

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee Resources, Performance And Development Overview And Scrutiny Committee

Date of Committee 19th June 2007

Report Title Chair's Annual Report

Summary This report contains the annual report of the Resources, Performance and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee summarising the work undertaken by the committee in 2006 and outlining its future commitments for 2007.

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Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? No.

Background papers None

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:- Details to be specified

- Other Committees
- Local Member(s)
- Other Elected Members Councillor Atkinson and Councillor Haynes.....
- Cabinet Member
- Chief Executive
- Legal Sarah Duxbury
- Finance
- Other Chief Officers Strategic Director of Performance and

Development. Strategic Director of Resources

- District Councils
- Health Authority
- Police
- Other Bodies/Individuals

FINAL DECISION NO

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee
- To Council *11th September 2007*
- To Cabinet
- To an O & S Committee
- To an Area Committee
- Further Consultation

Agenda No

Resources, Performance and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 19th June 2007.

Chair's Annual Report

Report of the Chair of Resources, Performance and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Recommendation

That the Resources, Performance and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee agrees the annual report of this committee and refers it to the Council on 11th September 2007

All Overview and Scrutiny Committees are required to present an Annual Report to the Council on a rolling programme. The Resources, Performance and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee is required to present its Annual Report to the Council on 11th September 2007. Attached as Appendix A is the Annual Report for this committee, summarising the work that we have undertaken during 2006 and highlighting future areas of work for 2007.

CLLR DAVID BOOTH
Chair of Resources,
Performance and
Development Overview and
Scrutiny Committee

Shire Hall
Warwick

7 June 2007

THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE RESOURCES, PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 2006-07

Foreword by Cllr David Booth

Chair of the Resources, Performance and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Warwickshire County Council has, over the last eighteen months undergone a period of significant transition, which has resulted in nine departments being transformed into six directorates. Members and officers have found themselves confronting new challenges and responsibilities. The Resources, Performance and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee came into being in June 2006 taking over most of the responsibilities of the former Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Since its inception the committee has worked hard, it has contributed to the democratic process and worked to promote transparency and accountability throughout the council.

I believe that Overview and Scrutiny has an important role to play in the life and work of the County Council. The Council's commitment to the Overview and Scrutiny function was demonstrated when it undertook a major review of the service, which concluded in October 2006. During 2007 and into 2008 the committee will work to implement the recommendations of that review and the profile of the committee's work programme is to be enhanced with more input from elected Members. To increase Members' knowledge of the council's public facilities throughout the county we are holding meetings away from Shire Hall. Working with our partners we hope that this will also increase public engagement in the overview and scrutiny process. We have recently held a meeting in Bedworth and are planning to meet in Atherstone in the autumn.

In common with the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees, there are new issues for the committee to turn its attention to next year. "Strong and Prosperous Communities", the Local Government White Paper published last year set out a series of new innovations concerning Overview and Scrutiny. These include extending scrutiny's remit to other service providers, encouraging more use of "area" overview and scrutiny committees with extended use of co-option, the right to recommend an independent inspection if a service has failed to adequately address local concerns and the encouragement of a focus on outcomes agreed as part of Sustainable Community Strategies, Children and Young People's Plans, Local Area Agreements and other key plans.

It is not possible for the committee to operate alone. I thank the many officers of the council that have worked for and supported the committee during 2006, and also other authorities and organisations that have helped by attendance and giving information and advice.

Did you know?

The County Council switchboard handled 546,972 calls last year with the Customer Service Centre dealing with 234,721 of them.

Every year we process over 14,000 applications for disabled parking badges.

5,600 births and 4,876 deaths were registered in the county.

There were 1971 referrals of sudden or suspicious deaths to the Coroner

244 inquests were held

Remit and Membership of the Committee

To advise on the development of policies and to scrutinise performance in relation to finance, property, e-government and information technology, traded services, facilities management services, customer service and access, change management, organisational development and co-ordination of partnership working including local area agreements and community partnerships, human resources, communications, corporate and community governance and law and probity.

Membership of the committee from 9th May 2006 was as follows:



Cllr George Atkinson



Cllr Chris Davis

Membership changed in May 2007 with Councillor Shilton replacing Councillor Timms
 8 @ number of issues throughout the
 year.

Performance Monitoring	Policy Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full year and half year performance • Corporate Business Plan targets • Money owed to the council • Customer service • Corporate complaint procedures • Staff absence • Human Resources • Property condition and use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Receipts Strategy • Consultation on Council Tax • IT Strategy • Corporate Asset Management Plan • Corporate Business Plan Targets • 2007/8 to 2009/10 Spending Proposals • Corporate Governance Audit • Recruitment Practice

Detailed Scrutiny

Some issues have occupied more of the committee's time than others. Three examples are listed below.

