

SCRUTINY BOARD (STRATEGY AND RESOURCES)

MONDAY, 19TH SEPTEMBER, 2016

PRESENT: Councillor K Groves in the Chair

Councillors S Bentley, D Cohen, H Hayden,
J McKenna, S McKenna, A Sobel,
C Towler, E Tunnicliffe and T Wilford

19 Late Items

There were no late items or supplementary information presented.

20 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

21 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence had been received on behalf of Councillor D Nagle, with notification received that Councillor C Towler would be attending as a substitute member.

22 Minutes - 18 July 2016

Minutes from the meeting held on 18 July 2016 were agreed as an accurate and correct record.

There were no specific matters arising identified or discussed at the meeting.

23 Chairs Update

The Chair gave a brief update on some of the activity undertaken since the last Scrutiny Board meeting, with specific reference to on-going discussions regarding procurement and associated service reviews.

RESOLVED – That the Chair's update be noted.

24 Effective Procurement

The Scrutiny Board considered the report from the Chief Officer, Projects, Programmes and Procurement Unit (PPPU) in relation to effective procurement. The report presented:

- An update on PPPU's access to council feeder systems following the intervention of the Scrutiny Board.
- Improvements to the council's financial management system (FMS) to reduce off contract spend.
- Ongoing work to reduce non-contract spend

Minutes approved as a correct record
at the meeting held on Monday, 21st November, 2016

- An analysis of the use of Waivers of the Contracts Procedure Rules (CPRs) April 2015 to March 2016

The following officers were in attendance for the discussion and to address questions from the Scrutiny Board:

- Jo McCann – Portfolio Manager – Projects, Programmes and Procurement Unit
- Dominic Bailey – Senior Portfolio Officer – Projects, Programmes and Procurement Unit

The officers provided an outline of the key issues within the report. A discussion followed and a range of matters were discussed, including:

- The significant reduction in the level/ number of contact waivers in the current year, compared to previous performance.
- The level of member involvement in monitoring compliance with Contract Procedure Rules.
- Opportunities for fraudulent practice within current procurement / order raising arrangements.
- Checks and balances in place within the processes for placing orders up to the value of £10k.
- The use of internal suppliers and awareness of the requirements within the Contract Procedure Rules.
- Concerns regarding the number of Council Officers authorised to place orders within current arrangements.
- The relationship and coordination between procurement, order raising and payment processes.
- The Council's programme of Support Services Reviews, including the 'systems' workstream.
- The use of contact waivers allowable within the Contract Procedure Rules and associated outcomes and instances where 'required information' was not provided.
- The availability and delivery of mandatory staff training around Contact Procedure Rules.

In concluding the discussion, the Chair thanked the officers for their attendance and contribution to the meeting.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That the Scrutiny Board give more detailed consideration to the level and use of Contact Waivers and the associated or underpinning reasons.

(NB Cllr D Cohen joined the meeting at 10:05am, during consideration of this item).

25 Work Schedule

The Principal Scrutiny adviser presented the Scrutiny Board's proposed work schedule for the remainder of the municipal year 2016/17.

The Board specifically discussed the next steps and stages to its inquiry around 'commissioning' and the links to procurement. This specifically included:

- Details of recent decommissioning activity.
- Commissioning opportunities with other partners/ local authorities.
- Member involvement in the commissioning process.

The Chair agreed to undertake further work on the Board's behalf, in preparation for more detailed consideration later in the year.

RESOLVED – That the work schedule presented be agreed, subject to any scheduling decisions necessary by the Chair.

26 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday, 24 October 2016 at 10:00am (pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9:30am).

The meeting closed at 11:35am.