

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

CORPORATE RESOURCES

Report of
Chairman:

COUNCILLOR JOHN GUEST

There was one regular meeting of the Committee, preceded by a special meeting that was a trip to two North-East Authorities. The purpose of the special meeting was to enable members and officers to evaluate customer service schemes that were already in operation in the country. The two Authorities visited were Newcastle and Derwentside.

CROS.105/02 CUSTOMER CONTACT BEST VALUE REVIEW

(a) Site Visits

Members, with officers and Executive members, discussed the value and lessons learnt from the site visits. The majority of all concerned were enthusiastic about the Newcastle Centre and the benefits such a centre would bring to this Authority, its staff, and our customers. It was noted that Derwentside had not got it right just yet, but that improved specialist software should rectify current problems. However, members felt that visits had been beneficial and lessons had been learnt.

(b) Review Update

Members concurred that the principles embodied in the Review were of significant importance and if should not achieve the support of the Executive and Council; it should be referred back to us for further consideration.

CROS.114/02 AREA WORKING – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW

At last, work has started on this important area that seeks to engage communities in the democratic process. This is a follow-up to work already commenced by a former Working Group of the Council. Fortunately, the Council has recently employed a person with significant knowledge and experience in this field, coupled with the large number of other Authorities that have embarked on similar schemes since the Working Group dissolved; we now have more information to complete the consult and compare aspects of the Review.

Conference on Risk Management and European Regionalism

I attended the above as Chairman of the Committee at an event in Newcastle organised by the National Association of Councillors (11 to 13 October 2002). In relation to Risk Management this was a valuable exercise because of the forthcoming CPA process. Presentation slides are available for Members in the bookcase outside the Executive Suite. A further copy was passed to the Director of Environment for information. A number of debates on regionalism with speakers from the three major parties and other interest groups were held. It was interesting to see how much resistance to these regional set-ups, was displayed by representatives throughout the north of England, and Northern Ireland.

Councillor J Guest
Chairman
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee