

SCRUTINY BOARD

30th May, 2002 at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Dr Hambleton (Chair), R. Davies (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Ali, Franks, Hand, Hoyle and McCarthy.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Hussain.

8 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE (REF: 1)

An apology for absence from this meeting was received from Councillor Akbar.

9 MINUTES (REF: 2)

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 11th March, 2002 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Vice-Chair.

10 LGA ANNUAL CONFERENCE (REF: 5)

The Director of Scrutiny advised that further to being notified of a vacant place on the LGA Annual Conference for 2nd to 5th July 2002 he had contacted several Scrutiny Board Members to ascertain their availability to attend.

Resolved: That Councillor Akbar attend the LGA Annual Conference from 2nd to 5th July 2002.

(Note: The above item was considered by the Committee in pursuance of Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair having considered that the item should be dealt with as a matter of urgency in order to avoid any unnecessary delay in considering the Best Value Review Report.)

11 REFERENCES - LIFELONG LEARNING AND SOCIAL INCLUSION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – ANNUAL REPORT 2001-02 AND WORK PROGRAMME 2002/03 (REF: 6.1)

The Director of Scrutiny submitted a report which detailed the Lifelong Learning and Social Inclusion Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2001-02 and Work Programme for 2002-03 for the Scrutiny Board's consideration and approval.

Member's attention was drawn to the recommendation to the Scrutiny Board to establish a joint Scrutiny Panel of Lifelong Learning and Social Inclusion and Performances, Resources and Assets Scrutiny Committees to examine teacher recruitment and retention policies and effect. The Director of Scrutiny informed the Board that Performance Resources and Assets Scrutiny Committee's role included the monitoring of recruitment statistics and much work had already been undertaken in this respect. Similarly Lifelong Learning and Social Inclusion Scrutiny Committee had, at its meeting on 26th February 2002, considered a comprehensive report on the Council's Strategy, policy and position in respect of teacher recruitment and retention and had subsequently made recommendations to the Executive which were duly endorsed. It was agreed that the matter concerning the setting up of the Panel be considered in conjunction with item 7 "Constitution" (minute ref 15).

Resolved:(i) To note the Lifelong Learning and Social Inclusion Scrutiny Committee Annual Report for 2001/02; and

(ii) To note the Lifelong Learning and Social Inclusion Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme for 2002/03

12 REFERENCES – ENVIRONMENT AND NON EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – ANNUAL REPORT 2001-02 AND WORK PROGRAMME 2002/03 (REF: 6.2)

The Director of Scrutiny submitted a report which detailed the Environment and Non-Executive Functions Scrutiny Committee's Annual Report 2001-02 and Work Programme for 2002-03 for the Scrutiny Board's consideration and approval.

Resolved: (i) To note the Environment and Non-Executive Functions Scrutiny Committee Annual Report for 2001/02; and

(ii) To note the Environment and Non-Executive Functions Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme for 2002/03; and

(iii) That the Director of Scrutiny report back to a future meeting of the Board on the options of putting in place a suitable procedure to allow all four of the Scrutiny Committees to track the decisions of the Executive.

13. REFERENCES – PERFORMANCE, RESOURCES AND ASSETS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – ANNUAL REPORT 2001-02 AND WORK PROGRAMME 2002/03 (REF: 6.3)

The Director of Scrutiny submitted a report which detailed the Performance, Resources and Assets Scrutiny Committee's Annual Report 2001-02 and Work Programme for 2002-03 for the Scrutiny Board's consideration and approval.

A discussion ensued concerning the need to clarify what would be involved in Performance, Resources and Assets Scrutiny Committee concentrating on, as their first priority topic, the Airport Concession. The Director of Scrutiny advised that this would be discussed with the Chair of Performance, Resources and Assets Scrutiny Committee and the Airport Client Manager at a meeting arranged for 7th June. As part of the new scrutiny arrangements prior to commencing with the scrutiny of major topics all scrutiny committees' Chairs and Vice-Chairs would be involved in meetings with key officers to agree on the scope of the project and how it would be approached.

