

## THE ASSEMBLY

9 APRIL 2003

### REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

REPORT OF MEETING - 19 MARCH 2003	FOR INFORMATION	
<p><i>This regular report on the work of the Scrutiny Management Board is submitted under Article 2, Paragraph 9.2 of the Constitution.</i></p> <p><b><u>Summary</u></b></p> <p>This report summarises the work of the Scrutiny Management Board at its meeting on 19 February 2003.</p> <p>The Board considered the following (further details are set out in the report):</p> <p><b>People Matters and the Way Forward for Internal Communications-</b> Welcomed past and present members of the People Matters (PM) Editorial Board and received a report on the way forward for internal communications.</p> <p><b>Draft Scheme for Co-ordinated Admissions to Secondary Schools -</b> Details of the draft scheme for co-ordinated admissions to secondary schools.</p> <p><b>Estate Management -</b> Progress on the Estate Management and Corporate Working action plan and additional developments.</p> <p><b>Community Forums - Public Interaction -</b> Considered receiving a six-monthly report highlighting areas of concern/other key points arising from Community Forums.</p> <p><b>Routine Items -</b> The Forward Plan, current, ongoing and future Scrutiny Panels and future/outstanding reports, including draft final report of the Traffic Calming Scrutiny Panel.</p> <p><b>Children's Matters and Integrating Health and Social Care -</b> The Board has commented that work on children's matters should be progressed as soon as possible, particularly in view of the Council's corporate parenting role, financial arrangements and the Social Services Inspectorate's reports. A special Board meeting has been arranged for this which will be reported at the next Assembly meeting.</p>		
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(i) **People Matters and the Way Forward for Internal Communications** - The Board welcomed past and present members of the People Matters (PM) Editorial Board and received a report on the way forward for internal communications including:

- the Editorial Board's discussions on the way forward
- progress so far - improving PM in its printed form and online, Trade Union involvement to elicit general involvement and contributions and editorial control and diversity
- broader issues for internal communications - the need for savings may move PM towards a simpler, but perhaps more frequent, news sheet format

The Board requested a progress report in six months time, including Editorial Board Policy and membership, particularly Legal Services representation on the Board. The Board also requested an example of the revised format prior to implementation in 2004 due to the Board's concern that this is likely to be a detrimental step.

(ii) **Draft Scheme for Co-ordinated Admissions to Secondary Schools** - The Board's role is to ensure that key decisions are taken in accordance with the Constitution. It received details of the draft scheme for co-ordinated admissions to secondary schools, which is due to be submitted to the Executive for approval on 15 April 2003.

The report covered the Government's changed timetable for admissions to secondary schools and the wide-ranging work being done by the Education, Arts and Libraries Department for this.

The Board requested a report back after implementation of the new arrangements for the September 2004 intake.

(iii) **Estate Management** - The Board noted progress on the Estate Management and Corporate Working action plan and additional developments. It requested a progress report in three months time covering void management, including garages.

(iv) **Community Forums - Public Interaction** - The Democratic Support Scorecard 2002/03 includes an objective to encourage and empower citizens to be more participative. One of the actions to meet this objective is to improve the link and flow of information between Community Forums and other parts of the political structure, particularly scrutiny.

Actions have been implemented to support the objective e.g. the continued promotion of links to Community Forums with other parts of the political structure - Forums are increasingly recognised as consultation vehicles before reports go to the Executive etc. The Board agreed a further suggested action to support the objective i.e. receiving a six-monthly report highlighting areas of concern/other key points arising from the Forums, giving Members the opportunity to consider the sort of issues being raised directly by the community for possible scrutiny/investigation.

(v) **Routine Items - The Forward Plan, current, ongoing and future Scrutiny Panels and future/outstanding reports** - The Board noted/commented as follows:

- Housing Associations - Expressed concern about the lack of attendance at the urgent meeting on 18 March 2003 and stressed the importance of everyone being involved throughout the Panel's work. The Board agreed to review membership if Panel Members are unable to attend meetings.

- Scheme of Delegation - Agreed Councillor Justice to fill vacancy on Panel.
- Traffic Calming Scrutiny Panel - Welcomed the Panel's report on traffic calming and suggested revising recommendation 2(b)2. Commended the Panel and officers for their excellent work.

**Background papers used in the preparation of this report:**

Minutes of the Scrutiny Management Board 19 February 2003