



MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER - 17th August 2007

The Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA) has published its post election report into the 2007 elections. The report highlights what the AEA says is the "inappropriate approach by Government to funding and resources for electoral services, and how the determination to introduce new measures to combat fraud without proper and rigorous testing almost brought the service to its knees." To read more go here:

www.aea-elections.co.uk/downloads/postelectionreport2007official.pdf

You may have heard of a local website called 'counterbalance'. From what I've seen of it its purpose seems to be to criticise anything the Council does rather than offer any alternative constructive solutions to local issues. The local press have been made aware of an article posted on this site on 12th August about the Council's financial and accountancy operations.

Just in case anything makes the pages of the local papers over the next few days I thought it might help Members if I circulated a couple of basic 'home truths':

- Yes, we were 26 days late in publishing the formal final accounts for the financial year 2006/07 - the sole reason for this was unexpected staff absence and turnover affecting our capacity;
- At the year end we still had over £250,000 more in our revenue balances than the minimum recommended level, so our finances are not in 'meltdown';
- We also hold a number of 'earmarked reserves' which are held for specific purposes such as :
 - 875,000 of commuted sum payments from developers of new market housing in the Borough, earmarked for the provision of affordable housing;
 - 260,000 to cushion any potential imbalance in the housing benefit subsidy payment made to us by the Department of Work & Pensions later in the year;
 - 21,000 of funds from the sale of the Council's interest in a bus company in the late 1990s, retained for use in Ansdell.

This week has seen the publication (finally) of the Blackpool International Airport Masterplan. The consultation draft of this was circulated almost a year ago now and at last we have a final blueprint which outlines their intentions until 2030. On

a brief scan through the document there do not appear to be many changes from the draft other than some more detailed analysis of the major areas of concern highlighted during the consultation. We have only received one hard copy of the document which I am happy to photocopy for any Member requesting one – however, I'm advised it is on their website at <http://www.blackpoolinternational.com/>

I have been to a meeting this week organised by Government Office North West and the Home Office about their proposals for re-shaping community safety partnerships. More and more of the government's funding support for these will be directed through Local or Multi Area Agreements in future and they will be publishing a set of minimum performance standards to be achieved. I hope they are talking to their colleagues in the Department for Communities and Local Government who have recently been promising that the burden of local authority performance targets will be reduced next year rather than added to.

P Woodward
Chief Executive