Customer Service and Access – The County Council is committed to first rate customer service and access. To this end a great deal of work has been undertaken to establish customer service centres and one-stop-shops around the county. The object of these initiatives is to provide a seamless, hassle-free point of contact for our customers. Because of the level of resource that is being committed and the fundamental changes to the way that we deliver our services, the Resources, Performance and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee has taken a particular interest in this project. In June 2006 Members from the committee, along with the Portfolio Holder, visited the customer service centre in Shire Hall and the one stop shop at Warwickshire Direct – Kenilworth. As a result recommendations for Warwickshire Direct – Kenilworth and future one-stop shops were made. At our April 2007 meeting we were pleased to note the progress being made against those recommendations. Our interest in customer service and access does not stop with a single site visit. The committee receives and comments on regular progress reports. The committee will follow the introduction of kiosks in Rugby with interest and our recent meeting at Bedworth incorporated a visit to the new customer service centre in Kings House.

Demand for School Meals – Changing tastes and choices have over the last two to three years led to a significant decrease in demand for school meals. Jamie Oliver's TV campaign to improve the quality of school meals had a significant further impact on demand to the extent that the viability of our school meals service is now in doubt. To address this matter, Members of the committee joined forces with Members from the Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee to undertake a review of demand for school meals. Considerable work has now been undertaken with evidence being sourced from other parts of the country, headteachers, school pupils and officers. Uptake of the school meals service provided in primary schools has bounced back in recent months but demand for the service amongst secondary school pupils continues to deteriorate. The review panel is scheduled to publish its report shortly. It is expected that this will contain a series of recommendations aimed at increasing the number of pupils eating school meals and setting our school meals service on the road to recovery.

ICT Issues – Warwickshire County Council is committed to exploiting the latest technology to optimise the service it provides balancing performance against cost. Over the last year the Resources, Performance and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee has received and debated a number of reports relating to IT. In November 2006 the committee considered the progress that this authority has made towards its e-government targets. At

the same meeting it was informed of the basis of a major problem that befell the council's computer system the previous June when the satellite used to govern our computers' date and time functions failed. As well as hearing of the basis of the problem, the committee learned how our officers worked to resolve the problem and minimise its impact on our service delivery. In February of this year we turned our attention to the increasing use of ICT being made by the majority of Members. Of particular note was the wholesale use of broadband and the increasing use of blackberries and laptops by Members. In April we debated and endorsed the new IT strategy. Wi-fi and Members intranet facilities are to be introduced, in Shire Hall, in the next few months; the committee will monitor the use and effectiveness of this new service.

Issues for Current and Future Consideration

As part of the review of Overview and Scrutiny, consideration has been given to the development of a core work programme ensuring that key issues are tackled in a timely way and allocated appropriately. Work on developing the programme is ongoing and will take a while longer as we are keen to be as inclusive as possible, working closely with our partners. We will identify a number of important issues for in-depth consideration.

One of the key elements of our remit is the development and co-ordination of partnership working. With the Local Area Agreement (LAA) now in place we are looking forward to receiving regular updates on progress towards meeting the targets in the LAA as well as considering other ways that we can engage with our partners to provide an enhanced service.



The committee met at Kings House in Bedworth in April

Two further issues occupy the committee's time and will continue to do so until they are resolved. The first is this authority's quest to reduce levels of sickness amongst its workforce. Over recent months we have seen a significant reduction in levels of sickness in some directorates (although in other parts of the authority this pattern has yet to be repeated). The committee has been informed of improvements to the methods of recording sickness

and over the next year will be exploring in greater detail the factors that can influence sickness and ways in which these can be addressed.

The second is the need to monitor and address occasions when, the County Council, is owed large sums of money through unpaid invoices. The County Council cannot afford to see debts remaining unpaid. The Strategic Director of Resources and his officers have already been successful in clawing back much of the money that was owed. Nevertheless, this committee will continue to monitor the situation closely.

We are also aware that we must not lose sight of the issues we have considered previously and will revisit those issues where we consider there is a need to do so.

As well as examining these important issues ourselves we are particularly keen to ensure that our partners and communities have the opportunity to have an input into the Overview and Scrutiny process.

Conclusion

2006 was a good year for this committee I look forward to 2007 when I am confident that our work will add considerably to the quality of the services that we provide.