

SCRUTINY BOARD (CENTRAL AND CORPORATE)

MONDAY, 6TH SEPTEMBER, 2010

PRESENT: Councillor P Grahame in the Chair

Councillors S Bentley, B Chastney,
M Hamilton, A Lowe, J Hardy, K Groves,
J L Carter and A Gabriel

16 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at this stage of the meeting.

17 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor D Blackburn.

18 Minutes - 5 July 2010

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2010, be confirmed as a correct record.

19 Questions to the Executive Board Member - Central and Corporate.

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development reminded Members of the previous agreement to invite Councillor K Wakefield to quarterly meetings to discuss issues within his portfolio. This also coincided with quarterly financial and performance information which was appended to the agenda in reports of the Director of Resources and Head of Policy and Performance.

The Chair welcomed the following to the meeting:

Doug Meeson – Chief Officer (Financial Management)
Julie Meakin – Chief Commercial Services Officer
James Rogers – Assistant Chief Executive (Planning, Policy and Improvement)
Richard Moss-Blundell – Head of Human Resources

Doug Meeson gave the Board a brief overview of issues in relation to the financial report and brought Members' attention to the following issues:

- The development of accountability aspects in financial reporting.
- The more in depth financial information provided by Chief Officers.
- Statement of Budget Risks.

- It was reported that the position at the end of the last financial year had been an improvement on the previous and larger than minimum reserves had been retained. There was a need to review reserves.
- The Housing Revenue Account.
- Council Tax collection – it was reported that this had been good in spite of the recession.
- Schools spending
- Collection of Non-Domestic Rates

In response to a question regarding the employment and associated costs of agency staff to the Council, it was reported that they could be employed for a variety of reasons such as sickness cover and assistance during peak working periods.

James Rogers was introduced to the meeting and gave an overview of the Quarter 1 Performance Report. Issues highlighted included the following:

- Council Business Plan Performance Indicators
- Analysis of efficiency
- Leadership of the City
- Central and Corporate Performance Indicators

Further to queries regarding staff appraisals, It was reported that details of the numbers of staff who had received appraisals over the past year would be sought.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Keith Wakefield, Leader of the Council to the meeting. He informed the Board of current areas of overspending, particularly in Children's Services and Adults Social Care and also made reference to the emergency budget in June and the anticipated scale of public services spending cuts which would be announced in October. It was reported that the scale of reductions would be clearer in November/December 2010.

In response to Members comments and questions, the following issues were discussed:

- Possible reconfiguration of public services and integrated services across West Yorkshire and also at a regional level.
- Challenges facing Children's Services and Adult Social Care which were both demand led services.
- Staff appraisals and staff development. Richard Moss-Blundell updated the Board on the position with staff appraisals following disappointment expressed regarding the lack of engagement at the time of the last staff survey. Appraisal co-ordinators had been identified across each service area and encouraging progress had been made. There had been a change to reporting systems which had provided a more consistent approach and all staff should receive an appraisal.
- Investment in IT

- The 'One Council' Approach

The Chair thanked all those present for this item.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

(Councillors Bentley, L Carter, Chastney and Hamilton joined the meeting at 10.25 a.m.; Councillor Lowe joined the meeting at 10.35 a.m.)

20 Vision for Leeds 2011 to 2030 - progress with development and next steps

The report of the Director of Leeds Initiative informed the Board that this was the 3rd Vision for Leeds and gave a progress update and outlined the next steps including the public consultation phase.

The Chair welcomed Martin Dean, Deputy Director Leeds Initiative and Sally Corcoran, Planning, Policy and Improvement to the meeting.

It was reported that there were 3 areas of major change to the Vision:

- Environment – Climate Change Strategy
- Economy – Change in what can be achieved and effects of the recession
- Population growth – Leeds population could reach one million by 2030

Consultation had been held with key stakeholders and the following issues had been highlighted:

- For the Leeds economy to be prosperous and sustainable
- That communities should be safe, healthy and successful with opportunity for people to progress
- That by 2030 Leeds would be internationally recognised as the best city in Britain

The Board was informed of the timetable for the remainder of the consultation period and in response to comments and questions, the following issues were discussed:

- The last time the Vision was produced over 2,000 questionnaires were received giving feedback. It was not anticipated that there would be as many questionnaires on this occasion due to the increased use of social media.
- Consulting harder to reach groups and those not usually targeted for such consultation.
- How the Vision would be used to set policy and deliver services.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

21 Scrutiny of Various Procurement Issues

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Development referred to the Board's request to invite Procurement Officers to discuss issues relating to procurement and the update on revisions to Contract Procedure rules including the involvement of Elected Members in the procurement process.

The Chair welcomed the following to the meeting:

- Wayne Baxter, Chief Procurement Officer
- Dean Backhouse, Procurement Compliance and Registration Manager

In brief summary and in response to Members comments and questions, the following issues were discussed:

- Monitoring of previous scrutiny recommendations relating to procurement
- Contract Procedure Rules – the code of practice included consultation with Elected Members and guidelines on how to do so.
- Program of negotiation with existing contracts – it was reported that the Council was aiming to achieve at least a stand still on costs with existing contracts
- Sourcing local firms – this was affected by European Directives where contracts above a certain level had to be available to anyone across Europe.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

(Councillors L Carter and A Gabriel left the meeting at 11.55 a.m. and 12.00 p.m. respectively, during the discussion on this item)

22 Work Programme

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development detailed the Board's Work Programme. Also attached was the Forward Plan of Key Decisions and recent Executive Board Minutes.

Members attention was brought to the following items that would be considered at the October meeting of the Board:

- Shared Services
- DECATS – including Review of Communications

It was also reported that the new Chief Executive, Tom Riordan would be invited to a future meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

Minutes approved at the meeting
held on 4 October 2010

23 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday, 4 October 2010.