

## SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday 9 June 2003

PRESENT:

**Councillor WARNER (Chairman), and Councillors SKILTON (Deputy Chairman), LACEY O.B.E, LEGGETT, MARSH, Mrs MURRAY and Mrs POOLEY.**

**1. 'MAKING SCRUTINY WORK'.** The Committee was requested to appoint Councillors Warner, Williams and two Liberal Democrats to attend the 'Making Scrutiny Work' Conference to be held in Westminster, London on 17 June 2003.

**RESOLVED: (By 4 Votes to 3)** That no Member be appointed to attend the 'Making Scrutiny Work' Conference to be held in Westminster, London on 17 June 2003.

**2. SCRUTINY REVIEW OF ELECTORAL ISSUES.** The Chairman requested that a Task Group be established to review Electoral Issues comprising two Councillors, 1 Member from each Political Group and the Lead Officer, Mr P Finnis, Head of Democratic Services. The Scope of the review was detailed on the front of the agenda. The two nominated Members were Councillors Leggett and Mrs Murray.

**RESOLVED:** That a Task Group be established to review Electoral Issues comprising Councillors Leggett and Mrs Murray and Mr P Finnis, Head of Democratic Services as Lead Officer.

**3. PERFORMANCE MONITORING.** The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive informing Members of the Council's performance for 2002-3 and the targeted performance for 2003-4 as measured by the Best Value Performance Indicators. Members were advised that the appendix to the report contained year-end results for 2002-3. Members noted that of the 67 indicators, four were not reported due to accounts not being closed and details still awaited from the results of the Housing Stock Condition survey.

The Strategic Development Officer was requested to provide additional information on a couple of questions raised; the information would be reported back to the committee via written correspondence. The questions were based on responsive repairs, racist incidents and prosecutions in relation to Benefit fraud.

Members also discussed various aspects of the performance of the Council and further information was sought for the following:

- **Personnel**
  - 15 Ill health retirements
- **IT**
  - 157 E Govt.
- **Housing Mgt.**
  - 74 & 74i Housing tenant satisfaction with Landlord
- o 75 Housing tenant satisfaction with opportunities for participation
  - 184a & b - Decent Homes
  - 185 - dealt with by query above?

- **Housing Needs**
  - BV 64 Demolished or returned to use Private homes
  
- **Benefits**
  - 76 Benefits security - Covered by response to above hopefully
  - 78a Claims processing
  - 78c Claims processing
  - 79b Claims processing
  
- **Community Safety**
  - 127b Violence
  - 128 vehicle crimes
  
- **Waste**
  - 82a Recycling
  - 86 Cost of waste collection
  
- **Culture**
  - 170 b Visits in person
  - 170c Visits by school kids

The Committee agreed that the information requested above would be the subject of a further report to Committee on 9 July 2003.

**RESOLVED:** (1) That the targets set for future years be noted.

(2) That a further report on the Performance Indicators as listed above be brought to this Committee on 9 July 2003.

(3) That PI numbers 107, 109a, b and c, be added to the Annual Scrutiny Programme for further Scrutiny concerning the performance of the Planning Department in the areas covered by the Performance Indicators listed above.

**4. HOMELESSNESS REVIEW.** The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing Needs and Strategy regarding the outcome of the Homeless Review.

Members were advised that the Homelessness Act 2002 required Local Authorities to carry out a review of homelessness and publish a homelessness strategy by 31<sup>st</sup> July 2003. The review and strategy must then be ongoing, reviewed at least every 5 years. The aim of this process was to move away from crisis management of homelessness to a proactive focus upon prevention of homelessness and housing support to reduce cyclical homelessness. The purpose of the Review was detailed within the report, along with members of the steering group, which contributed to the review, and the methodology that the review followed.

The report identified a number of areas where services could be improved, extended or new services where required. Members were advised that work had started on preparing the homelessness strategy and would be guided by the Homelessness Review steering group for continuity. It would provide an action plan for the next five years identifying key priorities for the authority and addressing the issue of homelessness. The draft strategy would be reported to Cabinet in July 2003.

Members discussed various aspects of the review and thanked the members of the Steering Group for their input into the Review.

Councillor Williams addressed the committee regarding the increase in the cost of homelessness accommodation brought on by new legislation, and called for a response from the Lead Cabinet Member for

Housing on how the increase would be funded. The Committee agreed that the question be forwarded to the Lead Member for an appropriate response.

**RESOLVED:** That the question posed by Councillor Williams regarding the increase in funding required for homelessness accommodation be forwarded to the Lead Cabinet Member for Housing for a response.

The meeting closed at 7.10 p.m.

**P WARNER**

**Chairman**