

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ORGANISATION COMMITTEE

5PM – 24 MAY 2004

COMMITTEE ROOMS 2/3
BRIGHTON TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Hamilton (Chair), Councillors Allen, Davidson, Edmond-Smith, Giebeler, Mallender, Simson, C. Theobald and Young.

Also present: Tony Miller – Director of Communications, Ian Withers – Internal Audit, Abraham Ghebre-Ghiorghis – Head of Law and Mark Wall – Head of Democratic Services.

PART ONE

ACTION

1. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

1A Declarations of Substitutes

1.1 Substitute Councillor For Councillor

Councillor Mrs. C. Theobald Councillor Theobald (Deputy Chair)

1B Declarations of Interest

1.2 There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES

2.1 The Head of Democratic Services apologised for the lack of the minutes and reported that because of staff sickness the minutes of the last meeting had not been completed and were therefore unavailable.

2.2 The Chair noted that the committee members were aware of the situation with regard to support to the scrutiny process and reported that as agreed at the last meeting, he had raised this matter with officers and at the last Council meeting. He also noted that a report was due to go to the next Policy & Resources Committee meeting in June.

TM

2.3 The Director of Communications stated that the report was being

finalised and that the Head of Democratic Services would be reviewing the service provided to the scrutiny panels, as well as providing direct support to OSOC.

- 2.3 **RESOLVED** – That the situation be noted.

3. PERFORMANCE MONITORING : COMMUNICATIONS

- 3.1 (a) The Committee received an Extract from Quarter 3 Best Value Performance Report 2003/2004 for Corporate Services (for copy see minute book).
- 3.2 The Director of Communications reported on the PI's that related to his directorate and noted that they were performing well. He was aware that the information relating to libraries was not as clear as it could be and would be working with the Performance team to improve it. However, he was pleased with the overall performance and anticipated that the figures would continue to go up.
- 3.3 The committee welcomed the information and noted that there was a need to give some consideration as to how the performance of services should be monitored in relation to the Directorate's DDP's.
- 3.4 (b) The Committee received an Extract from Corporate Complaints database for Corporate Services (for copy see minute book).
- 3.5 The Director of Communications noted that a number of the complaints detailed had been raised through the Visitor & Information Centre and did not actually relate to his service areas. However, with regard to Hove Museum he believed this had related to the cleanliness of the tableware etc. and that this had since been resolved with a change of contractor.
- 3.6 **RESOLVED** – That the reports be noted.

4. BEST VALUE REVIEW OF COMMUNICATIONS; SCOPING

- 4.1 The Director of Communications informed the committee that it was intended to undertake a best value review of communications within the municipal year. The first scoping meeting was being planned for mid-June and he would contact the Group Leaders to seek nominations for their representatives to attend. He felt that it would be beneficial for the council to have a broad strategic review of communications e.g. to include tourism and marketing rather than just looking at the

communications team.

- 4.2 Members noted that there was both good and poor practice amongst the directorates with regard to communication and information that was provided to Members and the public. It was suggested that a more corporate approach would be beneficial and this should be part of the review process.
- 4.3 The Director stated that he was aware of the issue and noted that guidelines had been produced three years ago. He agreed that it would be appropriate to review those guidelines and noted that two cross-directorate communications groups had now been established to look at on-line information and e-government.
- 4.4 **RESOLVED** – That the information be noted. **TM**

5. HOW IS THE COUNCIL ENSURING THAT ITS CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS ARE BEING MET AND THAT ACCESS TO SERVICES IS IMPROVING THROUGH THE INCREASED USE OF IT?

- 5.1 The Committee received the report of the Director of Communications, which summarised the council's performance in respect of on-line communications and transactions (for copy see minute book). The Director noted that the Council was now in the top twenty of authorities for its website's design and content. There had been a continued increase in the use of the website and he believed this would be maintained.
- 5.2 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

6. INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2004/05

- 6.1 The Committee considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Corporate Services that informed Members of the planned internal audit coverage for 2004/05 (for copy see minute book).
- 6.2 The committee raised concern over the need for Chairs of committees to be made aware of the various reviews that were being undertaken and suggested that reports should be submitted to the relevant committees. This would then enable OSOC to request those reports it felt were appropriate to consider.
- 6.3 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

7. PROGRESS ON CURRENT SCRUTINY REVIEWS

- 7.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Communications giving the progress made on current scrutiny reviews, and updating on developments in the scrutiny function including the Education and Health Overview and Scrutiny Panels and replies to scrutiny recommendations from the executive committee (for copy see minute book).
- 7.2 The Chair noted it appeared two of the Panels had been unable to take their work forward and hoped that progress would be made by the next meeting.
- 7.3 Councillor Edmond-Smith informed the committee that the Procurement Panel had met on the 17th May and were due to hold a further meeting in June. She anticipated that the Panel would be able to report to OSOC in July.
- 7.4 Councillor Allen reported that the Dome Panel had been unable to meet as it was awaiting a report from the finance team.
- 7.5 Councillor Young stated that the Bins Consultation Panel had met with residents and was due to meet in closed session with the officers. She then anticipated that the Panel would be able to report to OSOC in July.
- 7.6 The Chair noted that the EOSP was due to meet on the 22nd June and was likely to agree to a scrutiny review of COMART and PFI.
- 7.7 **RESOLVED** - That the report and the information provided be noted.

8. OUTLINE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2004/05

- 8.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Communications, which gave an outline work programme for 2004/05.
- 8.2 The Committee noted that there was a need to refine the work programme and that it was hoped to bring it back to the next meeting.
- 8.3 **RESOLVED** - That the report be noted.

9. ITEMS TO GO FORWARD TO COUNCIL

- 9.1 There were no items to go forward to Council.

10. ITEMS SCHEDULED FOR NEXT MEETING – 19 JULY 2004

- 10.1 Noted as being scheduled for consideration at the next meeting of the Committee:-

Performance Monitoring: Children, Families & Schools;
Provisional Out-turn 2003/04.
Annual Report
Update on Current Scrutiny Reviews.

The meeting concluded at 7.15pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

2004