



Minutes of the Meeting of the STRATEGIC PLANNING AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Held: THURSDAY, 19 FEBRUARY 2004 at 5.30pm

<u>PRESENT:</u>

<u>Councillor Farmer - Chair</u> <u>Councillor Thomas - Labour Spokesperson</u> <u>Councillor O'Brien - Conservative Spokesperson</u>

Councillor Fitch Councillor Kitterick Councillor Waddington

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor Johnson – Chair, Overseas Links Working Party Councillor Willmott – Overseas Links Working Party Douglas Clinton – Masaya Link Group Ed Brown – Masaya Link Group

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88. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests they may have had in the business to be discussed and/or indicate that Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act applied to them.

Councillor Thomas declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in Report B, Highfields Minimum Wage Project as his son was an employee of the inland revenue.

Councillor Fitch declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in Item A, Discussion of Funding for Twinning Activities, as his daughter had taken part in activities undertaken by the Masaya Link Group.

94. HIGHFIELDS MINIMUM WAGE PROJECT

The Corporate Director of Regeneration and Culture submitted a report giving an update on the progress made by the Highfields Minimum Wage Project in its second year.

Members of the Committee welcomed the report and praised Officers for the

work undertaken by the project.

Members of the Committee enquired about the involvement of other agencies, in particular advice services agencies, whether they would need to be included as part of any submission to the Department for Trade and Industry noting their importance as a source of referrals and with a view to protecting their funding as part of any Council review. In reply the Advice Services Development Officer stated that there was a bid in for Neighbourhood Renewal Funding for an employment worker who would be seeking to develop better links with statutory agencies such as the employment service. He also commented that it wouldn't be helpful if the advice agencies folded but the project would still seek to forge links with other agencies.

Members of the Committee suggested that the full report document should be provided in public facilities in areas where there were particular problems with minimum wage non-payment.

Members of the Committee suggested naming and shaming those responsible for non-payment of the minimum wage to act as a deterrent. The Advice Services Development Officer commented that most cases of non-payment are resolved before they reach tribunal, therefore it wouldn't be good practise to advertise these where no clear judgement has been passed. Naming and shaming would also potentially prejudice any debt enforcement court cases where tribunal verdicts were ignored.

Members of the Committee also raised concerns that employers who were flouting minimum wage legislation would also be ignoring other legislation which protected employees. The Advice Services Development Officer confirmed this was often the case. Where it was spotted that employers were ignoring such matters as legal holiday allowances and the working time directive, these were reported to the relevant investigating agency.

The Chair moved a number of recommendations which were unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the Committee welcomes the excellent work that being carried out on the Highfields Minimum Wage Project;
- (2) that the Chair writes to the relevant minister requesting that the Government funds and supports a City wide minimum wage project;
- (3) that the Triumvirate be tasked to develop further proposals for further investigation into this area; and
- (4) that the issues around the minimum wage be brought to the attention of the Cabinet.