

INTRODUCTION

The Local Government Act 1999 requires local authorities to review all of its functions over a five year period commencing Is' April 2000.

The Town Council decided such reviews should be conducted over a lesser period, perhaps three years in the following order:

- (1) Direct Works
- (2) Shildon Civic Hall
- (3) Remainder

The review of Direct Works was completed and published in February 2000 and distributed to all properties on the town.

THE REVIEW

The review of administration of the Shildon Civic Hall was brought forward by nine months and completed in July 2000 when Members looked at a number of working areas and practices including:

- (a) cost of raw materials
- (b) gross profit margins
- (c) meal costs
manpower and resource levels
maintenance, repair and improvements to buildings
- (f) general support services
- (g) existing policies on pricing, quality of materials and refreshments

Members also considered comparative figures on gross profit and margins of food and drink for financial years 1999/2000 and 2000/2001 (part) together with a detailed breakdown of income generated for individual months from April 1996 - November, 1999 which showed a substantial improvement not only in pure cash terms but also in the levels of profitability.

FUTURE POLICY

Members were mindful of the radical improvements in turnover made at the Shildon Civic Hall since 1996, and the need for substantial capital expenditure to meet and deal with the improved standards and new equipment required under the Hygiene Regulations as well as the replacement kitchen equipment originally purchased and installed in the 1970's.

Members decided that not only should the existing policies on pricing continue, but ways and means should be looked at to improve the service to customers and users, not least because of the increase in competition locally but also to explore new and improved methods of reducing costs. Members also looked at levels of staffing in the light of business needs and an earlier binding European Court of Justice decision on the employment of part time staff and their extended entitlement to contracts of employment, holiday and sickness benefits as well as the right of membership of a Superannuation Fund. They were of the opinion the present levels of staffing and the changes introduced by the E.C.J. ruling on the employment of part time staff should continue to be monitored.

CONCLUSION

Trade continues to improve albeit on a slower rate than previous. The Town Council will take all necessary steps to ensure the trading position at the Shildon Civic Hall continues to improve in order to reduce the annual deficit.

Members have also agreed to implement a continuous programme of repair and maintenance to the building, which will include the provision of new windows and doors for the small hall, kitchen and office areas with the possible renewal of the kitchen roof.