

Time commenced - 6.00pm
Time finished - 7.00pm

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

14 OCTOBER 2003

Present: Councillor Smalley (in the Chair)
Councillors Bayliss, Bolton, Brown, Graves, Latham, Lowe,
Repton, Travis and Wynn

35/03 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors F Hussain and Jones.

36/03 Late Items Introduced by the Chair

The Chair agreed to admit an item on the Service Area Budget Review 2003/04, on the grounds that it needed to be considered before the next scheduled meeting of the Commission. The Chair also reported that a 'call-in' had been received. It was agreed to hold a special meeting of the Commission on 20 October 2003 at 5.30pm, to consider the 'call-in'.

37/03 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2003 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

38/03 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

39/03 Service Area Budget Review 2003/04

The Assistant Director – Democratic Services said that the Directors of Finance and Corporate Services had proposed that instead of a review of the Central Services budgets, the three members of the Commission nominated to undertake the budget review (Councillors Graves, Jones and Smalley) should meet with the team carrying out the imminent Best Value Review of Support Services. It was suggested that this would enable Commission members to have a direct input to the scoping of the Best Value Review, avoid duplication and provide a more meaningful exercise than the currently proposed budget review, having regard to the limited resources available to support the review. It was also reported that the Members' Services Working Party has asked this Commission to review the Members' Services budget, which was projected to overspend in the current financial year.

Resolved

- 1 To proceed with the review of the Central Services budget, as the Service Area Budget Review for 2003/04.**
- 2 To convene a meeting of the group of three nominated members to set the terms of reference for the review as soon as possible.**

40/03 Report on the Outcome of the 'All Postal' Election Pilot Schemes held in England in May 2003

The Commission considered a report from the Chair of the Scrutiny Management Commission, which stated that in July 2003, the Electoral Commission published a report entitled 'The Shape of Elections to Come' which gave details of the outcome of the all postal election pilot schemes, which were run in England in May 2003. The report préciséd the information extracted from the Electoral Commission's report and the MORI report on which the Electoral Commission's report was based. It was reported that the Electoral Commission had concluded that all postal voting had the potential to increase voter participation by up to 20%. However, it did this not by changing attitudes to voting but by making it easier to vote for people who would have already been minded to do so. All postal voting did not, however, seem to increase participation in the voting process by those people who currently considered that voting in local elections was a waste of time.

Resolved to consider the information contained in the report, as part of the review of postal voting and to take it into account when developing the recommendations for the review.

41/03 Report on the Results of the Spring 2001 Pointer Panel Survey on 'New Ways of Voting'

The Commission considered a report of the Chair of the Scrutiny Management Commission, which stated that one of the functions of the Spring 2001 Pointer Panel had been to determine the public's views on new ways of voting. The report contained an analysis of the response to some of the questions that were presented to the Pointer Panel as part of that exercise. It was noted that the information was based on a small number of responses and the questions were not specifically intended to investigate attitudes towards postal voting. In order to obtain more specific information, it was suggested that a new survey should be commissioned. It was considered that the survey could be conducted through the Pointer Panel but it was felt that better results would be obtained from a demographically balanced external consultation exercise, such as a telephone survey. To be representative of the population of Derby, the survey would need to involve about 500 interviews.

Resolved

- 1 That as part of its review of postal voting, the Commission consider the information in the report and take it into account when developing the recommendations for the review.**

- 2 To include some questions in the next appropriate Pointer Panel to ascertain people's views on postal voting.
- 3 To consider the questions to be included in the next Pointer Panel before their inclusion.

42/03 Community Regeneration Commission Service Area Budget Review for 2003/04

The Commission considered a report of the Community Regeneration Commission, which stated that members of the Community Regeneration Commission had selected funding issues linked to their current cross cutting topic review on Crime and Disorder and Young People to do their Service Area Budget Review for 2003/04.

Resolved to approve the proposal of the Community Regeneration Commission that Funding Issues relating to the topic review on Crime and Disorder and Young People be its Service Area Budget Review for 2003/04.

43/03 Forward Plan - October

Resolved to request the Internal Audit Progress Report to be brought to a future meeting of the Commission.

44/03 Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Best Value Review Improvement Plan – Progress Report

The Commission considered a report from the Director of Finance, on the Best Value Review of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The review focussed on:

- ICT strategy development
- ICT service provision
- access through ICT, to Council services
- roles and responsibilities of the IT client and departmental ICT support.

Key areas of the Improvement Plan addressed since the review, included:

- a revised e-Derby strategy had been developed and an e-Derby strategy document had been produced and approved by Cabinet. Council had approved a significant increase in resources in the 2003/04 budget to assist in meeting e-government targets.
- a two year extension to the Capita outsourcing contract was agreed in April 2003 with an option, for a further extension dependent on Capita's response to delivering the e-Derby strategy
- as part of the contract extension, Capita had implemented new service

delivery and support processes based on the government's ITIL (Information Technology Infrastructure Library) standards and best practice guidance. Implementing these proposals was resulting in reduced incidents, quicker resolution of problems and less repeated occurrences. For example, priority 1 calls were down by approximately 20%.

- all PC users now had access to an updated and improved Intranet.
- the Council's new website was launched in July 2003.
- a new Assistant Director of ICT and Performance Management started in July 2003.

Resolved to advise Council Cabinet that the Commission would like to see Councillor involvement in the e-Derby strategy group.

Chair of the next ensuing meeting
at which these minutes were signed