Resolved: (i) To note the Performance, Resources and Assets Scrutiny Committee's Annual Report for 2001/02; and

(ii) To note the Performance, Resources and Assets Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme for 2002/03.

14. REFERENCES – REGENERATION AND CITIZENSHIP SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – ANNUAL REPORT 2001-02 AND WORK PROGRAMME 2002/03 (REF: 6.4)

The Director of Scrutiny submitted a report which detailed the Regeneration and Citizenship Scrutiny Committee's Annual Report 2001-02 and Work Programme for 2002-03 for the Scrutiny Board's consideration and approval.

Resolved: (i) To note the Regeneration and Citizenship Scrutiny Committee Annual Report for 2001/02; and

(ii) To note the Regeneration and Citizenship Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme for 2002/03.

15. CONSTITUTION (REF 6.7)

The Board considered a report submitted by the Director of Scrutiny which detailed the response of the Chairs and Vice Chairs of scrutiny Committees to the constitutional issues referred to them by the Board so that the Board could consider what to recommend to Constitution Committee.

Members gave consideration to the following issues further to the informal meeting of the Chairs and Vice Chairs held on 3rd April, 2002:

- i) Reasons for Call-In – Members discussed the possibility of whether there could be an informal discussion between the Member(s) who instigate(s) the Call-In, key officers and key Committee Members. The Board were subsequently minded to request Members who call in Executive decisions to state their reasons for call-in as opposed to requiring them.
- ii) Consideration of Call-Ins – Members considered whether called in decisions of the Executive should be considered at the next scheduled meeting of the appropriate scrutiny committee or at a special meeting of the committee specifically convened for that purpose. The Board felt that called in decisions should be considered by the appropriate scrutiny committee within four weeks of the expiry of the call-in period. This should be a special meeting of the committee specifically convened for that purpose unless the Chair and Vice Chair of the committee agree to its inclusion in the agenda of a scheduled meeting within the same period. The Members who have called in the decision should be consulted about the date for the special meeting with a view to selecting a date which is convenient to either or preferably both if this could be achieved.
- iii) Remit of Lifelong Learning and Social Inclusion Scrutiny Committee – Members considered both whether the remit of Lifelong Learning and Social Inclusion Scrutiny Committee was too large and the role and effectiveness of the Housing Panel. Members felt that the standing committees should be retained for at least another municipal year. There should be a thorough review of the remits and responsibilities of the standing committees with a view to clarifying any grey areas and to balancing the workloads. More use should be made of panels both informal and formal (e.g. like the arrangements already used to deal with best value reviews) to consider matters entirely within the remit of a committee and formal (e.g. Leisure Panel) to consider matters which come within the remits of more than one committee in order to avoid duplication.

The procedure and principles for setting up panels was agreed as:

- a) each case for setting up a Panel should be judged on its own merits in terms of panel size;
 - b) apply the rules on political balance to each panel to determine representation;
 - c) Director of Scrutiny to seek nominations to panels from Conservative and Liberal Democrat Group Leaders and Chair of the Board; nominees to preferably be drawn from appropriate committees;
 - d) report back to Board for information.
- iv) Panel to examine Teacher Recruitment and Retention Policies – Members agreed to set up a Panel of 8 Members comprising 5 Labour (one from the Board and two each from Lifelong Learning & Social Inclusion and Performance, Resources & Assets), 1 Liberal Democrat (Councillor Patterson), 1 Conservative and 1 co-optee from the co-opted members of Lifelong Learning & Social Inclusion Committee in accordance with the procedure detailed at (iii) above.
- iv) Housing Panel – The Housing Panel should be asked to complete its task and that they be requested to give consideration as to how housing issues should be scrutinised in the future.

The Chair circulated a copy of the notes of a recent meeting of the Leisure Panel which had been drafted to supplement the formal minutes of the meeting. The Board welcomed the

comprehensive style of the notes and agreed that this format should be adopted for all future meetings of scrutiny panels.

Resolved: (i) That in respect of call-in that Members who call-in decisions be requested to state reasons for call-in but that they not be required to give reasons.

