

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (SPECIAL)**TUESDAY 3 DECEMBER 2002 AT 2.00 PM**

PRESENT: Councillor Knapton (Chairman), Councillors Boaden, G Hodgson, Mrs Fisher, Morton and Mrs Pattinson.

Councillors Bloxham, Ellis, Mrs Rutherford and K Rutherford were also in attendance at the meeting.

COS.156/02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Atkinson and Mrs Parsons.

COS.157/02 AGENDA

The Chairman indicated that items of business relating to the Freedom of Information – Publication Scheme and Review of Advice Agencies had been submitted, and sought Members' agreement to their being added to the Agenda and dealt with at items A.4 and A.5 respectively.

Further, a Member of the Committee and the relevant Officers required to attend another meeting that afternoon and it was therefore proposed that Agenda items A3(b) – Community Centres Budgets, A3(c) – Tullie House Savings Proposals and A5 – Review of Advice Agencies be moved up the Agenda and dealt with as the first items of business.

RESOLVED – That, subject to the above, the Agenda be agreed.

COS.158/02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING DECLARATIONS OF 'THE PARTY WHIP')

Councillors Boaden, Mrs Fisher, Knapton and Morton declared personal interests in accordance with the City Council's Code of Conduct for Members in respect of the item of business relating to Community Centres Budgets. The Councillors stated that they were members of various Community Centre Management Committees.

Councillor Mrs Fisher declared a personal interest in accordance with the City Council's Code of Conduct for Members in respect of the item of business relating to the Review of Advice Agencies. Councillor Mrs Fisher stated that she was a member of the Citizens' Advice Bureau Management Committee.

COS.159/02 COMMUNITY CENTRES BUDGETS

Councillors Mrs Fisher, Knapton and Morton, having declared personal interests in this item of business, took no part in the discussion thereon.

Councillor Boaden, having declared a personal interest in this item of business, participated in the discussion thereon.

The Community Support Manager presented report LCD.35/02 concerning a review of the grant allocation to Community Centres in accordance with the Corporate Plan priority to 'ensure a fair and equitable distribution of resources'.

Options for general savings from the 2003/04 Budget for Community Centres totalling approximately £10,000 were submitted.

The report had been submitted to the Executive on 25 November 2002 when it was referred for consideration as part of the Budget process.

In considering the matter, Members raised the following points to which the Community Support Manager responded:

Would the options identified be on a one-off basis or year on year?

The option not to add an inflationary increase to that part of the 'controllable' budget which did not relate to wages/salaries would be year on year, as would the reduction in the 'general expenses' budget. The proposal regarding cleaning at Belah for example would be a one-off during the current financial year, with the monies subsequently being made up from an alternative source.

The object was to make £30,000 of savings over 3 years.

The budget allocations to Community Centres were in effect grants and it was up to the Management Committees how they were used. Would the proposed cuts not therefore affect staffing?

That would not be the case across the board e.g. the grant to Brampton Community Centre was unconditional.

A Member expressed the hope that Community Centres would receive early notification of any such reductions in order that they may effectively manage their expenditure in future.

A Member expressed disappointment that it had not been possible to compile a formula to ensure that the award of grant aid was fair to all.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Portfolio Holder for Community Activities commented that the manner by which resources were utilised was a matter for the Community Centres themselves. It was hoped, however, to provide three year budget protection for Community Centres.

RESOLVED – That the position be noted.

COS.160/02 REVIEW OF ADVICE AGENCIES

Councillor Mrs Fisher, having declared a personal interest in this item of business, took no part in the discussion thereon.

The Community Support Manager presented report TC.224/02 concerning a review of the City Council's financial support to Advice Agencies in accordance with Corporate Plan priority CO1 "to undertake a fundamental review of grant procedures to advice agencies ensuring there is a co-ordinated approach and the Council sees value for money".

The policy context was that financial support to the Advice Agencies had been provided for many years within the terms of the Council's Anti Poverty Strategy and, more recently, as part of the Cumbria Community Legal Services' Partnership's Strategic Plan. That partnership was part of a national initiative, under the auspices of the Legal Services Commission, which sought to incorporate a local body of funders and advice providers working in harmony to provide advice on a co-ordinated and strategic basis. The Council had committed to a Concordat and a Funding Agreement, details of which were submitted.

Councillor Mrs Pattinson had, until recently, chaired the Partnership Strategy Group. As part of the Executive's consultation process on the issue, the Community Activities Portfolio Holder had met with representatives of the Agencies concerned on 9 July 2002 and the notes of that meeting were submitted. In addition, the Citizen's Advice Bureau and Law Centre had been asked to respond to a series of questions about their service and the relevant correspondence was also submitted.

Details of current grant arrangements and remits for the Law Centre, Citizen's Advice Bureau and Benefits Advice Centre were provided, together with details of current grant arrangements for Carlisle Council for Voluntary Services.

The Community Support Manager indicated that there were also a number of "independent" advice projects operating within the City Council's area. He added that the work of the Advice Agencies could be split into two categories, general advice which was provided by the Citizens' Advice Bureau and specialist advice as provided by the Benefit Advice Centre and the Community Law Centre.

Options for future funding arrangements were identified in detail.

Any decisions taken as part of the budget process would require more detailed reports on implementation and should be carried out in accordance with a commitment to the Cumbria Community Legal Services Partnership and in full consultation with the relevant agencies and other partners, including the Legal Services Commission.

To that end a meeting would take place later that afternoon with the Legal Services Commission and which may have a bearing on the matter.

A Member commented that all the Local Authorities within the Partnership Strategy Group had expressed concern that the provision of financial assistance to Advice Agencies was currently a non-statutory function. She was of the opinion that this potentially made them an easier target when savings required to be made.

The Partnership had written to the Local Government Association expressing that concern and the view that they ought to be funded statutorily and she suggested that this Committee may wish to do likewise.

A Member added that, whilst no statutory obligation existed, subsidising the Agencies was something which the City Council had embraced over many years and which had great value for the community as a whole. He did not consider that an overlap of functions existed and found the proposals very worrying.

Members queried the position as regards the availability of legal aid and the Community Support Manager advised that, as he understood it, people could approach certain private Solicitors under a franchise arrangement to obtain free advice.

RESOLVED – (1) That consideration of the matter be deferred pending the outcome of the meeting with the Legal Services Commission.

(2) That a letter be sent to the Local Government Association outlining this Committee's concerns that there was currently no statutory obligation upon Local Authorities to provide financial assistance to Advice Agencies.

COS.161/02 TULLIE HOUSE – SAVINGS PROPOSALS

The Services Manager, Tullie House, presented report TC.233/02 detailing options for savings on Tullie House budgets for 2003/04 as follows:

£

- (a) Reduce Gallery Maintenance 4,000
- (b) Building Services – Changes to Cleaning Contract 10,000
- (c) Closure of Guildhall Museum 10,000
- (d) Exhibition Programme Reduction 10,000
- (e) Reduction in Training Budget 7,000
- (f) Reduced Arts Development resulting in loss
of Brampton Live Festival 8,000
- (g) Reduced Events Programme 16,000
- (h) Reduced Marketing Budget 15,000

There was also a possibility of increasing net income by £40,000 should it be agreed to introduce a Tullie Card Scheme for non-residents.

There would, however, be a projected shortfall in admissions income for 2003/04 of £20,000 against the budget.

She added that the Executive had on 25 November 2002 referred the matter for consideration as part of the 2003/04 Budget process and it was important that a decision be reached as soon as possible in order that arrangements could be made for the forthcoming year.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Portfolio Holder for Health and Well Being confirmed

that decision. He commented that the Executive was not in favour of the 'piecemeal' approach outlined in the report and, in particular, did not wish to see the closure of the Guildhall Museum.

A Member questioned the implications of the proposed savings on Tullie House.

The Services Manager indicated that there were serious implications emanating from certain of the proposals which could affect the sustainability of the operation, making it more difficult to attract trustees.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be received.

(2) That this Committee wishes to stress to the Executive the need for caution as regards the approach to operational savings at Tullie House.

COS.162/02 RAFFLES VISION – DRAFT FINAL REPORT

The Chairman advised the meeting that he had attended certain of the Open Days held as part of The Raffles Vision consultation process and had been extremely impressed by the enthusiasm demonstrated by all those involved. He had therefore asked that the report be brought before the Committee.

The Chairman then welcomed to the meeting Ms Jane Morris (The Riverside Group – Carlisle Housing Association – Landlord), Mr Les Ormrod (Business Development Manager, Lovell Partnerships Ltd – Developer) and Mr Peter Gommon (Ainsley Gommon - Architects)

There was submitted a report of the Acting Director of Housing (H.70/02) enclosing the draft final report on The Raffles Vision. A map detailing the Vision was on display in the meeting room, together with relevant documentation for inspection by Members.

Ms Morris, Mr Ormrod and Mr Gommon then gave a detailed presentation of The Vision.

On selection as preferred landlord by the City Council in May 2001, The Riverside Group had been asked to look specifically at a long-term Vision for the Raffles Estate. The Council had acknowledged that previous attempts to engage developers, following the production of a development brief and marketing report, had failed.

Following a selection process in January 2002, the City Council had formally selected Lovell Partnerships Ltd as preferred developer to work with the City Council and The Riverside Group in the preparation of a Vision for the Estate.

In April 2002, Ainsley Gommon Architects were appointed to devise a planning and design Vision for the Estate within the context of the City of Carlisle as a whole and adjoining areas of influence. That was also to be developed in the context of the stock transfer ballot, Housing Demand Study, Strategic Framework Report for the Estate, Household Survey and other baseline studies already undertaken for the Estate. In addition, they were to establish a framework and action plan for future development and design solutions for the core of the Estate in consultation with local residents and agencies associated therewith.

The Household Survey undertaken in October 2001 indicated a divided population base, with a large proportion of young single adults and an increasing number of elderly households. 57% of households surveyed had a total annual household income of less than

£10,000. 65% of households were in receipt of some form of state benefit. Over £19 million of regeneration funding had been spent on physical improvements to the Estate, but with no material change in the prosperity and stability of Raffles. However, there were a wide range of community organisations and activities operating on the Estate.

Although half of the Council housing had been demolished since 1999, void levels remained at 15%. Brookside and Raffles Avenue remained vulnerable to further abandonment. Critically the voids in those areas needed to be prioritised and the properties re-let. 71% of residents surveyed intended to remain on the Estate in the long-term (next ten years or more). Intensive housing management, wider regeneration and stock diversification was critical to the stability of the remainder of Raffles. Further demolition was only proposed in specific areas where it was uneconomical to return the properties into use.

The Vision had been informed by detailed, open and honest community consultation between April and October 2002 and by the involvement of the Raffles Regeneration Group – a resident Working Group.

Consistent themes and clear design aims had emerged through the above consultation. Understanding the social, economic, housing and regeneration context of the Estate had also informed the Vision's overall design aims. These related to :

- Form and Character
- Amenity Space
- Circulation
- Raffles Centre
- New Housing
- Existing Housing
- Health and the Community
- Training and
- Community Renewal

The Raffles Estate had a number of inherent assets: the garden city appearance of the Estate, the potential to improve and open up Heysham Park and the scope to enhance Shadygrove Road as the focus for community, commercial and social life. The land levels provided scope for attractive new housing and the Estate also benefited from a stable core of committed residents.

Detailed proposals were submitted, which included:

- A presumption that Lovell would start their development at Orton Place/Dobinson Road. The first phase of 3 bed semi-detached houses for sale would be built using the existing road layout

- A new link road connecting Parham Grove to Marks Avenue
- Removal of CCTV Masts
- Short-cul-de-sac development off Heysham Park Avenue
- Four aspects to the restoration of Heysham Park providing a Native Plants Park, Activity Park, Flower Park and Sports Park
- Opening up the park, removing redundant hedges, providing a fitness trail and tree lined avenue along Thomlinson Avenue and recommending a neighbourhood management approach to upgrading and maintaining the park
- Upgrading Shadygrove Road as the principal 'high street'
- Identification of a site on Shadygrove Road for a convenience store
- Detached housing for sale arranged in cul-de-sacs off Brookside
- Refurbishment of the Annex as a social facility
- Provision of a multi-user Healthy Living Centre on the corner of Brookside and Raffles Avenue
- A mixture of bungalows, news houses, semi-detached houses on the eastern side of the Estate. These plans were more indicative
- Additional demolition of specific housing blocks (34-56, 82-96, 33-39 Raffle Avenue and 114-116 Dalton Avenue). Retention of 61-67 Dalton Avenue
- Identification of a site off Dalton Avenue for a mini-market serviced by a new link road between Thomlinson Avenue and Balfour Road
- Alterations to existing one-way systems to two-way with priority controls and speed restrictions. That was suggested for Brookside, Thomlinson Avenue and Creighton Avenue
- Closure of selected cuts and provision of alternatives
- Creation of construction-linked modern apprenticeships
- Estimated investment, subject to securing funding of over £7 million

Lovells were seeking a commitment from local Councillors to encourage them to invest in the community in the longer term.

