

Scrutiny Report to Full Council - October 2006

Since my last report to full Council Scrutiny Management Committee has, for the first time, exercised its new constitutional power of considering the call-in of a decision made by an Executive Member. This decision related to a decision made by the Executive Member for City Strategy regarding junction improvements at Moor Lane, Askham Lane and Askham Bryan.

Deciding a call-in was a new experience for SMC members and a full discussion was held with inputs from one of the calling-in members, two Executive members and an interested member of the public who had registered to speak. In this case SMC decided to confirm the decision of the Executive member and not request any reconsideration. However, SMC was pleased to have had the opportunity to carry out this important function which is a vital part of the statutory role of Scrutiny.

In my last report I mentioned outstanding Scrutiny reports which had not been completed when the former Scrutiny Boards were disbanded in May 2006. Ad Hoc Sub-Committees were formed in order to complete these as quickly as possible and allow new work to commence without undue delay. I am pleased to report that the report on Sustainable Street Lighting has been completed and submitted to the Executive on 25 July.

The reports on Reducing Carbon Emissions and Recycling and Re-use were considered by SMC on 25 September and, subject to short revisions, should be considered by the Executive in the near future. The report on Guidance for Sustainable Development is expected to be submitted to the October meeting of SMC.

The Education Scrutiny Committee completed its report on the Extended Schools Service in York, this was considered by the Executive on 12 September and the recommendations accepted.

The Health Scrutiny Committee has been considering its response to a consultation about the replacement by the Department of Health of Patient and Public Involvement Forums with new Local Involvement Networks. They are also preparing for next year's annual evaluation of Health Trusts, which they are required to contribute to, as well as continuing to liaise with the Primary Care Trust as part of their scrutiny of the proposed financial recovery plan.

I am pleased to report that, as much outstanding work has now been cleared, it has been possible to authorise the creation of two new Ad Hoc Sub-Committees. These will examine i) use of Council owned land in the Tang Hall area and ii) the highways maintenance procurement process. Political groups have been asked to submit the names of members who are willing to serve on these sub-committees. It is hoped that, if the necessary resources are available, a third sub-committee will be formed in the very near future.

Scrutiny have to create guidelines for the selection of topics for Scrutiny review and to monitor progress on new, ongoing and completed reviews. The limited resources available for Scrutiny mean that for the system to be effective it needs to have a sharply streamlined approach to the whole function. Work is in progress to establish a database which will monitor the progress of scrutiny reviews and final recommendations which have been agreed by the Executive.

I am pleased with the progress of the new arrangements for Scrutiny within City of York Council and ask Council note the work underway to move scrutiny forward.

Councillor M Kirk
Chair, Scrutiny Management Committee