

APPENDIX H

FINANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Finance Scrutiny Committee met on Friday 25th January 2002. The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council attended the meeting to respond to questions by the Committee.

The Committee was asked to consider and comment on the budgets of the Combined Fire Authority and the Magistrates Courts Committee. A copy of the report considered by the Cabinet on the budgets of these two bodies together with the Cabinet decision thereon is attached (Appendices 1 and 2).

Magistrates' Court's Committee

That the basic cash limit budget for 2002/03 amounting to £5.108million be noted.

Combined Fire Authority

In reply to questions, the Leader indicated that he had yet to see an appropriate justification for the proposed growth of £200,000 (£500,000 in a full year) to implement the non uniformed staff review. The Cabinet was therefore unable to commend the proposed budget to the County Council.

The Committee expressed concern at the failure of the Combined Fire Authority to provide details of their budget proposals for public scrutiny. Accordingly the Committee resolved:-

- a) That the Chairman of the Combined Fire Authority and the Chief Fire Officer be requested to attend the meeting of the Scrutiny Commission on Thursday 31st January 2002 with a view to providing more information relating to a justification for requesting an increase of £200,000 (£500,000 in a full year) to implement the non uniformed staff review;
- b) That the Chief Executive be advised that this Committee is of the view that the report of the Chief Fire Officer on the review of non uniformed staff, which is in his possession in his capacity as Chief Executive of a 'Constituent Authority', is a document considered to be pertinent to the Commission in its scrutiny of the 2002/03 budget proposals. Accordingly it is the view of this Committee that the report should be disclosed to members of this Committee and the Commission to facilitate further discussion.

- c) That the Commission be advised that in the absence of detailed information from the Combined Fire Authority, this Committee is unable to comment on the overall proposals and supports the view of the Cabinet.