Broad costings for each main element of the Action Plan were provided. The costs were best approximations at that stage and were likely to change. All potential opportunities were subject to detailed negotiation and the securing of appropriate levels of funding.

The Project Team was confident that a pragmatic and deliverable Vision had emerged from the process which would guide development and regeneration of the Estate over the next 10 years. To commence that process, ongoing negotiations, relevant approvals and site

investigations would be sought in the first quarter of 2003 and the Project Team anticipated the development of new housing to commence in the summer of 2003.

The Chairman thanked Ms Moris, Mr Ormrod and Mr Gommon for their interesting and informative presentation.

The Head of Housing Provision commented that, notwithstanding the fact that the LSVT was scheduled to take place on 9 December 2002, the continuation of the partnership role was vitally important. That role would be passed to the Head of Economic and Community Development in the longer term.

Due to the absence of a member of staff on ill health grounds, there had been some slippage as regards the Raffles Environmental Project, but a further report would be submitted to the Committee at a future date.

A Member expressed his thanks for the presentation which had been extremely good and informative, aided by what was a comprehensive report. He welcomed what had been proposed which he felt to be a real opportunity for a fresh start on the Estate. He added that the key opportunities were critical and cautioned against raising people's expectations that these would all be delivered.

Ms Morris responded by saying that it had been made clear at all consultation events that there would be a lengthy lead in period on these issues and, although included within The Vision, there was ultimately no guarantee that they would be delivered.

A Member commented that there was a need to address housing management initiatives.

Ms Morris indicated that the Weedon Grant Ltd study into housing demand had been followed up and the Action Plan taken to the Shadow Board of Carlisle Housing Association (CHA). On a practical basis CHA was looking at initiatives e.g. a review of the Allocations Policy, Local Lettings Scheme and Introductory Tenancies.

A Member referred to the proposed development of Heysham Park, indicating that problems had arisen in the Park over the past few years as regards youths using motor bikes. He felt that it would be sad if the redevelopment work was spoiled as a result of such incidents.

Ms Morris indicated that she was aware of that issue and a great deal of discussion had taken place with Community Police Officers thereon. The view was that the Park should be developed and she felt that there was a need for tighter surveillance on the ground, perhaps in the form of a Warden/Caretaker. Such issues would be further explored.

The presumption was that Lovells would start their development at Orton Place/Dobinson Road. How would that develop?

Mr Ormrod indicated that it was only possible to built so many houses per year. Lovells were not here for the short-term and would make sure that the development was a success. There had already been quite a lot of interest and house prices would initially be set at a level designed to 'kick start' the process.

Ms Morris added that at the last two Open Days an increasing number of people had been

looking at the house types provided by Lovells.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Portfolio Holder for Health and Well Being thanked Ms Morris, Mr Ormrod and Mr Gomman, together with the Committee for the opportunity to witness the presentation. He was, however, concerned at the proposed car parking/garage provision, commenting that he would not wish to see increased parking on the roads.

Mr Ormrod indicated that that issue would be assessed in due course.

A Member commented upon the stigma attached to the name 'Raffles' and questioned whether it might be changed.

Mr Ormrod indicated that they would like to see it changed and the Estate may be branded e.g. 'Heysham Park' from a selling point of view. Ms Morris added that opinion within the community was divided on that issue and such views would require to be taken into account.

At the invitation of the Chairman, a Member raised the issue of the suggested retail and health facilities which, although located within Raffles, would rely upon the support of the wider community if they were to be viable. She questioned when consultation with the wider community was likely to take place.

The Member added that, at the moment, many people did not wish to be associated with Raffles and there was a need to get the wider community working together for the benefit of all.

