

RESOURCES SCRUTINY PANEL

19 October 2005

Attendance:

Councillors:

Hollingbery (Chairman) (P)

Clohosey (P)
Cooper (P)
Davies (P)
Higgins (P)

Hoare (P)
Jeffs (P)
Mitchell (P)
Pearce
Verney

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillor Learney (Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources)

456. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no questions asked or statements made.

457. **SECOND QUARTER PERFORMANCE MONITORING 2005/06 – FINANCE AND RESOURCES PORTFOLIO (OTHER)**

(Report RE11 refers)

The Panel noted that an update on the Procurement Strategy would be submitted to Cabinet in December 2005, seeking approval for the post of Procurement Officer to continue. The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources suggested that the Procurement Officer attend a future meeting to update the Panel on the progress of finding procurement savings within the Council and progress on the implementation of the Strategy.

The Panel also discussed the progress of the E-Government programme. The Director of Finance agreed that she would distribute a summary of the programme to Members before the next meeting.

During consideration of the report it was noted that the Panel was satisfied with the more strategic approach to the layout and content of the new format. However, it was agreed that any overlaps in information with the report prepared by the Director of Finance should be eliminated from future reports. It was also suggested that more detailed information was only required if it was necessary to aid understanding in considering the reports.

RESOLVED:

That the Scrutiny Panel is satisfied that work is progressing as required so that targets agreed by Council and Cabinet, required to deliver the Council's strategic priorities, can be achieved by the deadlines set.

458. **SECOND QUARTER PERFORMANCE MONITORING 2005/06 - FINANCE DIRECTORATE**
(Report RE10 refers)

It was noted that in October 2005, there had been further improvement in performance of the Customer Service Centre and the switchboard, and that a post implementation review would be submitted to the Principal Scrutiny Committee. However, the Panel also noted cause for concern over staffing levels in the Centre and issues around attaining the targets set. The targets would be reviewed as part of the business planning process for net year.

The Director of Finance reported that the Document Management System was running successfully on a departmental level in some areas. Further implementation had been suspended whilst corporate needs were assessed.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Scrutiny Panel is satisfied that work is progressing as required so that targets agreed by Council and Cabinet, required to deliver the Council's strategic priorities, can be achieved by the deadlines set.

2. That Cabinet be advised of the Panel's concerns about the staffing situation in the Customer Service Centre, and that it should be satisfied that issues had been addressed before moving to implementation of Phase Two.

459. **SECOND QUARTER PERFORMANCE MONITORING 2005/06 - CITY SECRETARY AND SOLICITOR'S DIRECTORATE**
(Report RE009 refers)

The City Secretary and Solicitor outlined the issues regarding the reduction of £40,000 in Land Charges Income and noted that this was due to a combination of a slow down in the housing market and the national trend towards using private search agents.

The Panel also noted that good progress had been made in processing all the applications in time for the 24 November 2005 deadline of the Licensing Act 2003.

RESOLVED:

That the Scrutiny Panel is satisfied that work is progressing as required so that targets agreed by Council and Cabinet, required to deliver the Council's strategic priorities, can be achieved by the deadlines set.

460. **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**
(Report PS195 refers)

Following debate the Panel proposed that it should establish an Informal Scrutiny Group to look at the impact of E-Government on the Council and the targets set.

The Chairman also suggested that an informal group be set up to review the Council's benefits system and the way in which it operates, with a scoping report to be brought to the next meeting, before seeking Cabinet and/or Principal Scrutiny Committee approval.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Scrutiny Panel is satisfied that work is progressing as required so that targets agreed by Council and Cabinet, required to deliver the Council's strategic priorities, can be achieved by the deadlines set.

2. That subject to the approval of Cabinet and/or Principal Scrutiny Committee, an Informal Scrutiny Group be established to review any lessons to be learnt from the Council's implementation of the E-Government programme and whether any policy changes should be considered for the future.

3. That a report be submitted to the Panel by the Chairman to examine the possible scope of a review by an informal scrutiny group of the way in which the Council's Benefits system is delivered.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 9.00pm

Chairman