

# AUDIT AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 15 July 2003 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Caborn (Chair); Councillors Mrs Blacklock, Davis, Gill, Kirton, Mrs Knight, Pratt, Sandhar and Mrs Sawdon.

(Councillor Sandhar substituted for Councillor Smith).

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor Crowther (Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Strategic Leadership), and

Councillor Gifford (Member of the Executive).

## 226. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

## 227. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 20 May and 17 June 2003, having been printed and circulated, were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

## 228. THE FUTURE WAY OF WORKING AND WORK PLAN

The Committee considered a report from the Strategic Director on the terms of reference for the review of repairs and maintenance expenditure, a work programme for the forthcoming year, and the means of tackling that work.

At its last meeting, the Scrutiny Committee agreed to consider the repair and maintenance expenditure in the light of the overspend of the previous year. Appendix 'A' to the report suggested a terms of reference and an approach. It was recommended to the Committee that a Sub-Group of the Committee of three or four Members could carry out the detailed investigatory work and report back.

It was suggested that the "investigative approach" might be more effective with a smaller group and it also enabled those who had more interest in this area to get involved, allowing other Members to tackle other areas of the Committee's work.

Appendix 'B' to the report was the previous work plan of the Committee and Members discussed the high and low priority items within the work plan.

Appendix 'C' to the report gave a diagram which detailed a seven stage scrutiny process adopted by Newham Council in London. Whilst it was not wholly appropriate, it was suggested that the Committee try this approach in relation to the first few priority review areas.

## **AUDIT AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (Continued)**

### **RECOMMENDED** that

- (1) the terms of reference of the Repairs and Maintenance Working Group, as detailed in Appendix 'A' to the report be approved;
- (2) the Committee's work programme based on Appendix 'B' to the report be prioritised by the Strategic Director and the Chair;
- (4) the Scrutiny model, as detailed in Appendix 'C' to the report, be approved as a trial approach;
- (2) the membership of the Repairs and Maintenance Working Group be Councillors Davis, Gill, Kirton and Pratt; and
- (3) a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee with a timetable for the work programme.

### **229. APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS 2002/2003**

The Committee considered the decision by the Executive, as set out in minute number 160, which had been called in under the provision of the Council's Constitution, by Councillors Hammon, Kirton and Windybank.

The Head of Finance and Head of Property Services had prepared a briefing note to assist the Committee in its consideration of the approval of the accounts 2002/2003.

The Committee were given details of the difficulties faced by the Council in 2002/2003, issues which had already been addressed and future learning points, queries on repairs and maintenance clubland, and the effect of the call in on the approval of the accounts.

The report of the responsible Financial Officer and Finance which had been submitted to the Executive on 23 June 2003, was a statement of fact. However, how the outcomes might be treated, could be dealt with in a variety of ways. Mainly the alternatives were not to allow any, or only some of the earmarked reserves requests to allow the general fund balance to fall below the one million pounds level.

At the last Audit and Resources Scrutiny Committee, the Committee had supported the recommendations in the report, but expressed concern about the robustness of the original estimates for the year, particularly in the light of the increase in the Repair and Maintenance Contract, and the shortfall in the savings on staff costings.

The Committee had asked that the Corporate Property Maintenance Budget Management should be included in its future work plan for scrutiny.

## **AUDIT AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (Continued)**

**RESOLVED** that this item be referred back to the Executive on 21 July 2003, subject to a regular process of monitoring at least every three months, and that the Executive be made aware that the Audit and Resources Scrutiny Committee has set up a Repairs and Maintenance Working Group.

### **230. EXECUTIVE MEETING - MONDAY, 23 JUNE 2003**

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on Monday, 23 June 2003, which came within the remit of this Committee, were submitted for information and scrutiny.

**RECOMMENDED** that the minutes be noted.

### **231. EXECUTIVE AGENDA - (NON-CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS AND REPORTS)**

The Committee considered the items on the Executive Agenda to be held on 21 July 2003 which came within its remit.

As a result, the following comments were made for forwarding to the Executive:-

#### Agenda Item Number 3 - Corporate Strategy

The Committee did not comment.

#### Agenda Item Number 5 - Stock Transfer – Financial Impact on Council

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

#### Agenda Item Number 8 - European Foundation for Quality Management – Peer Assessment Feedback

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

#### Agenda Item Number 9 - Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

#### Agenda Item Number 16 - Results of the External Audit of Compliance with the Commission for Racial Equality and Approval of the new Generic Equality Standard

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

#### Agenda Item Number 17 - Equality and Diversity Strategy

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

#### Agenda Item Number 21(C) - Public Art

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report but would like the Executive to approve the design of the public art before it goes ahead as they would not like something which would detract from the beauty of All

## **AUDIT AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (Continued)**

Saints Church.

### **232. PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**RESOLVED** that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item by reason of the likely disclosure of exempt information within paragraphs 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

### **233. EXECUTIVE AGENDA (CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS AND REPORTS)**

The Committee considered the items on the Executive Agenda to be held on 21 July 2003 which came within its remit.

As a result the following comments were made for forwarding to the Executive:-

#### **Agenda item Number 24 - Employment Committee – Financial Effects**

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report but would like to know the future of the retirement budget.

(The meeting ended at 8.05 p.m.)

I:\secs\members\Minutes\audit 15july.doc