

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 27 SEPTEMBER 2001 AT 2.10 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillor Jefferson (Chairman), Councillor Mrs Bradley, Councillor Ellis, Councillor Guest, Councillor Knapton, Councillors Mrs Mallinson, Councillor Mrs Rutherford and Councillor Mrs Prest

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Dodd, Joscelyne, Mallinson J, Morton, Mrs Pattinson and Prest G attended the meeting as observers.

OSM.1/01 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED – That Councillor Mrs J Prest be appointed Vice Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

OSM.2/01 CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

The Chairman welcomed Members to the first meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee. He encouraged everyone to be open and ask questions, as this was a new experience for everyone, and they were all part of a new process.

OSM.3/01 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive submitted report TC.203/01 setting out the Terms of Reference of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, as contained in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules within the Council's Constitution.

In considering the Terms of Reference, Members raised questions about the role of the Management Committee. The City Solicitor and Secretary commented that the Committee's role would not actually be to undertake reviews, but to ensure that there was a programme

for reviews to be undertaken and to give appropriate directions to the respective Overview and Scrutiny Committees. In relation to cross cutting areas, the Management Committee would decide which of the Committees should carry out the actual detailed review.

Members raised concerns about the accommodation facilities for the meetings and suggested that future meetings should be held in the Flensburg Room.

RESOLVED – (1) That the Terms of Reference of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee be noted.

(2) That future meetings of Overview and Scrutiny Committees be held in the Flensburg Room.

OSM.4/01 BEST VALUE – PROGRESS REPORT ON ALLOCATION OF

REVIEWS

The Corporate Best Value Officer gave a presentation on progress with Best Value reviews to date and outlined proposals for allocating responsibility for reviews which have to be undertaken this year.

There was discussion on the proposal that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee should have an overarching input into the Best Value Review process. The City Solicitor and Secretary explained the position under the Constitution. He commented that it was within the Management Committee's remit to do the monitoring of Best Value reviews, and this could include the scoping of reviews, if this was intended to mean giving appropriate directions to the various Overview and Scrutiny Committees as to what areas should be concentrated on during any Review..

Members suggested that it would be worthwhile for the Management Committee to be involved in the scoping of all Best Value reviews and then determine which Overview and Scrutiny Committee should undertake specific Best Value reviews. In relation to areas where there are cross cutting themes, Review reports could be sent to the Management Committee who could refer it for consultation to another Committee if they were concerned that corporate issues had been missed.

RESOLVED – (1) That the presentation be noted.

(2) That the Management Committee would be able, under the Council's Constitution, to scope Best Value reviews and allocate them to the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to carry out the reviews.

OSM.5/01 ANNUAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee, in setting an annual Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme, would be required to: consider any requests received from the Executive or the Council; examine the Forward Plan as a source of potential scrutiny areas; consider any suggestions from Members of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees; and finally set programmes and guidelines for the individual Overview and Scrutiny Committees on their work load.

There was tabled at the meeting, a list of work programme requests from the Deputy Leader, acting on behalf of the Leader in his absence. The document requested that

Overview and Scrutiny Committees:

- (a) take a constructive role in formulating the Council Budget for 2002/03;
- (b) explore options for celebrating the Golden Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II;
- (c) enquire into the roll-forward of the Carlisle and District Local Plan;
- (d) enquire into the current levels of income of expenditure generated by the cemeteries and crematorium services and explore options for closing the current annual deficit between income and expenditure.

Members raised concerns that although this request had come from the Deputy Leader, it had never been considered by the Executive as a whole. In addition, they raised concerns that the request to look at cemeteries and crematorium income and expenditure was very narrowly defined, particularly in light of the fact that there was to be a Best Value review on Bereavement Services which would look at a number of aspects, one of which may be income and expenditure.

A Member also suggested that the Executive should be asked to look at revisiting Large Scale Voluntary Transfer, in light of changes nationally and that as the budget process was being started, a review into this area be proposed at this stage.

Members then suggested that the work programme requests received from the Deputy Leader be referred back to the Executive Committee, with a request that more detail be provided on the requests and concerns expressed that the proposal in relation to cemeteries and crematorium income and expenditure would look at a very narrow aspect of a wider Bereavement Services Best Value review. In addition, the Executive should be asked to consider proposing a review on Large Scale Voluntary Transfer in light of national changes.

RESOLVED – (1) That the work programme request received from the Deputy Leader be referred back to the Executive with the following comments:-

- (a) More detail to be requested in relation to the work programme requests;
- (b) That concerns be expressed about the cemeteries and crematorium income and expenditure request, as it was just one aspect of a whole issue which would be covered in the Bereavement Services Best Value Review;
- (c) That the Executive be asked to consider a review revisiting Large Scale Voluntary Transfer in light of national changes.

(2) That the work programme for Overview and Scrutiny Committees be allocated as follows:

Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee -

Community Safety Best Value Review

Bereavement Services Best Value Review

Strategic Approach to Housing Best Value Review

Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee -

Customer Contact Best Value Review

Risk and Safety Management Best Value Review

Organisational Assessment Best Value Review

Budget

Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee -

Regeneration Best Value Review

Concessionary Fares Best Value Review

(3) That it be noted that Overview and Scrutiny Committees could come forward with suggestions of any other areas they wish to look at.

OSM.6/01 START TIMES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

RESOLVED – That future meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee start at 2.00 p.m.

OSM.7/01 CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

The Chairman thanked Members for their contributions and commented that they would have to continue working together to make the overview and scrutiny role function effectively.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive gave an update on Officer support which would be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

In response to Members' questions, the City Solicitor and Secretary advised that Officers required to attend Overview and Scrutiny Committees to answer questions from the Committee would normally be at Head of Paid Service level and above, but officers at Principal Officer level could be asked to attend if they had a particular knowledge or expertise in the matter under scrutiny.

Members then raised concerns that there was no budget in place for Overview and Scrutiny and that in the future a budget may be required to carry out reviews, for example, in paying expenses to expert witnesses.

RESOLVED – That issues raised by Members be taken into consideration by Chief Officers.

(The meeting ended at 3.40 p.m.)

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