

RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 4 NOVEMBER 2004
UPDATE AND WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2004 / 05

Agenda Item No.

8

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

1. MONEY ADVICE UNIT – PROGRESS REPORT ON INCREASING BENEFITS TAKE UP

- a) The Committee asked the Executive Member for Resources to: -
- i) encourage the Hertfordshire District / Borough Councils to sustain, and if possible improve, financial support of Citizens Advice Bureaux in their districts, and to ask County Councillors who are also District / Borough to promote to their district / borough councillors colleagues the services provided by Citizens Advice Bureaux.
 - ii) invite the Head of the Money Advice Unit to make a bid for additional funds in the Budget for 2005 / 2006 to enable other projects to be undertaken to further benefits take-up.
 - iii) request the Finance Director to undertake some research into the suitability of the number of children in receipt of Disability Living Allowance for use as an additional indicator in the Childrens Personal Social Services Formula Spending Share to reflect the number of children with disabilities and if appropriate lobby for a review of the methodology.
- b) That the Money Advice Unit urge the Department of Works & Pensions to include a note providing information when sending out application forms to people enquiring / applying for benefits as to where prospective claimants could obtain local independent advice.

Response

- i) **The Chief Executive will raise the issue of financial support of Citizens Advice Bureaux at the next meeting with Hertfordshire District / Borough Councils Chief Executives which is due to be held on 17 November 2004.**
- ii) **A bid has been made for additional funding from within the Council's budget for the Children with Disabilities project. There also a number of outstanding bids for external funding, the results of which will be known during the autumn of 2004.**
- iii) **Lorraine Allen has started to collect data on this issue. Research is under way to decide whether the number of children receiving disability living allowance would be a more accurate and beneficial measure of the extent of childhood disability in Hertfordshire.**
- iv) **This matter has been raised with both the local Department of Works & Pensions office and the regional Tribunal Appeals Service.**

2. HERTS TOGETHER –LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY STRATEGIES IN HERTFORDSHIRE

- a) A copy of the Community Strategy Panel's new remit will be circulated to Resources Scrutiny Committee members.
- b) The Committee welcomes the report and recommends that the Community Strategy Panel advise the Executive Member for Partnerships on what has been successful to date for the Herts Together and what future success criteria would be.
- c) That the Assistant Chief Executive be requested to prepare a check list capable of identifying where District Plans are consistent with Herts Together.

Response

- i) A copy of the Community Strategy Panel's new remit was circulated to Resources Scrutiny Committee members by Email on 7 October 2004.**
- ii) The Community Strategy Panel will be requested to identify to date what has been successful with Herts Together and what future success criteria is.**
- iii) A check list capable of identifying where District Plans are consistent with Herts Together has been compiled by David Hughes.**

3. BEST VALUE REVIEW MONITORING UPDATE

- a) That progress on individual best value reviews be referred and considered by the appropriate service Scrutiny Committee.
- b) That the Leader of the Council be recommended that replacement of road signs be given a low priority unless involving replacing damaged signs.
- c) That the Executive Member for Environment be recommended to lobby H M Government to revise current statutory regulations to allow a simpler notification process for temporary road closures and restrictions, which do not require advertisement in local newspapers.
- d) That the Corporate Director for People & Property be requested to circulate details on the coverage of Performance Management appraisal schemes throughout the authority to all Resources Scrutiny Committee members.

Response

- i) Details of progress of the best value reviews undertaken have been circulated as information items to the appropriate Scrutiny Committees.**
- ii) The Chief Executive has advised the Leader of the Council of the Committee's views on the replacement of road signs.**

- iii) **A letter has been sent to the Minister for Transport in September 2004 requesting revisions to legislation. An approach to the E Government Envoy is now being prepared.**
- iv) **Details of the coverage of Performance Management appraisal schemes throughout the authority were circulated to all Resources Scrutiny Committee members by Carole Grimwood by E mail on 15 July 2004**

4. SCRUTINY UPDATE AND WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2004 / 2005

- a) A report on the main conclusions of the recently issued MORI Survey on public satisfaction of Local Government services be made to a subsequent meeting.
- b) The Chief Executive advised that further work was being undertaken by the officer Performance and Planning Group chaired by Geoff Brown, on how we were dealing with complaints and the systems used.

Response

- i) **The Chief Executive is proposing to submit a report on the main conclusions of the recently issued MORI Survey on local authorities services to the meeting on 20 January 2005.**
- ii) **A progress report is proposed to be submitted to the Resources Scrutiny Committee on 20 January 2005.**

Update on petitions presented to the last meeting: None

A. UPDATE ON PREVIOUS SCRUTINY ITEMS

	ITEM	Committee Date	EFFECTS OF SCRUTINY	STATUS* (see end note)
1	Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring	19/10/2000	Report to each meeting.	Monitoring
2	Review of Performance Monitoring Information	19/10/2000	'Traffic Lights' Report to each meeting [with the exception of the January meeting].	Monitoring
3	Review of the Best Value Performance Plan	19/10/2000	Reviewed annually.	Monitoring
4	Review of Treasury Management	25/1/2001	Reviewed annually.	Monitoring
5	Planning Obligations	15/3/2001	The Topic Group has met on six occasions and its findings are contained in the report attached as Agenda Item 4 to this agenda and are also due to be considered by the Environment Scrutiny Committee at its next meeting on 18 January 2005.	Concluding ?
6	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 six times with the last meeting being on 17 September 2004. The meeting scheduled for 19 July 2004 was cancelled. Items considered on 17 September 2004 were advertising; implementing 2004 / 05 Efficiencies; plus progress reports on Integrated Transport and on SHARP. The work of the former SHARP Member Reference Group has been transferred to the Efficiencies Panel. The next meeting is due to be held on 8 December 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.
- **Awaiting 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

B. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2004 / 2005

20 January 2005

	ITEM	SCRUTINY FOCUS
1	Corporate Services Proposed Resource Budget	To consider the Corporate Services revenue budget and capital programme proposals for the forthcoming financial years.
2	County Council Proposed Resource Budget	To consider the Council's total revenue budget and capital programme proposals for the forthcoming financial years.
3	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.
4	CPA for 2004 – Outcome	To consider the outcome of the Council's CPA for 2004.
5	MORI Survey on local authorities services	To consider views expressed by the public concerning services provided by local authorities.
6	Budget Monitor	This report will provide Members with the projected revenue and capital expenditure of the County Council as at 31 October 2004.
7	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.

14 April 2005

	ITEM	SCRUTINY FOCUS
1	Budget Monitor	This report will provide Members with the projected revenue and capital expenditure of the County Council as at 31 December 2004.
2	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.
3	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.

WORK TO BE PROGRAMMED : -

- 1) Review of Financial Delegations