(ii) That Constitution Committee be recommended to recommend to the Council to amend Standing Order 55 as follows:

That called in decisions should be considered by the appropriate scrutiny committee within four weeks of the expiry of the call-in period. This should be a special meeting of the committee specifically convened for that purpose unless the Chair and Vice Chair of the committee agree to its inclusion in the agenda of a scheduled meeting within the same period. The Members who have called in the decision should be consulted about the date for the special meeting with a view to selecting a date which is convenient to either or preferably both if this could be achieved

(iii) that through the Executive the Housing Panel be asked to complete its task as assigned and detailed in the Constitution;

(iv) that subject to (iii) above the Constitution Committee be requested to give consideration as to how housing issues should be scrutinised in the future;

(iv) that in respect of standing scrutiny committees to endorse the view that:

- (a) standing committees should be retained for at least another municipal year;
- (b) there should be a thorough review of the remits and responsibilities of the standing committees with a view to clarifying any grey areas and to balancing the workloads; and
- (c) more use should be made of panels both informal and formal (e.g. like the arrangements already used to deal with best value reviews) to consider matters entirely within the remit of a committee and formal (e.g. Leisure Panel) to consider matters which come within the remits of more than one committee in order to avoid duplication.

(v) To set up a Panel to examine Teacher Recruitment and Retention Policies comprising 5 Labour (one from the Board and two each from Lifelong Learning & Social Inclusion and Performance, Resources & Assets), Councillor Patterson (nominated for the Liberal Democrat place) 1 Conservative and 1 co-optee from the co-opted members of Lifelong Learning & Social Inclusion Committee; the Director of Scrutiny to be advised of nominations.

16. WORK PROGRAMMES AND ANNUAL REPORTS (REF: 8)

The Board considered a report of the Director of Scrutiny which detailed the proposed work programmes for 2002/03 submitted by the four scrutiny committees and the draft annual report of the Board to the Council for consideration and approval.

The Board noted that in submitting their annual report to Council the annual reports of each of the scrutiny committees would be attached for information.

RESOLVED (i) to recommend that Council note the Annual Report of the Scrutiny Board;
and

(ii) that the Scrutiny Board retain health scrutiny arrangements as a topic under review within its own remit.

17. MEETINGS OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEES (REF: 9)

Members provided feedback on their overview of the work of the Scrutiny Committees for the 2001/02 Municipal Year.

The Chair advised of the intention to organise in house training for chairs and vice chairs based on the new format for the scrutiny process.

Resolved: To note the oral reports and that the Director of Scrutiny develop and deliver a training workshop for Chairs and Vice Chairs on the skills and techniques of chairing meetings.

18. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO OVERSEE THE WORK OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEES (REF: 10)

The Director of Scrutiny submitted a report which sought the Board's views on whether to appoint members of the Board to oversee the work of the Scrutiny Committees in view of the changes made to the membership of the Board and Scrutiny Committees.

The Chair commented that the oversight role largely comprised observing the conduct of meetings, supporting the Chair of the Committee and providing constructive feedback on both good and bad practice in a "wash-up" session at the end of each meeting.

Resolved: That the following Board Members be identified as having responsibility for an overview of the work of the Scrutiny Committees indicated:-

- (a) Environment and Non-Executive Functions Scrutiny Committee - Councillors R. Davies and Dr. Hambleton.
- (b) Lifelong Learning and Social Inclusion Scrutiny Committee - Councillors Hoyle and McCarthy.
- (c) Performance Resources and Assets Scrutiny Committee - Councillors Jenkins and Franks.
- (d) Regeneration and Citizenship Scrutiny Committee - Councillors Ali and Hand.

19. HEALTH SCRUTINY UPDATE (REF: 12)

The Board considered a report of the Director of Scrutiny which detailed the latest position with regard to the scrutiny of the NHS.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

20. BEST VALUE REVIEWS (REF: 13)

The Board received a report which detailed the progress of best value reviews within the Authority and which outlined the forthcoming work.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

(Note: The meeting ended at 8.00 p.m.).