

Item 8a

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1

Conference Room 1,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

Tuesday,
30 August 2005

Time: 10.00 a.m.

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

In Attendance: Councillors W.M. Blenkinsopp, V. Crosby, G.C. Gray, Mrs. J. Gray,
J.P. Moran, R.A. Patchett, Mrs. E.M. Paylor, A. Smith and T. Ward

Apologies: Councillors Mrs. A.M. Fleming, B. Hall, K. Henderson, J.M. Khan,
J.M. Smith, Mrs. I. Jackson Smith and K. Thompson

OSC(1).9/05 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
No declarations of interest were submitted.

OSC(1).10/05 MINUTES
The Minutes of the meeting held on 14th June, 2005 were confirmed as a
correct record and signed by the Chairman. (For copy see file of Minutes).

OSC(1).11/05 RISK MANAGEMENT - PROGRESS REPORT 2004/05
Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Resources detailing
the development and progress of issues that were fundamental to risk
management and those areas where risk management was a key
component. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was reported that effective risk management was an essential element of
quality corporate governance and should be an integral part of an
organisations processes and culture. The requirements of the
Comprehensive Performance Assessment and the Statement of Internal
Control necessitated a strong risk management culture.

It was pointed out that although progress had been made in the area of
risk management since the last CPA further development of the Corporate
Risk Management areas of CPA and the Statement of Internal Control was
crucial to future assessments of the quality of corporate governance.

Members were informed that a Risk Management Group had been
established as part of the revised Council structure. This group had
discussed a wide range of risk issues, which were set out in the report.

Members were given details of progress made in relation to the following
risk issues:-

- Departmental Safety Groups
- Durham Chief Financial Officers' Risk Management and Insurance Sub-Group
- Insurances
- Corporate Risk Register
- Risk Profiles
- Risk Matrix
- Health and Safety
 - General
 - Management Procedure Register
 - Occupational Health and Safety Communication Framework
 - Stress Management Policy
 - Lone Workers
 - Working at Height
 - Hand Arm Vibration
- Statement of Internal Control and Comprehensive Performance Assessment
- Civil Contingency Planning
- Business Continuity
- Training

In relation to Stress Management Members commented that a number of departments within the Council did not have a full compliment of staff. Therefore employees were under increased pressure to maintain the same standard of service. Reference was made to Job Evaluation and the possible implications to staff turnover. Members were however pleased that a Stress Management Policy had been developed.

Reference was made to Trade Union involvement in the development of risk management. It was explained that Trade Unions were involved in discussions on Health and Safety through Joint Consultative arrangements.

AGREED :

1. *That the report be noted.*
2. *That regular progress reports on risk management be considered.*

OSC(1).12/05 STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL

Members noted the Statement of Internal Control had been prepared and certified by the Leader and Chief Executive Officer as part of the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was explained that each Director was required to make appropriate certifications regarding the operation of his major internal control arrangements, as well as the approach to performance and risk management. An action would be developed to address any areas where remedial action was required.

AGREED : *That the Statement of Internal Control be noted.*

OSC(1).13/05 CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW - MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

Consideration was given to a report of the Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer making proposals for arrangements to provide for the engagement of Members in the Council's processes for the review of the Constitution. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was reported that it was necessary to monitor and review the Constitution to ensure that its aims and principles were given full effect. Any amendments to the Constitution were considered by the Chief Executive Officer and approved by the Council.

It was recognised however that there were occasions where Members could have a legitimate expectation to be engaged in reviewing certain areas of the Constitution e.g. rules of procedures at meetings and Overview and Scrutiny procedures.

The report proposed that:-

- That the work schedules of Overview and Scrutiny Committee annually include an item inviting Members to identify and submit proposals for changes to the Constitution.
- That the Chief Executive Officer be formally notified of such proposals.
- That the Chief Executive then convene a meeting of the Chairman of the Cabinet and Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to discuss, consider and then formulate draft proposals for changes and amendments.
- That, if necessary, such proposals form part of a report by the Chief Executive to be submitted to the Council for formal approval.

General discussion took place in relation to the type of issues Members could raise regarding review of the Constitution.

RECOMMENDED : That the proposals be approved.

OSC(1).14/05 WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report of the Chairman of the Committee setting out the Committee's Work Programme for consideration and review. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was explained that the Internal Audit Service – Half Year Report would be considered at the meeting on 22nd November 2005 and not 10th January 2006.

An update was given on the progress of the ongoing reviews.

It was explained that the review of Area Forums was at the end of the review process with a final report being produced. It was anticipated that

the final report would be submitted to Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 for consideration in October 2005.

With regard to the review of Recruitment and Retention it was explained that a meeting of the review group was to be arranged to consider comparative data obtained from other Local Authorities within the County.

Members expressed concern in relation to job evaluation and the effect on staff turnover. It was requested that the Leader of the Council, Chief Executive Officer, Director of Resources and Head of Service Improvement be requested to attend a special meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 to address Members concerns regarding job evaluation.

Specific reference was made to future topics for review. It was felt that as Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 would receive regular updates on risk management as part of the work programme this topic for review should be deleted from the list of future reviews.

- RECOMMENDED :**
1. *That the Leader of the Council, Chief Executive Officer, Director of Resources and Head of Service Improvement attend a special meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 regarding Job Evaluation.*
 2. *That the Committee's Work Programme be agreed.*

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

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