

## SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday 8 September 2003

PRESENT:

**Councillor WARNER (Chairman), and Councillors LACEY O.B.E, LEGGETT, MARSH, Mrs MURRAY, Mrs POOLEY and SLATER (as substitute for Skilton).**

**(An apology for absence was reported from Councillor Skilton)**

**5. MINUTES.** The minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2003 were submitted and approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

**6. PERFORMANCE MONITORING.** The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive providing further information on selected Best Value Performance indicators as requested by the Chairman.

The questions raised were regarding Bed and Breakfast stays, Benefit claims and Lifeline. The performance details and responses to the questions were detailed in the report for Members consideration.

**NOTED.**

**7. SCRUTINY REVIEW OF VOTER TURNOUT.** The Committee considered the report of the Scrutiny Review Team, advising Members of the findings and recommendations of the Team.

Councillors Leggett and Mrs Murray introduced the report to the committee. The objectives of the review were detailed within the report. The Review Team concluded that the Council Infrastructure towards Member support, the conduct of elections and the administration of the electoral register was appropriate and of good quality. However members noted that there were some issues that needed addressing.

Members expressed concern regarding the requirement that proxy voters applying for more than one election on the grounds of ill health or employment must have a signature by a doctor or employer. Members pointed out that several voters had complained that doctors were charging upwards of £15, and discussed the possibility of alternative signatures.

Concern was also expressed about the merging of the Local and European Elections, accessibility to Polling Stations and E-Voting, mixed views were expressed regarding the option of a four yearly election cycle.

In order to tackle the objectives detailed in paragraph 2 of the report, the Review Team proposed the measures as set out in the Action Plan (Appendix 2).

**RESOLVED:** That Council be recommended to approve the Action Plan as appended to the report.

**8. COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT.** The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive, informing the members of the Council's self assessment.

Members were advised that Cabinet on 3 September received a report on the Council's self-assessment. The recommendation being that delegation for further amendments was made to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council or nominee.

Members agreed that it was important for the Scrutiny Committee to have the opportunity to make recommendations for any amendments to the Council's self assessment. Members agreed that the Peer Review had been very positive, and reflected well on the performance of the Council as a whole.

The Chief Executive advised the committee that Cabinet had made amendments to the Self Assessment, and that Cabinet had endorsed the Diagnostics. The amendments were due for submission to the inspectors by next week. The agenda for the Inspection week was being discussed with the Lead Inspector.

**NOTED.**

(NOTE: URGENT ITEM: By virtue of Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chairman was of the opinion that the following item, not listed on the agenda, should be considered as a matter of urgency to enable a decision to be made as soon as possible).

**9. MOTION BY COUNCILLOR LACEY.** The Chairman reported that a motion had been received as follows:

- 1) “That the Scrutiny Committee should immediately investigate the recent collapse of the Eastbourne Borough Council IT network and email service and that explanations should be sought and provided to Committee members to see how the situation arose and to seek firm assurances that the necessary steps are now being taken to prevent recurrence of the disaster that befell our internal electronic communications systems”.
- 2) “That a report be immediately drawn up to identify what measures can be taken by Eastbourne Borough Council to halt the rash of un-requested inappropriate spam emails”.
- 3) “That a calculation of the cost of the collapse of our IT systems should be identified and apportioned to the culprits”.

**RESOLVED:** That this motion be approved.

The meeting closed at 6.55 p.m.

**P WARNER**

Chairman