

**ENVIRONMENT AND NON-EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**ANNUAL REPORT 2003/04**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Council's constitution, introduced in December 2001, provides that each of the Scrutiny Committees reports once a year to the Scrutiny Board. This is the third annual report of the Environment and Non-executive Functions Scrutiny Committee.

## **THE COMMITTEE**

Membership of the this Committee comprised as follows:

Councillor Ireland (Chair)  
Councillor Howes (Vice Chair)  
Councillor Boyle  
Councillor D. Chapman  
Councillor Strange  
Councillor Worlding

The terms of reference of the Environment and Non-executive Functions Scrutiny Committee covers the following:

Executive Portfolios	Environment
Functions	Physical infrastructure – provision and maintenance Use of land and impact of uses Local Agenda 21 and sustainability Pollution control Pest control Value and appropriateness of services Operation of external partnerships Critiques budget proposals, standards, performance and Best Value including reviews All functions within the terms of reference of: Administration Committee Development Control Committee Regulation Committee

## **MENTORS**

Councillors Siederer and A Hussain were appointed by the Scrutiny Board to oversee the work of the Environment and Non-executive Functions Scrutiny Committee.

## PANELS

One member of the Environment and Non-executive Functions Scrutiny Committee serves on the Swimming Pool and Leisure Facilities Scrutiny Panel.

## THE ROLE OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

The role of scrutiny committees is as follows:

- To hold the Executive to account
  - By considering Executive decisions which are 'called in'
  - By giving advice to the Executive about matters included in their forward plan
- To monitor and evaluate performance
  - Using performance Indicators
  - And best Value reviews of services
- To examine topics of public interest or concern
- To consider topics referred by the Executive
- To undertake policy development, reviews and revision
- To undertake the role of community champion
  - By reviewing the performance of other public and 'common' services
  - By considering matters affecting the area and/or local people

## WORK COMPLETED

The Committee has met every four weeks throughout the last municipal year and continued with the work programme that had previously been set on the basis of the advice tendered by the Scrutiny Board to choose a limited number of topics and to carry out an in depth scrutiny of those topics.

The topics chosen by the Committee for 2003-04 were as follows:

<b>Scrutiny Topics</b>	<b>Monitoring Items</b>
Clean Streets	Local Plan review
Transport – traffic and parking	Major infrastructure projects
Enforcement	Licensing Act

The Committee has also selected a number of other topics for future years.

Major infrastructure projects include the completion of the inner ring road, the railway station redevelopment, Translink, the East Luton corridor and the northern by-pass. The committee also has a continuing interest in the Thameslink 2000 project to increase capacity on the Bedford to Brighton train services.

During the year the committee has completed two major topics and made recommendations to the Executive that have been accepted and adopted.

### Traffic and Transport

The review of Transport and Traffic concluded that the Local Transport Strategy was appropriate and addressed the issues identified in the study but that faster progress needed to be made on some aspects such as a freight transport strategy. The committee supported the development of a high quality bus service through a quality partnership and the development of a park and ride scheme in order to achieve a modal shift. The committee also recognised that Translink is a vital part of the current local transport strategy.

### Clean Streets

The review of clean streets review examined the issues surrounding the implementation of the action plan that resulted from the best value review of the Council's cleansing service and the roles and responsibilities of other statutory agencies in keeping the town clean. The final report concluded that the Council has an important role in working with other agencies to address issues that are outside the direct control of the Council and to enforce the cleaning of land and premises that are not the responsibility of the Council and recognised the important role of educating the public. The committee recognised the importance of additional resources that would be required if the standards to which the Council aspired were to be achieved. As a result of the recommendations presented in the report to the Executive the Council has agreed to budget for the increase resources outlined in the clean streets final report as from April 2004. The committee will be monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of its recommendations.

### Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub Regional Strategy consultation

In conjunction with Regeneration and Citizenship Scrutiny Committee the committee considered what the Council's response to the Government should be in respect of the draft Milton Keynes and South Midlands sub regional strategy and submitted a recommended response to the Executive, which was adopted by the Executive as the Council's response to the consultation.

## **BEST VALUE REVIEWS**

None of the services under review in 2003-04 came within the remit of the committee.

## **PERFORMANCE**

Following the advice of the Scrutiny Board the committee appointed two Members to monitor statistical information on service delivery performance of services coming within the remit of the committee. The Members appointed to this task were Councillors Howes and Ireland. The two nominated Members referred no performance issues to the Committee.

During the Course of the year the Scrutiny Board decided that each of the scrutiny committees should receive reports on the priority performance indicators relating to services within their remit.

## **WORK IN PROGRESS**

The Committee has started work on its next topic which is 'enforcement' deciding to look specifically at how the Council works with partners to enforce the clean up of privately owned land when dumped rubbish becomes a hazard or an eyesore. The scope for this topic has been agreed by the committee and is currently at the evidence gathering stage.

## **FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME**

Future topic have been selected by the committee but not prioritised are as follows:

- ❑ Energy
- ❑ Impact of the Environment on Health
- ❑ Conservation Policy
- ❑ Waste and Recycling
- ❑ Co-ordinated Street Scene
- ❑ Commercial and Industrial Recycling
- ❑ Underground Services

Other topics may be added as a result of consultation with partners, stakeholders, Councillors and employees.

Councillor Ireland  
Chair of the Environment and Non-executive Functions Scrutiny Committee

18<sup>th</sup> March 2004