

# Minutes

**Meeting of** : Overview & Scrutiny Co-Ordinating Committee  
**Meeting held in** : Committee Room 1, The Council House Bourne Hill Salisbury  
**Date** : Monday 24 July 2006  
**Commencing at** : 6.00 pm

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## Present:

Councillor K A Cardy: Chairman  
Councillor F D Bissington: Vice Chairman

Councillors Mrs E A Chettleburgh (replacing Councillor Edge), T F Couper, P V H Paisey, A G Peach and Miss M A Tomlinson.

Councillor M Hewitt (Chair of Salisbury Health Scrutiny Panel), Debbie Dixon (Policy Director) and Steve Milton (Lead Officer for Scrutiny) were also in attendance.

Apologies: Councillors M J Osment and I C West.

## 41. Minutes of the last meeting:

**Agreed:** that the minutes of the last ordinary meeting held on 13 June 2005 and the special meeting held on 15 May 2006 (both previously circulated) be approved as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

## 42. Declarations of Interest:

There were none

## 43. Scrutiny Work Programme 2006-2007:

The Committee considered the work programmes submitted by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels (previously circulated). The Committee noted that, in view of recent government announcements, the Resources OSP had decided to abandon its proposed review of local government reorganisation and instead would continue with its review of the use of consultants.

The Committee questioned the decision of the Environment and Transport OSP to include 4 reviews within its work programme considering this may stretch both councillor and staff resources.

### **Agreed:**

- (1) that the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Work Programme 2006/07 be approved;
- (2) That the full programme of reviews be circulated to all members of the council, in order that they may volunteer to participate in the reviews that interest them; and
- (3) that the Environment and Transport OSP be requested to review its programme after 4 months to ensure that available resources are adequate to achieve the reviews proposed.

44. **Scrutiny Work Programme 2005/06 - Progress Report:**

The Committee considered the previously circulated report of the Principal Democratic Services Officer. The Committee welcomed the progress made and the improvements to the council's scrutiny work as a result of the scrutiny review in 2004. Members thanked the DSU Scrutiny Support Team for its hard work and enthusiasm over the preceding 12 months.

The Committee considered the observations and learning points that had emerged during the year as follows:

- Because of the way the scrutiny calendar operated many reviews were going on simultaneously - up to 8 during 2005/06. This created a strain for the Scrutiny Team and members alike. It also meant that cabinet was presented with a raft of reviews within a relatively short period.
- Of the eight reviews completed, only two were considered by the full council. The scrutiny review completed in 2004 anticipated a higher number of public facing reviews being considered by the full council.
- The use of independent expert witnesses was used for the first time during the Rural Wellbeing Review when Ivan Annibal from Lincolnshire attended a review session to advise members and officers. The value of Ivan's input was considerable and had substantially strengthened the work undertaken.
- Research trips had also proved useful. The trip to Bristol City Council by the Members Development Review Group was particularly valuable, so too was the visit to Westminster Council made by the CCTV Review Group. In addition, the review of sheltered housing involved visits to four sheltered schemes.
- Far greater use was made of public consultation during the 2005/06 and this had demonstrated how important consultation could be to the scrutiny process. The reviews that had made use of consultation had been immeasurably improved as a result.
- The Committee considered that scrutiny work was most effective when members are fully engaged and leading the process. In view of this, greater effort had been made in 2006/07 to ensure more members are involved in the review programme.

**Agreed:**

- (1) that from 2007/08, the Annual Work Programme be based on a rolling programme of reviews in order to reduce the number running concurrently.
- (2) that the Overview and Scrutiny Panels be asked to decide which reviews should be submitted to the full Council.
- (3) that Scrutiny Review Groups be encouraged to make greater use of independent expert witnesses in the future.
- (4) that Scrutiny Review Groups be encouraged to make greater use of research visits in view of the value they add to scrutiny work.
- (5) that the increasing use of public consultation and involvement by scrutiny reviews be welcomed and encouraged.

The meeting concluded at

*The meeting concluded at 6.55 pm*