

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY CHAIRMAN:

CORPORATE RESOURCES

Report of
Chairman:

COUNCILLOR JOHN GUEST

CROS CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO COUNCIL

The Committee has continued to progress its workload efficiently and effectively, and for the most part, harmoniously. There have been two meetings of the Committee since the last Council: 1 August 2002, and a special meeting on 28 August 2002. The sub-committee dealing with the Organisational Assessment Best Value Review is also continuing with its work under the chairmanship of Councillor Jefferson. I have listed comments below on certain items that may be of interest to Council.

CROS 1 AUGUST 2002:

CROS.90/02 CUSTOMER CONTACT BVR

Members received a report from the lead officer, noting improvements to date and future proposals. Some concern was expressed at the amount of investment that may be required, however, I have been assured that the final figure will be somewhat lower than that quoted. I should point out that this estimated cost would be a **capital** consideration to be included in the budget bids for 2003/04. A special meeting of the Committee was arranged to enable members to view facilities in Newcastle and Derwentside (details below).

The next report is to include details of an action plan that is currently being prepared. The purpose of this review is to enable the Authority to become *more 'customer focused'* in its dealings with the public, and to meet national 'e-government' targets.

CROS.95/02 MEMBER TRAINING

This item was debated at the last meeting of the Council where it was apparent that there were some '*unhappy chappies*'. Its heartening to see this is now being addressed more urgently, and the Committee made several recommendations to the Management Committee.

CROS.100/02 MEMBERS TELEPHONE ARRANGEMENT

This report concludes the Committee's involvement in what has become a contentious issue. I hope that Council accepts the Committee's recommendation.

CROS (SPECIAL MEETING) 28 AUGUST 2002:

Visit to Newcastle and Derwentside

Members of the Committee were accompanied by officers from the Review Team and four members of the Executive. This was a valuable exercise that enable members to witness *first-hand*, the arrangements being adopted by neighbouring Authorities. The conclusions drawn by members are to be an agenda item at the next meeting of the Committee, however, at this stage I would like on behalf of those members who attended, to extend our thanks to the Customer Services Manager at Newcastle City Council and the General Manager of Derwentside District Council for their generous hospitality, time, and patience.

Councillor J M Guest
Chairman
Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee