

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC MONITORING COMMITTEE

Meeting Held on 8 December, 2003

Membership:

Councillors: T.M. James (Chairman), Mrs. P.A. Andrews (Vice-Chairman) W.L.S. Bowen, A.C.R. Chappell, J.H.R. Goodwin, Mrs M.D. Lloyd-Hayes, J.Stone, J.P. Thomas, W.J.S. Thomas.

REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION

1. The Committee has considered the proposed amendments to the Constitution required to give effect to Cabinet's decisions following a review of the Local Area Forums. It has also noted the need to empower the Regulatory Committee to appoint a Sub-Committee to carry out new licensing duties and to refine the scheme of delegation to officers for regulatory matters.

RECOMMENDATION

- THAT**
- (a) **the Cabinet's proposals relating to the Local Area Forums and the Scheme of Allowances for Members be noted and the necessary consequential amendments to the Constitution be recommended to Cabinet and Council for approval;**
 - (b) **it be recommended to Cabinet and Council that the Constitution be amended to empower the Regulatory Committee to establish a Sub-Committee;**
- and**
- (c) **it be recommended to Cabinet and Council that the Constitution be amended to provide for the County Secretary and Solicitor to be authorised to devise a scheme of delegation for officers for regulatory matters.**

HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY

2. The Committee has received an update on progress in implementing the Human Resources Strategy. It has noted how the findings of the third annual staff opinion survey will inform action to make progress against the targets in the Strategy and the addition of milestones and interim targets into the Strategy to monitor performance.

ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

3. The Committee has noted that the Council's Asset Management Plan has been rated as "good" by the Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM), the highest rating possible, and had obtained the best score in the West Midlands. The Council accordingly no longer has to submit a Plan to the GOWM. The Asset Management Plan will, however, remain an important tool for the authority and link into the prudential code for local authority finance.

THE PRUDENTIAL CODE AND ITS IMPACT ON CAPITAL STRATEGY

4. The Committee has noted the implications of the new Prudential Code which will take effect in the 2004/2005 financial year. The Committee has been informed that the Council has in place the building blocks to develop the capital strategy in line with the Code's requirements and that the Code will afford the Council greater flexibility in seeking to deliver its priorities.

CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING

5. The Committee has been advised that it remains the case that, subject to the expected acceleration of spending in the second half of the year no conditional resources will be lost.

REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING

6. The Committee has noted that the projected overspending is within the Council limit of 1%.

ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE INDIVIDUAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

7. The work of the Committees is analysed below as far as practicable under the following five roles for overview and scrutiny: holding the executive to account, best value reviews, policy development and review, external scrutiny, and improvement (performance management and review), the first four of which are identified as key roles in report on "The Development of Overview and Scrutiny in Local Government published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister". Issues considered by the Strategic Monitoring Committee not all of which are dealt with above because they arise from its role in fulfilling its remit to scrutinise the Policy and Finance Programme area, rather than being of Council-wide significance, are listed for completeness.

Summary By Programme Area

Education

8. The Education Scrutiny Committee met on 18th November, 2003 and considered the following issues:

Theme	Reports
Holding the Executive to Account	
Best Value Reviews	
Policy Development and Review	Safer Routes To Schools Home To School/College Transport – Discretionary Areas Of Policy Social Inclusion Education Policy Building Schools For The Future Review Of Small Schools
External Scrutiny	
Improvement (Performance Management and Review)	Education Development Plan 2002-2007 Post Ofsted Inspection Action Plan

and Review)	Complaints, Compliments And Appeals
Other	Work Programme

9. The Environment Scrutiny Committee met on 21st November, 2003 and considered the following issues:

Theme	Reports
Holding the Executive to Account	
Best Value Reviews	Implementation of Improvement Plans
Policy Development and Review	Parish Council Minor Highway Maintenance Scheme Public Rights of Way Service
External Scrutiny	
Improvement (Performance Management and Review)	Human Resources Capital Budget Monitoring Revenue Budget Monitoring Performance Indicators Herefordshire Plan Ambitions – progress Kerbside Collection of Recyclables GEM performance
Other	-

10. The Health Scrutiny Committee met on 13th November 2003 and considered the following issues:

Theme	Reports
Holding the Executive to Account	
Best Value Reviews	
Policy Development and Review	
External Scrutiny	Briefing on public health team and public health issues
Improvement (Performance Management and Review)	
Other	Work Programme

11. The Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Committee met on 24th November, 2003 and considered the following issues:

Theme	Reports
Holding the Executive to Account	-
Best Value Reviews	Home Support - update
Policy Development and Review	Green Paper: Every Child Matters
External Scrutiny	
Improvement (Performance Management and Review)	Serious Case Review Action Plan Better Care Higher Standards Annual Users Report Home Energy Conservation Act Annual Report Adoption Service Annual Report Complaints Comments and Compliments Supporting People Inspection Herefordshire Plan Ambition Groups Performance Indicators Budget Monitoring
Other	

12. The Social and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee met on 27th November 2003 and considered the following issues:

Theme	Reports
Holding the Executive to Account	
Best Value Reviews	
Policy Development and Review	Festivals Review
External Scrutiny	Presentation by HALO (the leisure trust)
Improvement (Performance Management and Review)	Budget Monitoring Performance Indicators Payment of Invoices
Other	

13. The business conducted by the Strategic Monitoring Committee at its meeting on 8th December, 2003 is summarised below.

Theme	Reports
Holding the Executive to Account	-
Best Value Reviews	
Policy Development and Review	Review of the Constitution Property Management Scrutiny Review Prudential Code and its Impact on Capital Strategy
External Scrutiny	
Improvement (Performance Management and Review)	Human Resources Strategy Asset Management Plan Performance Monitoring – Corporate Health Revenues and Benefits Service Capital Programme Monitoring Revenue Budget Monitoring
Other	Health Scrutiny Work Programme.

**T.M. JAMES
CHAIRMAN
STRATEGIC MONITORING COMMITTEE**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Agenda Papers of the Meeting of the Strategic Monitoring Committee held on 8th December, 2003.