

Time commenced - 6.00pm
Time finished – 6.35pm

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION 8 JUNE 2004

Present: Councillor Smalley (Chair for minutes 113/03 to 116/03)
Councillor Graves (Chair for minutes 108/03 to 112/03)
Councillors Bayliss, Bolton, Brown, F Hussain, Jones, Lowe
Repton and Travis.

Councillor Graves in the Chair

108/03 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Wynn. Councillor Smalley had sent his apologies for arriving late to the meeting.

109/03 Late Items Introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

110/03 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

111/03 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2004 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Items For Discussion

112/03 Topic Review on Over-Lapping Areas of Control and Management

Rob Davison, Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination Officer, updated the Commission on the progress made on the Topic Review. A session for the three lead Councillors was being arranged with John Cornall, Assistant Director, ICT and Performance Management, to discuss paperless systems for e-government. The outcome from this session would be reported to a future meeting of Scrutiny Management Commission.

Resolved to note the report and ask that future reports on the Internal Audit Plan be presented to the Commission.

At this point Councillor Smalley took the Chair

113/03 Internal Audit Plan 2004/05

Philip Walker, Assistant Director, Corporate Finance, introduced the Internal Audit Plan 2004/05 that had been considered by Council Cabinet on 18 May 2004. The report was considered by the Commission at the request of Councillors Smalley and Graves.

It was noted that details of corporate and departmental risk assessments had been used for planning internal audit coverage for the first time.

In response to a question from Councillor Brown, Philip Walker explained that because of an unusually high level of maternity leave and the difficulties with getting experienced temporary auditors, it had been planned to buy in external auditors for specific assignments. However, to obtain better value for money, consideration was also being given to establishing a supernumerary post in partnership with other Derbyshire authorities.

Councillor Repton asked how the Council's expenditure on internal audit and governance compared to other authorities. He was advised that expenditure at Derby was believed to be similar to other councils, as staffing levels were known to be about the same. The focus of Internal audit and governance work was very intensively planned and tightly controlled.

For further details of the risk assessments associated with specific services members were advised to contact the relevant departments.

The Commission confirmed that it wished to see future planned reports on the progress of audit work against this Plan.

Resolved to note the report.

114/03 Council Cabinet Forward Plan

The Commission did not identify any items on the June Forward Plan that it wished to consider.

Matters Referred to the Commission by Council Cabinet

115/03 Reshaping the Best Value Review Programme

David Armin, Head of Strategic Planning and Performance, introduced a report of the Director of Finance on reshaping the best value review programme. The report had been considered by Council Cabinet on 18 May 2004.

David Armin explained that the report outlined the reasons for rationalising the Council's best value review programme at this stage, the criteria adopted for this purpose and the resulting programme of proposed reviews. It was proposed that during the period to spring 2006 seven improvement reviews, three capacity building

reviews related to the Building for Excellence programme and three process improvement reviews would be undertaken. The topic for two of the service improvement reviews had not yet been identified, so that the Council would have the flexibility to respond to issues identified through its own performance management systems and from the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) in 2004 and subsequently.

Resolved to note the report.

116/03 Best Value Performance Plan 2004-05

David Armin, Head of Strategic Planning and Performance introduced a report on the principles of the Best Value Performance Plan 2004-05 and the latest draft of the Plan. The report had been considered by Council Cabinet on 18 May, any comments from the Scrutiny Management Commission would be considered by the Special Purposes Committee on 21 June, in order to meet the statutory deadline of 30 June 2004.

It was noted that the Plan only included the statutory best value performance indicators and actions and targets from the previously approved Corporate Plan for 2004-07 and Local Public Service Agreement. It therefore did not cover all of the Council's services.

To aid understanding of the report, it was agreed that the performance figures should be highlighted at the beginning, rather than half way through the document.

Councillor Graves was concerned that whilst Council Cabinet had considered the principles of the Best Value Performance Plan, it had not considered the report in the detail being presented to this Commission. Councillor Bayliss added that the Plan should have included details of any remedial action where performance was poor. Councillor Smalley considered that in order for the Commission to fully scrutinise the Plan it was necessary for all Directors to attend to answer any detailed questions relating to their services. To address these concerns it was agreed that it should be recommended to Special Purposes Committee that all of the Commissions scrutinise performance on a quarterly basis with the relevant Council Cabinet members and Directors in attendance.

Resolved:

- 1. to advise Special Purposes Committee that the Scrutiny Management Commission did not consider that it had sufficient information or time to fully scrutinise the Best Value Performance Plan.**
- 2. to recommend to Special Purposes Committee that in future years, each Commission look at its relevant best value performance indicators on a quarterly basis with the relevant Council Cabinet members and Directors being invited to attend to answer any questions on poorly performing areas and any related remedial actions.**

MINUTES END