

**REPORT OF THE ECONOMY AND PLANNING
PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE AND REVIEW PANEL**

(Meeting held on 29 November 2000)

1. TERMS OF REFERENCE (REPORT A) (MINUTE NO. 7)

The Panel noted the Terms of Reference of the Portfolio Performance and Review Panels, as set out in the draft Constitution.

Members highlighted the need for training, especially on the 'Economy' side, and were advised that this would be provided when the Economic Strategy document came forward in March 2001.

It was explained that the Panel's working budget would be determined when the Panel had been operating for 12 months and had formulated its work programme.

Members noted that the Environment Portfolio Performance and Review Panel had resolved to advise the Modernising Working Party that car park management, transportation issues and concessionary travel did not form a logical part of the Environment Portfolio and should be relocated; but that land drainage and coastal protection should be transferred to the Environment Panel from Economy and Planning. The Panel endorsed the Environment Panel's recommendation, but considered that responsibility for Sewerage belonged with the Environment Portfolio.

2. THE ROLE OF SCRUTINY IN BEST VALUE (REPORT B) (MINUTE NO. 8)

The Panel received a detailed report on the Best Value review process and the roles which might be played by members of the Panel. The Panel received an oral update on Best Value work on Planning undertaken since September 2000 and a general breakdown of the Best Value process.

The Planning Review encompassed Development Control, Planning Policy, Conservation, Landscape and Trees. The process began with a Scoping exercise, which defined the service to be reviewed and identified information required to carry it out.

The Scoping exercise was completed in mid October 2000. Stage 2 now involved the analysis of information gathered and comparisons made with other authorities in Hampshire and nationally. Conclusions on service performance, including any identified shortcomings would be documented. This, combined with customer feedback would help highlight those areas requiring attention.

The Review document would then be submitted to the Corporate Management Team. Members would then have the opportunity to validate the information and recommend changes in the Verification process. The result of this process would then be drawn together in a Best Value Action Plan.

Additionally, the Chairman of the Panel invited members to bring in any comments or complaints from their constituents about the Planning Service. All such comments would be followed up. The Chairman gave an open invitation for Members to come and observe the work of the department.

The need for training in Best Value work was reiterated by members.

The following members were appointed to the verification teams, on behalf of the Panel, in the following Year 1 and Year 2 service reviews:-

- Year 1 Planning – Cllrs Ault, Gradidge and Wyeth;
- Year 2 Building Control – Cllrs Bright, Wyeth and one member of the Liberal Democrat Group to be nominated.

3. MAJOR POLICY ISSUES (REPORT C) (MINUTE NO. 9)

The Panel noted the programme of major policy reviews that the Advisory Cabinet and Policy and Resources Committee had agreed should form the basis of their work programme during the initial trial period to May 2001. It was emphasised that this was a provisional list which would be subject to review and change.

4. PROGRAMMED SERVICE REVIEWS (REPORT D) (MINUTE NO. 10)

The Panel gave initial consideration to the service reviews which they might wish to undertake in the coming months. It was agreed to revisit the question of which reviews to undertake at a future meeting, in view of the expected transfer of functions between the Economy and Planning Portfolio and the Environment Portfolio.

Members noted that the Human Rights Act might require major changes in the Planning Inspectorate, particularly in regard to rights of appeal on the part of neighbours and other parties affected by proposed developments. At present only planning applicants had the right to appeal to the Planning Inspectorate. Any changes to the current situation would have an impact on planning procedures and the Planning Directorate.

In view of these and other related issues, the Panel asked for a report on the implications of the Human Rights Act for the Planning Service, once the position had crystallised.

The National Park proposals particularly had significant implications for the Planning Department. The National Park area, based upon the existing New Forest Heritage Area boundary, could result in 38% of planning applications currently dealt with by New Forest District Council in future being dealt with elsewhere. If Lymington and Ringwood were included in the National Park area, this percentage could rise to 60%.

The Panel has requested a future report on neighbour notification and publicity for planning applications.

**Councillor Mrs P A Wyeth
CHAIRMAN**