

# Item 8b

## SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1

Conference Room 1,  
Council Offices,  
Spennymoor

Tuesday,  
6 September 2005

Time: 10.00 a.m.

**Present:** Councillor A. Gray (Chairman) and  
Councillors B. Hall, B. Meek, G. Morgan, Mrs. I. Jackson Smith and  
K. Thompson

**Invited to  
attend:** Mrs. B. Graham

**In  
Attendance:** Councillors W.M. Blenkinsopp, Mrs. B.A. Clare, J.P. Moran,  
Mrs. E.M. Paylor, A. Smith and T. Ward

**Apologies:** Councillors Mrs. K. Conroy, Mrs. A.M. Fleming, D.M. Hancock,  
K. Henderson, J.G. Huntington, J.M. Khan and J.M. Smith

**OSC(1).15/05 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
Members had no declarations of interest to submit.

**OSC(1).16/05 HUMAN RESOURCES BEST VALUE REVIEW SERVICE  
IMPROVEMENT PLAN - PROGRESS UPDATE**  
Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Resources 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 aims:-

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

It was reported that 36 of the 60 actions in the Service Improvement Plan  
were complete. With regard to Performance Indicators (PIs) it was noted

that 10 PIs had been completed and work was underway on 8. Work on the remaining 6 PI's had not yet began.

Specific reference was made to Single Status terms and conditions of employment. Members were informed that although terms and conditions had been agreed for several groups of workers, Single Status could not be fully implemented until the pay and grading review had concluded.

Detailed discussion took place in relation to Job Evaluation. It was explained that following a meeting of the Corporate Consultation Panel, it had been agreed that ACAS be invited to assist in the Job Evaluation process.

Reference was also made to the assessment process adopted by the Council.

With regard to Sickness Absence, it was noted that performance had improved. Members commented that sickness levels varied between departments and suggested that a review be carried out in relation to sickness absence across the Council

The lead Member for Welfare and Communication then left the meeting to enable the Committee to reach recommendations.

- AGREED:
1. That the Committee was satisfied with progress against the Service Improvement Plan
  2. That sickness levels be considered as a future topic for review

#### **OSC(1).17/05 PROCUREMENT SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN - PROGRESS UPDATE**

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Resources detailing revisions to the Council's Procurement Service Improvement Plan. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was reported that since the completion of the Best Value Review of Procurement in November 2001, the Procurement Service Improvement Plan in January 2003 and the Procurement Strategy in March 2003, the Government had launched the following national projects relating to Procurement: -

- National Procurement Strategy
- I&DeA Procurement Fitness Check
- Gershon Efficiency Review
- Comprehensive Performance Assessment

Details of these national projects were set out in the report.

With regard to the original Procurement Service Improvement Plan, it was noted that 28 of the 55 actions had been completed. Work was in progress on 21 actions and 6 actions had not yet started.

It was pointed out that some of the actions in the original SIP were dependent upon work being carried out at either a national or regional level. It was also explained that until the outcome of the recent ballot in relation to Large Scale Voluntary Transfer, work on some actions could not be completed.

Members noted that work undertaken in respect of the completed actions and actions in progress had resulted in substantial progress being made with regard to the Council's procurement activity.

With regard to the revised Procurement SIP it was explained that there were six key themes. Each theme had its own aim together with a number of associated actions. It was explained that the completion of actions would result in the achievement of the aim.

A summary of the key themes together with the topics covered was outlined in the report.

Members were informed that the revised SIP had taken into account the milestones and recommendations contained within the National Procurement Strategy and the "Taking Stock" documents. A summary of the Council's progress against these milestones was attached to the report.

Reference was made to electronic tendering. It was explained that this was a more effective and efficient way of tendering especially for small and medium enterprises.

Detailed discussion took place with regard to the costs associated with the social aspects of procurement, e.g. demonstrating improvement in equality and opportunity for business, service users and council officers.

It was explained that the Council was a public organisation providing a service and therefore required to address social issues relating to procurement.

- AGREED:
1. That progress on the SIP be noted and that the revised SIP be agreed
  2. That a further progress report be considered in September 2006

#### **OSC(1).18/05 PREPARATION OF THE ANNUAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REPORT**

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive Officer and also a presentation which was given in relation to the preparation of the Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report. (For copy see file of Minutes).

The Committee reviewed the work undertaken, considered a suggested Action Plan for the Overview and Scrutiny function and also reviewed working methods in order to improve the Overview and Scrutiny function.

Members were reminded that in accordance with the Council's Constitution a combined Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report covering all three Overview and Scrutiny Committees would be submitted to Council on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2005.

The achievements that the Committee had progressed were outlined in the report.

- AGREED:
1. That the work undertaken during 2004/05 be noted
  2. That the proposed action plan for 2005/06 be supported

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**ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

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