitted to the Head of Audit or Financial Strategy Accountant, during the consultation period.

The Chairman added that a copy of his questions would be forward to the Head of Audit, as soon as possible, and requested a written response to issues raised.

Members were informed that the completed document would be presented to Council on 30 July 2003

RESOLVED: (1) That the continuation of work and consultation by the officers reviewing the Contracts Procedure rules, as proposed within the report, ahead of submission to Council, be endorsed.

(2) That the Tender Procedure Task Group be disbanded.

40. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC.

RESOLVED: That the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting as otherwise there was a likelihood of disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972. The relevant paragraph of Schedule 12A is shown beneath the item.

41. SUMMARY OF CONFIDENTIAL PROCEEDINGS FOR INFORMATION.

(NOTE: The full minute of the undermentioned item is set out in the confidential section of these minutes. The report remains confidential).

a) **SUMMER SEASON THEATRICAL PERFORMANCES 2003.** The Committee considered the report of the Director of Tourism and Leisure regarding the processes and success of in house productions.

(Exempt information reason – Para 7 - information relating to Personal, Financial or Business information).

NOTED.

The meeting closed at 6.39 p.m.

R M LACEY O.B.E

Chairman