Ms Morris indicated that the welfare of existing businesses on the Estate had been the first concern and that was why initial consultation had involved those parties. Consultation would be undertaken more widely if appropriate in the future. With regard to the latter point, the aim was to bring the stability of Yewdale across into the Estate.

A Member questioned whether the examples of house types submitted would be the general theme.

Mr Gommon commented that the aim was to connect the new development to the exiting fabric through design, detailing, circulation and landscape. There would, however, be scope for variation.

RESOLVED – That the partnership approach and recommendations as detailed within The Raffles Vision – Draft Final Report be endorsed.

COS.163/02 BEREAVEMENT SERVICES BEST VALUE REVIEW – FINAL REPORT

Pursuant to Minutes COS.153/02 and COS.80/02, there was submitted the draft final report in respect of the Bereavement Services Best Value Fundamental Performance Review. The report identified the key service issues arising from the Review and included an Action Plan for improvement.

The Chairman made reference to comments made by the Committee at its meeting on 6 June 2002 and questioned whether they had been taken on board.

The Director commented upon the action taken to address those issues as follows:

Service Standards -

Grounds Maintenance

There was a need for formal consultation with Carlisle Works to develop working relationships.

Formal consultation had been allowed for by way of joint meetings with the staff at Carlisle Works (point 12 of the Improvement Plan refers).

Cost comparisons for the Grounds Maintenance aspect of the service should be undertaken with other Local Authorities;

In order to satisfy the competition element of the Review, consideration needed to be given to market testing the Grounds Maintenance aspect of the Bereavement Service.

Information as regards cost comparisons had been provided at Appendix 14. Market testing would require to work within the confines of the organisational review.

Specific targets existed within the Improvement Plan for the reduction of dog fouling in the Cemetery.

There was no easy way in which to monitor improvement in that area, other than through public satisfaction (i.e. if fewer complaints were received).

Financial -

Capital Fund (Section 5.3 refers)

Members had asked that the Director of Leisure and Community Development include further detailed information on the future use of the Capital Fund.

An appendix regarding the above had been prepared but had been omitted from the report.

Members also considered that there should be information included on the support and grants available for people on lower incomes in relation to arranging funerals.

Such information needed to be added to item 17 of the Improvement Plan and the Director was happy to do that.

Asset Management –

Grave Rights

Members considered that investigations could be made into a lesser reduction in the term of grave rights and the possibility of differential pricing for various items.

Members' attention was drawn to Section 8.4.2 of the report, in particular, the

recommendation that an option of purchasing a grave for a shorter period whilst retaining the 50 year period for those who preferred it. That issue had been addressed at point 8 of the Improvement Plan.

A Member further requested that a sliding scale be introduced and the Director indicated that he would take that on board.

Potential Income Streams (Section 8.4.4 refers)

With regard to potential income streams, the Director of Leisure and Community Development was asked to investigate whether other Local Authorities operated any schemes which may be suitable for operation in Carlisle.

The Director was not aware of any such schemes, but suggested that the Head of Property Services be requested to test the market.

Operational (Section 8.5.1 refers)

The Best Value Officer indicated that the Carlisle Works Ground Maintenance Team and the Bereavement Services Team operated separately, which meant that there was no joined up service for users. Investigations should be made into formal negotiations with Carlisle Works to improve the service.

Formal consultation had been allowed for by way of joint meetings with the staff at Carlisle Works (point 12 of the Improvement Plan refers).

Whilst Members did not believe that the City Council wished to outsource the Bereavement Services, it was agreed that, for the sake of completeness in the Best Value Review, comparison information should be sought. (Section 8.5.2 refers)

Comparative information had been provided at Appendix 16.

Funeral Service Provision –

Quality Assurance Scheme (Section 8.6.1 refers)

Members considered that it was worth exploring the development of a Quality Assurance Scheme to develop a local charter mark on quality criteria for the provision of funeral services.

Members' attention was drawn to the Extract from a report by The Office of Fair Trading and template which had been circulated by the Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer.

There was a need to further investigate that issue.

Ethnic Group Pricing (Section 8.6.3 refers)

The Best Value Officer indicated that there was also an issue in the provision of funerals for people with certain religious beliefs where there was a requirement for a burial to take place

within 24 hours. If this meant that a weekend service was required then the costs charged by the City Council were greater than for a weekday service. The Director of Leisure and Community Development undertook to investigate how other Local Authorities approached this issue.

