

# Item 6

## SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1

Conference Room 1,  
Council Offices,  
Spennymoor

Tuesday,  
12 October 2004

Time: 10.00 a.m.

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

**In Attendance:** Councillors Mrs. B.A. Clare, Mrs. J. Croft, V. Crosby, G.C. Gray,  
Mrs. J. Gray, Mrs. L. Hovvels, J.P. Moran, Mrs. E.M. Paylor, A. Smith and  
T. Ward

**Observer  
with  
Chairman's  
Consent** Councillors W. Waters

**Apologies:** Councillors W.M. Blenkinsopp, Mrs. A.M. Fleming, K. Henderson,  
J.M. Smith and K. Thompson

### **OSC(1).13/04 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2004 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman (for copy see file of Minutes).

### **OSC(1).14/04 REVIEW OF PARTNERSHIP CONTROL ARRANGEMENTS**

Consideration was given to a report prepared by the Audit Commission, regarding a Review of Partnership Control Arrangements within Sedgefield Borough Council. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was explained that the objectives of the review were to:

- Identify the current range of partnerships the Council was involved in
- Confirm whether the Council was applying good practices

Detailed consideration was given to the Audit Commission's key findings and recommendations, together with the Council's response.

Members queried what arrangements would be made in relation to Town and Parish Councils, who gained Quality Status, delivering services on behalf of the Borough Council. It was explained that the partnership principle would apply when working with Town and Parish Councils.

Member's queried partnership arrangements relating to procurement. Members were informed that the principle of procurement was to work with others to provide best value. It was explained that sound principles of procurement were applied in order for the Council to progress forward.

CONCLUDED: That the report be noted

#### **OSC(1).15/04 HUMAN RESOURCES BEST VALUE REVIEW SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN - PROGRESS UPDATE**

Consideration was given to a joint report of Head of Service Improvement and Head of Financial Services setting out progress to date on the implementation of the Human Resources Service Improvement Plan (for copy see file of Minutes).

The report set out progress to date on the following key strategic aims:-

- HR Strategy
- Corporate Policies and Procedures
- Single Status
- Sickness Absence
- Flexible Working Arrangements
- Payment of Creditors
- Communication and flow of information between Payroll/HR
- Unit costs of HR/Payroll
- Performance Management and Performance Indicators
- Electronic Service Delivery
- Central Training and Development
- Health, Safety and Welfare
- Industrial Relations

Members noted that 27 of the 51 actions in the revised Service Improvement Plan (SIP) were complete and 13 were on schedule. SIP Ref. 12.11 – Implement an Occupational Health Strategy was behind schedule as a result of recent staff turnover in this service.

Members expressed concern in relation to Members receiving different levels of training. It was felt that all elected Members should receive the same standard of training.

It was explained that the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) had stated that training needed to reflect training needs. Therefore all Members would receive corporate training and individual specific training would be identified through a training needs analysis.

Discussion took place in relation to the level of sickness within the Council. It was explained that Sedgefield Borough Council was in the bottom quartile with regard to sickness absence. The Doctor had withdrawn her services from the Council and the Nurse had taken employment at another authority.

Consideration was being given to outsourcing the Occupational Health

Service. If this service was outsourced the new service provider would be given targets to reduce the level of sickness within the Council.

Members questioned when single status would be fully implemented. It was explained that single status terms and conditions of employment had been agreed for several groups of workers although it could not be fully implemented until the pay and grading review had been completed.

With regard to the payment of creditors Members requested that an update report be given at a future meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1.

CONCLUDED: That progress made on the Human Resources Best Value Service Improvement Plan be noted.

**OSC(1).16/04 AREA FORUMS SCRUTINY REVIEW GROUP - SCOPE AND REMIT**

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive Officer seeking approval for the scope and remit relating to the Area Forums Review Group (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Chairman of the Review Group outlined the proposed Scope and Remit of the Review Group.

AGREED: That the scope and remit as outlined in the report be approved

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**ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection, etc., in relation to these Minutes and associated papers should contact Miss L. Moore Tel 01388 816166 Ext 4237

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