

**RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 1 JULY 2004**

**UPDATE AND WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2004 / 05**

Agenda Item No.

**6**

Chairman : - Adrian Service      Tel : 01992 555564

**Recommendations made to Cabinet / Executive Member / Chief Officer at the last meeting:**

**RESPONSIVENESS TO CUSTOMERS**

- ) Whilst recognising the difficulties associated with monitoring all of the Council's contacts with customers, the Committee is concerned that the Council should monitor and particularly learn from feedback.
- ) That the County Secretary and Chief Executive act on the Committee's concern that the Council's standards should also apply to contractors working on behalf of the Council and in particular write to Hertfordshire Highways to ensure that they are fully aware of the response standards.
- ) That the Chief Executive/ County Secretary check to ensure that all officers are aware of the response standards and recognise the importance of their role in responding to customers.
- ) That the timescales in complaints procedures should be reviewed to ensure that they are harmonised.
- ) That a report be submitted to a subsequent meeting containing the following information :-
  - the findings from 'mystery shopping'
  - a summary of complaints ,at each stage, of all departments
  - learning points from complaints in broad terms.

**Response**

**The Performance and Planning Group consisting of officers from all Departments, chaired by Geoff Brown, will consider issues that have arisen and will direct issues / responses to service Departments or to the Senior Management Board [SMB] as appropriate.**

- ) **The County Secretary has contacted Departmental Heads responsible for contractors, asking them to alert contractors [including Hertfordshire Highways] to observe the Council's public response standards in particular responding to written requests for information from members within 5 working days.**
- i) **The Council's response standards are contained within the Members Information folder which all Departments have copies of and all staff will have access to.**

- ) **The timescales in Departmental complaints procedures are being reviewed and will be harmonised as far as practicably possible, given the different regulations that have to be met. These will be monitored by the officer Performance and Planning Group chaired by Geoff Brown.**
- ) **A report will be submitted to the Resources Scrutiny Committee meeting on 4 November 2004.**

### **SHARP PROJECT - PROGRESS**

- ) Members expressed a desire to be kept further informed of developments with this project.
- ) That the Chief Executive be requested to ensure communication with members is maintained throughout the phased implementation of the differing systems - particularly if problems occur.

### **Response**

- ) **An update report will be made to the SHARP Member Reference Group at its next meeting on 23 June 2004.**
- ) **No significant problems have been experienced to date.**

### **SIMPLY DONE EFFICIENCIES PANEL WORK - PROCUREMENT**

- ) The Committee expressed concern of the possibility of the recent proposals for regional centres of excellence disrupting the excellent work of the Central Buying Consortium, in particular should not result in additional costs arising.
- ) That an update report on any changes be made to the next meeting.

### **Response**

**No significant changes have been yet put forward.**

- ) **It is proposed to submit an update report to the Committee's next meeting on 4 November 2004.**

## **LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT – PROGRESS REPORT**

- ) The Cabinet is recommended that Scrutiny Committee members should have an input to the decision as to whether the Council should take part in Local Public Service Agreement 2.
- ) That the Resources Scrutiny Committee should maintain an overview of the implementation with the appropriate Scrutiny Committees involved in the selection of targets for its respective services covered.
- ) That the Executive Member for Resources is suggested to
  - i) seek the support of the Best Value Performance Plan Panel in considering the Council's approach to Local Public Service Agreement 2.
  - ii) ensure that our approach means that any potential benefits outweigh the costs of achieving targets.
- ) That a report on LPSA 2 be submitted to the 4 November 2004 meeting.

### **Response**

- i) a) & b) above - A report is due to be submitted to Cabinet on 8 November 2004.**
- ii) The process to be followed has yet to be determined and the suggestions made will be considered along with other details of the process.**
- iii) Report on LPSA 2 included in the Committee's Work Programme**

