

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY CHAIRMAN:

INFRASTRUCTURE

Report of
Chairman:

**COUNCILLOR
MRS RUTHERFORD**

In setting the work programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Committees for the coming Municipal Year there has been an attempt to involve staff, the general public and all Members of the Council in identifying suitable review topics.

All of the above groups were invited to put forward suggestions for the Committees to consider when setting their work programmes. Unfortunately, allocating time at the end of the first normal meeting for the individual committees to prioritise the suggestions was not very successful. In the case of the Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny time had run out as people had other commitments. I understand that other committees had the same problem. I think that we all learned that in future perhaps what is needed is a separate meeting altogether rather than just tagging the workshop onto the end of an already busy agenda.

An important area still to be fully finalised is training. All the Chairmen are agreed that training is needed on such things as Best Value Reviews, Performance Indicators and questioning techniques. Hopefully some training can be arranged as soon as possible if the committees are going to be really effective.

As can be seen from the Minutes, this committee was particularly unhappy with the consultant's report on Best Value Regeneration. An advantage of having an outsider doing the report should be that they come to the authority with a fresh and open mind and are able to ask more rigorous questions. After all this is what the Best Value Inspectorate will do. Unfortunately, the initial draft did not inspire much confidence and raised more questions than answers from both Officers and Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

A meeting to discuss the report with the consultant has been arranged for 15 July 2002. The meeting will include all the Members of the Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny, Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and relevant Portfolio Holders.

Councillor C Rutherford
Chairman Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee