

Item 9

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1

Conference Room 1,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

Tuesday, 31 August
2004

Time: 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillor A. Gray (Chairman) and
Councillors D.M. Hancock, J.G. Huntington, J.M. Khan, G. Morgan and
Mrs. I. Jackson Smith

In Attendance: Councillors Mrs. B.A. Clare, V. Crosby, G.C. Gray, J.E. Higgin,
J.P. Moran, A. Smith and T. Ward

Apologies: Councillors W.M. Blenkinsopp, Mrs. K. Conroy, Mrs. A.M. Fleming,
B. Hall, K. Henderson, B. Meek, J.M. Smith and K. Thompson

Invited to Attend D. Newell

OSC(1).7/04 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15th June, 2004 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

OSC(1).8/04 FEEDBACK FROM CABINET

Member Training – Procurement

Members were reminded that at the meeting on 15th June, 2004 Members of the Committee had requested that Cabinet consider offering the same level of training on procurement to all Members. (Minute .No. OSC(1)4/04 refers).

This issue was considered at Cabinet at its meeting on 15th July, 2004 when Cabinet agreed that basic procurement training be offered to all Members. Additional training would also be offered to Cabinet Members to support their strategic roles and the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Committees would also be invited to attend that training. (Minute. No. CAB.31/04 refers).

AGREED : That the information be noted.

OSC(1).9/04 CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE

It was explained that a report had been presented to Cabinet on 23rd July regarding progressing the e-Government Agenda and strengthening customer care and corporate capacity. The Cabinet Member for Performance Management, Councillor D. Newell, was present at the meeting to give a presentation on progress in relation to

the Customer Service Centre.

Councillor Newell explained that an in-depth review of the Council's Customer Service Centre had been undertaken which identified issues and made recommendations as to how the critical element of the e-Government Agenda could be extended.

The review identified a requirement to relocate the Customer Services Centre from its current location to a more appropriate position. A full appraisal had been undertaken and Cabinet had approved floor plans for the repurposing of Green Lane's front reception area which would need to be extended into accommodation currently occupied by the Benefits Service. The location of the Customer Services Centre Manager was still to be agreed.

He also outlined the proposed new staffing structure within the Customer Services Centre including the appointment of two full time Team Leaders, supported by ten full and part time Customer Services Centre agents, the establishment of post of Customer Services Manager, the regrading of the Customer Services Centre Supervisor, the redesignation and regrading of the e-Government Co-ordinator to Corporate E-Government Manager and the regrading of the Corporate Procurement Manager. Job Descriptions had been drawn up. The two posts of Team Leader and the post of Customer Services Manager would be advertised during September.

In relation to Job Evaluation negotiations were ongoing with Trades Unions.

Discussion was also held regarding Customer Service Centre opening hours and Saturday morning working.

In relation to the operation of the Centre, the progress of the pilot services provided through the Customer Service Centre i.e. Housing Maintenance, Environmental Services and Gas Servicing had been reviewed and had identified that the potential and service offered through the Customer Service Centre needed to be developed in order to deliver the wider e-Government agenda.

A County-wide Customer Relationship Management System had been introduced which would bring the Council close to meeting its Customer Services objectives. A Modernisation Taskforce had also been established to define responsibility for delivering the Council's contribution to priority service outcomes and identifying potential inhibitors to the achievement. The establishment of the Taskforce would provide the vital support infrastructure needed for the future success of the Customer Services Centre.

AGREED : That the information be received.

OSC(1).10/04 PHILIPS IPS 2000 TELEPHONE SYSTEM

The Cabinet Member for Performance Management gave an update in relation to the progress on the above system.

It was explained that it had been decided to introduce the system on a phased basis. Four lines would be installed at Chilton Depot and ten at the Customer Services Centre. The system, when fully embedded, would be able to monitor peaks and troughs of the service to ensure a more efficient operation.

Some concerns had been expressed in relation to customers experiencing misdirected calls. It was explained that training would be undertaken to ensure that Customer Services staff were able to divert calls to the appropriate departments etc.

It was considered that progress had been made in this respect and that customers were receiving a more beneficial service.

AGREED : That the information be received.

OSC(1).11/04 SCRUTINY REVIEW GROUPS

The Recruitment and Retention Review Group which had been set up was still ongoing. Research was being carried out into different aspects of the issues. The next meeting of the Review Group was to be held on 19th October, 2004. Following the Review a report would be submitted to this Committee.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 at its meeting on 15th June 2004 had agreed to set up an Area Forums Review Group. The first meeting of that Group would be held on 1st October and would discuss scope and remit of the Group etc. Information would be circulated to Members of that Group prior to the meeting.

AGREED : That the information be received

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection, etc., in relation to these Minutes and associated papers should contact Liz North, Spennymoor 816166, Ext 4237.

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