

SCRUTINY BOARD (RESOURCES AND COUNCIL SERVICES)

MONDAY, 27TH APRIL, 2015

PRESENT: Councillor P Grahame in the Chair

Councillors N Dawson, R Grahame,
J Jarosz, A Khan, A Lowe, C Macniven,
T Wilford and R Wood

76 Late Items

There were no late items.

77 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared to the meeting.

78 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Bentley and J Cummins.

Councillor R Grahame substituted for Councillor J Cummins.

79 Minutes - 23 February 2015

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2015 be confirmed as a correct record.

80 External publication of employee interests for High Risk posts

The Director of Resources submitted a paper addressing issues previously raised by Scrutiny Board.

The following were in attendance to respond to Members' questions:

- Councillor Peter Gruen, Executive Member, Neighbourhoods, Planning and Personnel
- Alex Watson, Head of Human Resources.

In summary the main areas of discussion were:

- Whether the definition for 'senior officer', currently set at Chief Officer level and above was appropriate, and whether less senior officers, also in a position of influence, should be within scope.
- The scope for adding to the 'Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests' by Members item on formal committee agendas to also include declarations of relevant interests by officers.

- The scope for introducing limitations regarding employees leaving the authority and moving into organisations which might have a financial and/or contractual relationship with the Council.
- Scope for strengthening the advice that former employees should not be afforded preferential access to information by former colleagues.

RESOLVED –

- (a) To agree the suggestions that certain committees and meetings are appropriate for verbal declarations of interest by officers, (in addition to Planning decision meetings), and agree that this would be subject to Trade Unions consultation.
- (b) To agree the proposals regarding measures to limit risks where council staff take up employment with ‘competitor’ organisations.
- (c) To agree the proposals for communication of officer responsibility for handling confidential information, with an emphasis on release of information to ex council staff
- (d) To agree that breach of confidentiality cases arising are reported to Chief Officer HR.

81 Interpreting and Translation Services

The Chief Officer Customer Services submitted a report providing progress of recommendations made by the Scrutiny Board in July 2014.

The following were in attendance to respond to Members’ questions

- Councillor Peter Gruen, Executive Member, Neighbourhoods, Planning and Personnel
- Jayne Grant, CITU Co-ordinator
- Geoff Turnbull, Senior Policy and Performance Officer.

In summary the main areas of discussion were:

- The approval and subsequent implementation of the Interpreting and Translation Service Policy.
- The development of British Sign Language video interpreting service.
- The use of trained interpreting volunteers.

RESOLVED –

- (a) To congratulate the service on the development and implementation of the Interpreting and Translation Service Policy.
- (b) To ask that progress on the policy and other initiatives be brought back to the relevant Scrutiny Board in 6 months’ time.

82 Employee Engagement, Investors in People and Manager Challenge Results for 2014 and culture change priorities for 2015

The Director of Strategy and Resources submitted a report detailing the results of the Employee Engagement Survey for 2014 and also proposals for Manager Challenge.

The following were in attendance to respond to Members' questions

- Councillor Peter Gruen, Executive Member, Neighbourhoods, Planning and Personnel
- Jane Stageman, Head of Human Resources.

In summary the main areas of discussion were:

- The improvement in the response rate to 45% of all employees
- The 5th re-accreditation from IIP.
- The four highest performing areas.
- The two lowest performance areas.
- The success achieved against a backdrop of staff leaving and budget cuts.
- The different response rates and outcomes between those I.T enabled and those not.
- The next phase of Manager Challenge.
- The need for greater Member/officer dialogue in driving the values of the organisation.
- The need to drive the value of cross departmental work and for employees to see themselves as working for Leeds City Council rather than a specific service.
- Analysis of returns from civil enforcement staff.

RESOLVED – That the appropriate Scrutiny Board regularly monitor this area of work.

83 Effective Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules

The Chief Officer PPPU and Procurement and Chief Officer Strategy and Commissioning submitted a report relating to waivers, extensions and contract management. The report also considered contract management in place for Strategy and Commissioning in Public Health.

The following were in attendance to respond to Members' questions

- Councillor Peter Gruen, Executive Member, Neighbourhoods, Planning and Personnel
- Andy Eaton, Executive Manager, Legal Services
- Bridget Emery, Chief Officer Strategy and Commissioning
- Chris Dickinson, Head of Commissioning.

In summary the main areas of discussion were:

- An understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities for contract management within Directorates and the advice role provided by PPPU/PU.
- The accountability of those undertaking procurement.
- The difference between sensible and managed contract extensions and those due to poor management.
- The development of a tool kit to manage waivers, introduced since the last scrutiny board meeting.
- The planned audit work for this municipal year in relation to contract management.
- The concept of commissioning for outcomes.
- A one Commissioning team within the Council with single responsibility and associated timescales.

RESOLVED – That the appropriate Scrutiny Board receives further updates in relation to the development of an Integrated Peoples' Commissioning Service.

84 Community Centres Pricing and Lettings Policy

The Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) submitted a report providing an update on the introduction of a new pricing policy for community centres within the citizens and communities portfolio.

The following were in attendance to respond to Members' questions

- Councillor Peter Gruen, Executive Member, Neighbourhoods, Planning and Personnel
- Rory Barke, Area Leader
- Sarn Warbis, Senior Policy and Performance Manager.

In summary the main areas of discussion were:

- The introduction of a new simplified three point pricing policy for community centres from 1 May 2015.
- The introduction of an on-line booking system.
- Key holders.
- The lettings staff.

RESOLVED – To receive regular updates in relation to the management of lettings.

85 Date and Time of Next Meeting

To be confirmed.

86 Chair's Closing Remarks

Closing the meeting the Chair thanked Board members for their hard work. Specifically the Board thanked Councillor JL Carter for his work for the City. A letter of appreciation would be sent. Thanks were also given to Councillor R Grahame for being a substitute for this Board.

(The meeting concluded at 11.45 am).