
OVERVIEW OF RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Since the last ordinary meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work the Resources Scrutiny Committee has undertaken :-
 - (a) Car Parking, Green bus and the Local Transport Plan** – Following a previous Scrutiny Committee meeting, we agreed to invite the Director of Development and Environment to our meeting on the 13th October, 2005, to answer our questions in relation to the net overspend on Car Parking, the allocation of additional grant to Green Bus and the criteria for the allocation of funding to various schemes under the Local Transport Plan. More information in relation to the three issues is contained below :-
 - (i) Car Parking – Following a previously reported high net overspend of £269,000 on the Department’s budget, the Director advised us of the main reasons for this which was due to the delay in acquiring the East Street Car Park and the subsequent loss of income. He reassured us that the overspend was now reduced and work was continuing with the aim of it being on target at the end of the year. If this is not the case, there is provision for carry forward and eliminating a carried forward overspend over a longer period;
 - (ii) Green Bus - As Members will be aware, a number of subsidised bus contracts within the Town are part funded by the Council and Government grant to enable the provision of bus services, considered to be socially necessary but not commercially viable e.g. early morning, late evenings and weekends. Following the additional grant of £130,000, by Cabinet, the Director of Development of Environment advised us of the background to the situation and to the allocation of the grant. He also advised us of the current situation in relation to the operation of the four small buses which had been purchased by this Council to operate its Urban Bus Challenge bus service;
 - (iii) Local Transport Plan – Following questions by Members about the criteria for the allocation of funding to the various schemes contained within the Local Transport Plan, the Director gave us an overview of the production and implementation of the Plan, which is required under the Transport Act 2000, and which set out the Council’s transport proposals for the next five years and the bidding mechanism for the funding of these projects. Further training on the financial side of the Local Transport Plan will be given to Members of the Resources Scrutiny Committee in the near future.

- (b) Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monthly Monitoring Reports –** Consideration has been given to the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monthly monitoring reports. In addition, we have also received an update on the projected efficiency gains, compared with the planned gains which have been submitted to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and we will continue to monitor this as part of our Review topic for this year.
- (c) Street Scene –** As have all other Scrutiny Committees, we have received a presentation on the progress, to date, on the review of Street Scene, which is being undertaken as part of the ‘Leading Edge’ agenda.
- (d) Efficiency Review Group –** This Review Group has continued to meet and we have looked at the progress regarding the monitoring of the 2005/06 planned efficiency gains; the Council’s approach to planned efficiency gains in 2006/07 onwards; and the ten major corporate programmes identified by the Council’s Corporate Management Team under the Leading Edge Organisation Development Programme. As referred to earlier in this report, we will continue to monitor the Efficiency Statement as part of the Revenue Budget Monitoring.
- (e) Community and Voluntary Sector Funding Review –** This Review Group has also continued to meet and has looked at the Compact, which is a statement of partnership between the Council, PCT and the Voluntary and Community Sector, and which provides a commitment to work together more closely and to respect each other’s rights and responsibilities. We are satisfied with the Compact and the Group will continue to meet and interview parties to gain further information to assist with the review.

I, as Chair, have also had discussions and meetings with various Officers about the work of the Committee.

Councillor Ian Haszeldine
Chair Resources Scrutiny Committee