

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday 7 February 2005

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs HEALY (Chairman) Councillor MARSH (Deputy Chairman) and Councillors Mrs BANNISTER, BELSEY, Mrs HOWLETT, TAYLOR and WARNER.

19. MINUTES. The minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2004 were submitted and approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

20. 2005-2006 BUDGET. The Committee considered the report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services regarding the detailed budget proposals for 2005/06 covering general fund revenue, housing revenue, capital expenditure and treasury management for recommendation to full Council on 23 February 2005.

The report set out comprehensive information on the Council's finances together with details of budget proposals developed in consultation with Members for approval by Cabinet and subsequent consideration by full Council.

Members discussed various aspects of the Council Budget 2005-2006. A summary of the comments is appended to these minutes. Councillor Lucas was in attendance to answer Members questions.

NOTED.

21. CORPORATE EQUALITY UPDATE REPORT. The Committee considered the report of the Communication and Participation Manager reporting corporate progress against the Equality Standard for Local Government and Corporate Equality Action Plan.

The report detailed how the Council had responded to the Equality Standard for Local Government and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, over the second year and currently third year of the Equality Standard (Appendix 1 to the report). The report also concentrated on the progress made corporately.

Much work has been carried out during Year 2 was detailed in the report at 6.5. This work would continue until Equality was mainstreamed throughout the Council and strong links were established with stakeholders, partnerships, community groups, and representative bodies. Members thanked the Communication and Participation Manager for her continuing efforts with regard to the development of Equality throughout the Council.

Members noted that the Council was committed to achieving Level 2 of the Equality Standard at the end of Year 3 (2004-05). The framework was in place that would enable the Council to progress systematically and years 3 and 4 would build upon this framework in preparation for the Council to achieve all five levels by the end of the 2007/08 equality year. Councillor Marsden was in attendance to answer Members questions.

NOTED.

22. REVISION TO POLICY FRAMEWORK. The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive recommending new overarching documents and Values aimed at forming part of the Policy Framework as agreed by Council in May 2004.

Members were advised that the Council's existing Policy Framework listed a number of separate policies. At the time the Constitution was written (1999/2000) this was in line with statutory requirements. As a result of the

Government's commitment to reducing unnecessary regulation a review of planning requirements was carried out. The actual reduction of plan requirements was linked to Eastbourne achieving a 'Good' CPA result and is one of the Government's much heralded "Freedoms and Flexibilities." The formal minimum requirements for the Policy Framework were detailed in the report.

Members noted that within the current framework there was often no mechanism for monitoring the implementation, updating and renewal of the plans. In addition, the requirements for consultation and publication meant that amendments to the Council's policies were a barrier to efficient and speedy decision-making. The benefits of adopting a new policy framework that would be contained within the Council approved Performance Plan were also detailed in the report.

The initial draft of these statements was attached. It was hoped that these would represent the Council's key policy statements.

NOTED.

23. GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS TASK GROUP. The Committee considered the briefing note advising Members of the progress regarding the Gypsies and Travellers Task Group.

NOTED.

24. ANNUAL SCRUTINY PROGRAMME 2005/06. Members were invited to consider items for review for the coming municipal year 2005/06. The Chairman put forward three suggestions for review; Enforcement, Consultancy funding for the procurement of Theatres, Leisure Services and Seafront Attractions and the value of Airbourne

NOTED.

The meeting closed at 7.15 p.m.

Councillor Mrs Healy

(Chairman)