**late on petitions presented to the last meeting:     None**

## UPDATE ON PREVIOUS SCRUTINY ITEMS

ITEM	Committee Date	EFFECTS OF SCRUTINY	STATUS* (see end note)
Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring	19/10/2000	Report to each meeting.	Monitoring
Review of Performance Monitoring Information	19/10/2000	'Traffic Lights' Report to each meeting [with the exception of the January meeting].	Monitoring
Review of the Best Value Performance Plan	19/10/2000	Reviewed annually.	Monitoring
Review of Treasury Management	25/1/2001	Reviewed annually.	Monitoring
Planning Obligations	15/3/2001	The Topic Group has met on three occasions with its next meeting due on 21 July 2004 and will report its findings to the Resources Scrutiny Committee at its November 2004 meeting and also to the Environment Scrutiny Committee.	Investigation
Promise Scrutiny 'Improve employment prospects for disadvantaged people'	31/10/2002	The Scrutiny Committee have agreed the definition of disadvantaged people to be used for this exercise and further work is being undertaken.	Investigation
Promise Scrutiny 'Give the public value for money by getting more cost efficient every year.'	23/01/2003	Efficiencies project in preparation. The Simply Done Efficiencies Panel has met five times with the last meeting being on 3 June 2004. The Panel at its last meeting considered information on the Council's usage and expenditure on external consultants for one off projects. The Panel is next due to meet on 19 July 2004.	Investigation

status definitions:

**Investigation** – The scrutiny committee has commissioned work, which could be from a topic group, officers, consultants or other parties which is not yet complete but will report to the main committee in the future.

**Work outside scrutiny** – an item which has been raised by the scrutiny committee where work is being taken forward through another mechanism in response to the item being raised by scrutiny – a panel, external body or officer mechanism for example.

**Monitoring** – Items which the scrutiny committee has scrutinised in the past where it has asked for occasional or regular updates. This update could be a planned report, in which case the dates should be given, or monitoring through the update report. Items where there is work outside scrutiny can also be monitoring items.

**Monitoring Action** – Items the committee wishes to scrutinise or review where the timing is unclear due to awaiting events or the outcome of other investigations. E.g. government guidance

## SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2004 / 2005

November 2004

ITEM	SCRUTINY FOCUS
Budget Monitor	This report will provide Members with the projected revenue and capital expenditure of the County Council as at 31 July 2004.
Promises Monitor Report - Traffic Lights Report	This report will update Members on progress being made to meet promises made to improve the performance of specified Council services.
Employment of People with Disabilities by Herts C.C	To consider the current level of staff with disabilities and in particular whether the SHARP programme has assisted in identifying the number of disabled employed by the County Council.
Use of Publications	To consider the best way of getting the Council's messages out to our customers plus alternatives to hard copy information.
Capital Strategy	To consider the current and future strategy for funding the Council's capital spending.
Planning Obligations	To consider the report of the Planning Obligations Topic Group.
Procurement - Any Changes	To consider any changes that have arisen following the Excellence Status being awarded to Norfolk and Kent County Councils.
Local Public Services Agreement 2	To consider progress made with a possible Local Public Services Agreement 2 for Hertfordshire.
Update & Work Programme Report 2004/05	This report will seek to update Members on all new and live scrutiny items and review the work programme for forthcoming meetings.

January 2005

ITEM	SCRUTINY FOCUS
Corporate Services Proposed Resource Budget	To consider the Corporate Services revenue budget and capital programme proposals for the forthcoming financial years.
County Council Proposed Resource Budget	To consider the Council's total revenue budget and capital programme proposals for the forthcoming financial years.
Best Value Review Monitoring Update	This report will provide Members with an update on projected actual costs and savings arising from recent best value reviews.
Responsiveness to Customers	This report will cover follow up issues requested by the Committee concerning a) mystery shopping; b) summary of complaints - all Departments c) learning points from complaints
Budget Monitor	This report will provide Members with the projected revenue and capital expenditure of the County Council as at 31 October 2004.
CPA for 2004 – Outcome Update & Work Programme Report 2004/05	To consider the outcome of the Council's CPA for 2004 This report will seek to update Members on all new and live scrutiny items and review the work programme for forthcoming meetings.

April 2005

ITEM	SCRUTINY FOCUS
Budget Monitor	This report will provide Members with the projected revenue and capital expenditure of the County Council as at 31 December 2004.
Promises Monitor Report-Traffic Lights Report	This report will update Members on progress being made to meet promises made to improve the performance of specified Council services.
Update & Work Programme Report 2004/05 & 2005 /06	This report will seek to update Members on all new and live scrutiny items and review the work programme for forthcoming meetings.

RK TO BE PROGRAMMED : -

Review of Financial Delegations