

Corporate Resources Scrutiny Committee

Annual Report 2009/2010



Foreword by the Chairman

The Committee has had a very interesting year. In particular, the Budget process followed a different format this year, and this has required time and dedication from the Committee Members, over an intense and challenging time.

The Committee met eleven times during the 2009/2010 municipal year and spent over 11 hours scrutinising the budget process and alternative proposals.

The Panel agreed its work programme and topics for future scrutiny with regard to the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy Theme, Corporate Plan Aim and Council Priorities at its work programme setting meeting with officers on 22nd May 2009. The work programme has included items forwarded to us by Officers and also by fellow Councillors.

There will also be items on the work programme that will be carried forward to the next municipal year.

At the meeting of the committee in April 2009, Members considered the Recommendation Tracking Forms which monitored the recommendations from Scrutiny Committees to Cabinet. It was felt by the Committee that this was an important part of the scrutiny process and should be an ongoing item on the work programme for the new municipal year.

I would like to thank Members of the Committee for their contributions and assistance in the various Scrutiny exercises, without whose attendance and active involvement, the Committee would not have been successful. In particular this year, Members were allocated directorates for the Directorate Business Plans to which they took ownership. I would also like to thank those officers who attended the meetings and/or the Review Panels for their input.

Finally, I would like to thank my Vice Chairman, Councillor Jenny Greener for all her help and support, Sue Saunders for her efficiency, cheerfulness and patience. I would also like to thank Caroline Newlands for her legal advice throughout the year.

Councillor Graham Ballinger
Chairman, Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee
26th April 2010

1. Review Panels

The following Review Panels were established by the Committee in order to scrutinise specific issues in greater depth.

a. Domestic Waste Collection & Recycling Review Panel

The Domestic Waste Collection & Recycling Review Panel was established on 8th April 2009 following a report to Cabinet on 23rd October 2008. The panel met five times between 19th May 2009 and 26th August 2009.

The purpose of the review was to investigate and consider potential methods of future collections for waste and recycling following the opportunity of collection of co-mingled recycling with the provision of the Envirosort facility. Recommendations from the review panel, which Members had agreed were sensible and well measured were agreed by Cabinet at their meeting on 22nd September 2009.

b. Regulatory Services Review Panel

The Regulatory Services Review Panel was established on 10th December 2009 to allow Members to scrutinise fully the Worcestershire Enhanced Two Tier Working (WETT) Regulatory Services Business Case. The panel met twice on 4th January 2010 and 8th January 2010.

During the course of the review panel, Members were reminded that the Council Licensing Policy would not change if the Regulatory Services business case went ahead. Each Council would retain their own Licensing Policy.

The recommendations from the review panel were agreed by Cabinet on 19th January 2010 which were subsequently agreed at Council on 24th February 2010.

c. No Barriers Review Panel

The Review Panel was established on 27th April 2007 following a recommendation by Group Leaders at their meeting on 6th March 2007.

The No Barriers Awards were set up in memory of Councillor Mike Oborski who admired a similar scheme based in Gdynia, Poland. Mike's wish was that the values of the Polish project were reflected in the Wyre Forest scheme. The Scheme recognises local businesses, organisations and individuals who have provided significant access, service or employment opportunities for people with disabilities in the Wyre Forest district. These include people with physical and learning disabilities, mental health difficulties and hearing and visual impairments.

Cabinet agreed recommendations from the review panel that an annual awards ceremony would be held.

The Review Panel has reconvened to co-ordinate the arrangements for the awards in 2010.

These awards are a lasting tribute to Mike's hard work and dedication to the district and the county over many years.

d. Budget Review Panel

The Budget Review Panel this year was again challenging. The Panel met from July 2009 to February 2010. It gave all Members an opportunity to take part in reviewing the budget for the year and in total, there were seven meetings.

During the budget process, the Panel received reports on the base budget variations, income service options and details of the capital programme.

The Panel also had the opportunity to scrutinise the budget proposals made by the Cabinet and considered the alternative budget proposals from the Independent Community & Health Concern, Labour and Liberal/Liberal Democrat parties.

The Review Panel's recommendation below were presented at the Cabinet meeting on 16th February 2010 and agreed at Council on 24th February 2010.

"Having considered the Cabinet proposals, and amendments from the Independent Community & Health Concern, Labour and Liberal/Liberal Democrat Groups, the Corporate Resources Scrutiny Committee is satisfied that the proposals are all clear, achievable and financially sound."

e. Recommendations from Local Authority Mortgage Review Panel

The Panel was established on the 25th February 2009 following a request from Council. The Local Authority Mortgage Review Panel undertook a scrutiny exercise to look into the possibility of the Council providing Shared Ownership Mortgages with the added condition that the mortgages be underwritten by the relevant Registered Social Landlords (RSL's). Cabinet agreed the recommendations from the review panel at their meeting on 27th October 2009 which included that the Council did not wish, at the present time, to offer shared ownership mortgages in respect of RSL properties.

f. Recommendations from Corporate Performance Clinic Review Panel

The Panel was established on 11th February 2010 by the Corporate Resources Scrutiny Committee. This was to allow Members to

scrutinise fully the work of the Corporate Performance Clinics. Part of the work undertaken was the issue of a questionnaire to Officers (who had attended the Clinics) and Members on how they perceived the Clinics were performing.

Recommendations from this review panel were agreed by Cabinet on 20th April 2010.

3. Equality & Diversity Update

The Corporate Resources Scrutiny Committee received a quarterly update on Equality & Diversity. The Council worked in partnership with the 5 other districts and the County Council to deliver a Unified Equality and Diversity Plan for Worcestershire in the form of the "Being Different Together Project". The Committee agreed to work closely with Worcestershire County Council for the needs of all our communities.

4. Recommendation Tracking Forms 2008/09

The Committee considered a report on all recommendations that had been made from Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee, Community Services Scrutiny Committee and Regeneration & Enterprise Scrutiny Committees.

Members went through the Recommendation Tracking Form document and highlighted areas for follow up and these were action. The Committee agreed that this would be a standing item on the work programme for the Committee again for next year to ensure that recommendations were followed up.

5. Single Site

The Committee were updated at each meeting on the progress made on purchasing of the site for Single Site and on the project in general. They were grateful to be kept informed of the latest position. During the course of the monthly updates, feedback was given to questions raised during the meetings.

Some Councillors were also involved by being members of the Transformation Board.

6. Directorate Business Plans

It was agreed at the Corporate Resources Scrutiny Committee on 9th July 2009 that Members of the Committee would take ownership of the Business Plans. Each Member was allocated a directorate and received information on performance data on the progress of the plans, these were received on a quarterly basis in order for them to carry out their role. The Members had held regular meetings with the relevant Director to go through the business plans.

7. Corporate Performance Clinics

The Committee were updated on a quarterly basis with a summary of the outcomes for the items discussed at the Corporate Performance Clinics. Members had perceived that the Corporate Resources Scrutiny Committee would not have the capacity to carry in-depth work on the information at their monthly meetings and for this reason felt that the work done by the clinics was excellent.

8. Other Items

Throughout the year, other items were considered including:

Annual Report (2008/09) – Performance Management Framework
Business Continuity Plan (Emergency Planning)
Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA)
Corporate Plan Priorities and Performance Indicators for 2009/10
Directorate Business Plans 2010/11
Equality Framework
Exception Reporting from Performance Management Clinic
Flexible Retirement Policy
Homeworking Policy
Joint Municipal Waste Structure
Sickness Monitoring
Update on the ICT Strategy
Updated Data Quality Policy & User Guidance Notes
Value for Money Policy
Workforce Development Plan