

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee for Corporate Management Issues held at the County Hall, Durham on Friday 30 July 2004 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILLOR C ROBSON in the Chair

Members:

Councillors J Armstrong, Blenkinsopp, Firby, T Forster, Nicholls and Thompson

Other Members:

Councillors Dormer and Marshall

Visitor:

Mr A M Williams

A1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 May 2004 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

A2. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The Sub-Committee considered a report, together with a presentation, of the Head of Corporate Policy, concerning Performance Management (for copy of slides, see file of Minutes). The presentation covered the following areas:

- Changes to the Best Value Performance Plan
- Our Priorities
- Corporate Policies in 2003/2004
- Effective Corporate Management – Key Achievements 2003/2004
Performance Issues (un-audited)
Priorities for 2004/07
- General User Satisfaction Survey 2003
- Outturn 2003/2004

Referring to the key priorities for improvement for Corporate Management in 2004/05 to 2006/07, Councillor Armstrong asked whether level 3 of the Equalities Standard in the Corporate Equalities Plan would be achieved by March 2005. Ian Mackenzie replied that Linda Walker had taken Chairmanship of the Corporate Equalities Group, and would attend the next meeting to report progress.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

A3. BUDGET OUTTURN 2003/04

The Sub-Committee received a presentation from Robert Cornall, Deputy County Treasurer on the Budget Outturn for 2003/04.

Robert Cornall informed the Sub-Committee that the County Council had reserves of just below £7m, which was a reduction of £835,000. Although services had shown an overspend of £2.2m, £2.5m related to capital charges, and therefore the true position was an underspend of £367,000.

Ian Mackenzie reminded the Sub-Committee that individual service budgets would be scrutinised with Chief Officers over the next few months.

A4. SCRUTINY TRAINING ASSESSMENT GROUP – A REVIEW OF THE WORKING GROUP'S RECOMMENDATIONS

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Head of Overview and Scrutiny regarding a review of the Scrutiny Training Assessment Working Group's recommendation (for copy see file of Minutes).

Ian Mackenzie informed Members that, following the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Training Assessment Group last year, a review meeting had taken place, which highlighted the following:-

- As at 9 June 2004 56 Members had participated in the preparation of a Personal Development Plane (PDP), and the Member Learning and Development Programme was now being prepared based on these PDP's
- Training and development needs were being co-ordinated in the interests of improving cost-effectiveness
- The Co-ordination Role for all Member Training had been allocated to the Personnel Division
- Areas of training had been identified which had facilitated the opportunity to put on specific courses locally for Members to deliver bespoke training.
- Combined Officer/Member training was being developed
- A database was being developed which included information about individual courses

- The following areas should involve mandatory training courses
 - Recruitment and selection
 - Equal rights in employment
 - Diversity
 - Employee appeals procedures
 - Planning
- A Member/Officer Working Group has been established to monitor and review Member training and development

The Head of Overview and Scrutiny informed Members that further investigation into the adoption of the North East Charter on Member Development was ongoing, and that a further report on progress would be brought to the Sub-Committee.

Resolved:

That the recommendations contained in the report be approved.

A5. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT: PROJECT PLANNING

The Sub-Committee noted a report of the Head of Overview and Scrutiny regarding a training course provided for Scrutiny Members in relation to project planning (for copy see file of Minutes)

Ian Mackenzie informed Members that Project Planning had been identified by a number of Members in their PDP, and as a result of this a training course was held on 22 June 2004. The training considered the Fear of Crime project as a case study.

Councillor Armstrong informed Members that the case study was perhaps a little too ambitious for the training course, given its complexity. However, the training course had emphasised that Project Planning was a key part of the work of scrutiny.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

A6. WORK PROGRAMME

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Head of Overview and Scrutiny regarding the work programme for the Sub-Committee (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Head of Overview and Scrutiny informed Members that the programme for the budget scrutiny process would be circulated in due course.

Resolved:

That the report be noted

A7. FORWARD PLAN

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Head of Overview and Scrutiny which informed them of the sections of the Council's Forward Plan which were within the Sub-Committee's jurisdiction.

Resolved:

That the Forward Plan be agreed.