



Report to Council

Subject: Scrutiny Chairs Annual Reports

Date: 13th December 2006

Author: Chairs of Scrutiny Committees

1. Purpose of the Report

To inform Members that the Chairs from all three Scrutiny Committees-Community and Quality of Life, Resources and Management and Services have written their annual reports and these have been considered by their respective Committees and approved for referral to Council.

2. Background

The Constitution requires that the Scrutiny Committees submit an annual report to full Council on their workings and with any recommendations that they may wish to make Council. These reports are attached.

3. Recommendations

Members are recommended to consider these reports.

Chair of Community and Quality of Life Annual Report.

The CQL committee has had a busy, useful and rewarding year.

The **Disability Working Group** continued its valuable work from the previous year, noting services and access for the mentally and physically disabled. A number of agencies addressed the committee putting forward various perspectives, and we completed the survey/questionnaire from the disabled in the community. By March the working group had completed 67 questionnaires from people with a disablement. The long task of collating all the evidence/information then started. It was noted that our extensive report starting to take shape in May will help inform the GBC Disability Equality Scheme. August saw the first draft of the final report with the aim of presenting the final report to the October meeting.

In January it was decided that **Fair Trade** would be an area of work we would consider. The working group was formed and the scope included looking at the feasibility of gaining Fair Trade status in a defined area of the borough. During the summer a list was drawn up of useful people the working group could interview. The Arnold Town centre manager was helpful during this period. It was understood that unlike other scrutiny studies, the Fair Trade initiative would be like a project, that we would start, but hopefully gain a collective who would see the project through to completion.

January saw our well-researched and important **Twitchels and Alleyways Working Group** being completed and going to cabinet. Our report and recommendations were agreed in full.

The **Cross Budget Review 05-06** continued its work at the beginning of the year. We looked at the Councils budget prioritising/scoring process, and later at the medium term financial plan. The close scrutiny work continued until the summer with discussions with Peter Baguley- Planning and Environment, and Stephen Nickolls – Food Health and Safety Licensing Manager, in relation to Zero Based budgeting in the Licensing and environmental section.

Stock Transfer Application was on our agenda in Sept. Members were reminded the Council was busy finding a housing association partner, in order to transfer the homes to. The procedures and timing was gone through.

The Sept meeting agreed to place under scrutiny the application from **East croft Incineration** plant to increase its capability. It was noted that whilst the Council was obliged to collect the waste, it was the County Council's duty to dispose of it. It was felt to widen the scope to include not just the potential increase in capacity of East croft but to look at incineration itself as a means of disposal of waste. Other related questions such as transport of waste was raised.

In addition to the working groups, a number of cabinet members and portfolio holders have attended the full committee for question and answer sessions. The leader of the Council attended for a full and frank discussion on cabinet, scrutiny and their relationships.

Christopher Preston
11th October 2006

RESOURCES AND MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

CHAIRMANS REPORT 2006

The purpose of this report is to acquaint members with the purpose, progress and recommendations of the Resources and Management Scrutiny Committee working groups during 2006. The working groups individual examination, details, facts and figures etc are not discussed here, they are contained within the appropriate working group minutes and reports. This report only summarises the intention of the working groups, their progress and recommendations.

1. Mayoral Support Working Group

The working group was set up to explore the role of the Mayor and the support services needed for him to carry out his duties and responsibilities.

The recommendations were far reaching and a summary is appended to this report (Appendix 2).

2. Consultants Working Group

This group has been set up to look at the role and use of professional consultants and to look at how much the council spends on specialist advice given by consultants who are commissioned to undertake discrete pieces of work.

A first draft of this report has gone out to working group members to review and it is anticipated that this report will be presented at the 22nd January Committee.

3. Planning Working Group

This group has been set up to look at how information about the planning application process is presented to the public. It will also consider information given to the public about the role of councillors in the planning process and also what information is given to members.

The review is still in progress and as yet the group have not reached any conclusions. It is hoped to be completed by the end of year or early in 2007.

4. Twinning Working Group

This group is looking at the Boroughs Twinning arrangements, (in particular, Rotenburg un der Fulda). It is considering the purpose and value of twinning relationships, and the officer support required within the Council.

The review is now nearly completed and a final report is being drafted ready to be presented at the 22nd January Resources and Management Committee.

5. New Cross Budget Review 2005 - 2006.

This group is still ongoing, having last met on 25th July to review all the work to date and to determine some recommendations for the first draft of this report. This work is still ongoing with the chairman still seeking additional clarification from the Heads of Service on their membership of bench marking schemes

Councillor Carol Pepper

Chairman of the Resources and Management Scrutiny Committee

6th November 2006

Chair of Services Committee Annual Report 2006

Sustainability Report- November 2006

A review has been undertaken to explore the potential for generating Green Energy at the Civic Centre, for extending energy saving within the Council premises, for adapting civic premises for sustainable energy generation and seeking Executive approval for budgetary funding to progress this further.

Cross Budget Scrutiny 2005-06- ongoing

Several members of the Services Scrutiny Committee are participants on the second cross-scrutiny Budget-working group. Members have almost completed this review of various aspects of the Council's budget, including how the budget is managed and how the Council's spending fits with its priorities. Members have concluded that budget management fits with the Council's vision and that budgets are allocated to support priorities. A final report for this review is going to be drafted shortly.

Stock Transfer and Housing Repairs Working Groups- ongoing

This Committee has received regular updates on the Housing Stock Options / Transfer and the Housing Repairs Programmes. A conclusion on the final choice of partner for the Housing Stock Options transfer will be made shortly.

Reports / Presentations to Services Scrutiny Committee-

Report on Gedling Borough Council's work and the requirements of the Licensing Act 2003- P. Baguley January 2006

Presentation on the Council's Energy Saving Measures- S. Wiseman January 2006

Report on the use of questionnaires and Gedling Borough Council's consultation framework- R. Lucas May 2006

Presentation on Sustainable Energy options- Gareth Ellis May 2006

Question and Answer session with Steve Wiseman on Energy Saving Options- July 2006

Scrutiny Chairs Event 9th August 2006

Following a visit to Derbyshire Dales on the 12th July to look at Scrutiny best practice; the Chair and Vice Chair were also participants in a half-day review in August 2006 to look at the role of the current Scrutiny Committees. This led to suggested changes that may require an amendment to the Gedling Borough Council constitution. If approved these changes would become operative after May 2007.

*Author – Councillor Christopher Pratt
Chair of the Services Committee
15th November 2006*