Comparative information had been provided at Appendix 17. The Director considered that the present policy was not discriminatory.

Advice

It was agreed that detailed information on arranging funeral services should be distributed to Advice Agencies and Solicitors' offices.

That issue required to be added to the Improvement Plan.

The Director then undertook to amend the report as necessary.

RESOLVED – That, subject to the amendments outlined above being undertaken, this Committee was satisfied with the Bereavement Services Best Value Review Final Report and would forward the same to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

COS.164/02 GENERAL FUND REVENUE ESTIMATES 2003/04

The Overview and Scrutiny Manager advised Members that he and the Head of Financial Services had discussed the manner by which Overview and Scrutiny could best continue its role as regards scrutiny of the Budget.

Estimates were now so technical in nature that it was extremely difficult to effectively scrutinise the same. It was therefore suggested that scrutiny of estimates was not an effective use of the Committee's time and should be discontinued. It was stressed, however, that the Committee would still have the opportunity to scrutinise policy issues.

A Member commented that, whilst he could see the logic behind that suggestion, he felt that the matter should be considered again by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee in order that it could be addressed as part of the bigger picture.

The Overview and Scrutiny Manager added that an Overview and Scrutiny Workshop would be held in January 2003 and the matter was to be included on the Agenda for that event so that a protocol could be adopted.

The Chairman requested that the Overview and Scrutiny Manager, in liaison with the Head of Financial Services, compile a paper on the issue for consideration at that Workshop.

There was submitted Financial Memo 2002/03 No.77 summarising the revenue estimates for all General Fund services presented to reflect the new Business Unit structure. The report had been compiled in accordance with the City Council's agreed budget strategy for 2003/04.

In considering the report, a Member questioned why the Bereavement Services income had been reflected in the estimates, but further savings had not yet been incorporated into the estimates presented.

The Head of Financial Services advised that it had been a matter of timing.

The Member further questioned the bid for £43,400 to fund administrative support for the Executive Management, from the Organisational Review savings of £50,900 (section 6.2 refers), yet at sections 10.2 and 10.3 it appeared that the savings were being utilised again.

The Head of Financial Services indicated that an error had occurred within the report. The bid outlined at section 10.3 would be utilising monies from 2002/03 and that at section 6.2 monies from 2003 onwards.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and that the Committee did not require to see budget estimates in future.

COS.165/02 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – PUBLICATION SCHEME

The Data Protection Officer presented Financial Memo 2002/03 No.89 concerning the Freedom of Information – Publication Scheme.

The Overview and Scrutiny Manager commented that the Scheme was a living document and tabled the most up-to-date version thereof.

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, all public authorities were required to produce a document detailing the information which they made available to the public. That document was known as a Publication Scheme. Each Publication Scheme had to be approved by the Information Commissioners Office and the submission deadline for Local Authorities was 31 December 2002. The Scheme would thereafter require to be adopted by the City Council in February 2003.

An Officer Working Group had been working on the Scheme, the proposed draft of which was appended to the report.

The Data Protection Officer indicated that the Scheme had yet to be finalised and the final draft would be submitted to the Executive on 19 December 2002.

In considering the matter, Members raised the following issues, to which the Data Protection Officer responded:

A Member commented that he was struck by the amount of information to be available in hard copy format as opposed to also being provided by electronic means or via the website. What plans had been made to address that and what was the process for updating the Scheme?

Once the Scheme had been endorsed by the Information Commissioner, provision existed under the Act to add to it. She appreciated the point raised by the Member and would discuss the same with the Communications Unit. She added that information had to be available in manual format, as not everyone has access to the Internet. The Officer Group would meet on a monthly basis in future and the Scheme would be reviewed and updated at those meetings.

It was noted that requests for information were to be submitted to the Data Protection Officer, as were any appeals about the Council's failure to disclose. Was that a safe practice?

That issue had been considered by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services. The provisions of the Act would come fully into force in January 2005 and it was considered that matters should be left as open as possible until that time.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and the comments of this Committee forwarded to the Executive.

[The meeting ended at 4.20 pm]