

## **SCRUTINY BOARD (STRATEGY AND RESOURCES)**

**THURSDAY, 22ND JUNE, 2017**

**PRESENT:** Councillor P Grahame in the Chair

Councillors S Bentley, A Garthwaite,  
R Grahame, P Harrand, J McKenna,  
D Nagle, A Smart, C Towler, T Wilford and  
R Wood

### **1 Chair's Opening Remarks**

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all those present to the Scrutiny Board's first meeting of the new municipal year.

The Chair invited all those present to give a short introduction.

### **2 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared to the meeting.

### **3 Late Items**

The Board received the following supplementary information in relation to the 'Financial Health Monitoring' item (minute 9 refers):

- (a) Treasury Management Outturn Report 2016/17
- (b) Financial Performance – Outturn Financial Year ended 21 March 2017
- (c) Financial Health Monitoring 2017/18 – Month 2 (May 2017)

It was confirmed that the supplementary information had been provided to all members of the Scrutiny Board and made available on the Council's website.

### **4 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes**

Apologies for absence for the meeting had had been received as follows:

- Cllr A Sobel, with Cllr R Grahame attending as a substitute member.
- Cllr E Tunnicliffe, with Cllr C Towler attending as a substitute member.

### **5 Minutes - 22 May 2017**

The Board considered the draft minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2017. There were no matters arising identified and discussed at the meeting.

**RESOLVED** – The draft minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2017 be agreed as an accurate record.

### **6 Scrutiny Board Terms of Reference**

Minutes approved as a correct record  
at the meeting held on Friday, 21st July, 2017

The Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support submitted a report presenting the Board's terms of reference as agreed by Council in May 2017.

**RESOLVED** – That the Scrutiny Board's terms of reference be noted.

## **7 Co-opted Members**

The Board received and considered a report from the Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support seeking the Board's formal consideration for the appointment of Co-opted members.

The Board was informed of the following options for the appointment of co-opted members:

- Up to five non-voting co-opted members for a term of office that does not go beyond the next Annual meeting of council; and/or
- Up to two non-voting co-opted members for a term of office that relates to the duration of a particular and specific scrutiny inquiry.

The Board discussed the options for appointing co-opted members, including that 'co-option would normally only be appropriate where the co-opted member has some specialist skill or knowledge, which would be of assistance to the Scrutiny Board'.

As part of this discussion, the Principal Scrutiny Adviser also outlined other options, including the use of 'expert witnesses', to broaden input into any of the Board's agreed areas of inquiry.

**RESOLVED** –

- (a) To note the information presented and options available for the appointment of co-opted members.
- (b) To consider the appointment of co-opted members on an ad-hoc basis for any inquiries where it was deemed appropriate.

## **8 Sources of Work**

The Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support submitted a report which provided information and guidance on potential sources of work to be developed within the Board's work programme for 2017/18.

Appended to the report was a copy of the Vision for scrutiny at Leeds 2017/18, Best Council Plan update for 2017/18 and a draft work schedule for 2017/18.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Cllr Mohammed Rafique (Executive Member for Employment, Skills and Opportunity);
- Neil Evans (Director – Strategy and Resources);

- Shaid Mahmood (Chief Officer - Communities);
- John Mulcahy (Head of Head of Elections, Licensing and Registration);
- Doug Meeson (Chief Officer – Financial Services)

Those in attendance gave a summary of their areas of responsibility, including priority areas and some of the financial and organisational issues facing the Council.

The Scrutiny Board considered the information presented with the agenda and the details outlined at the meeting. A number of specific issues were highlighted and discussed, including:

- Apprenticeships (for newly recruited and existing employees) and the apprenticeships levy – further details requested;
- Equalities – in particular work around ensuring Leeds City Council has a workforce that is representative of the population;
- A recent report, *LGBT: Inclusive City*;
- Emergency planning and business continuity – with specific reference to (a) building security and (b) recent events in Manchester (Manchester Arena) and London (Grenfell Tower);
- Specific service areas (Finance, ICT, Human Resources, Communications (including International Relations), Civic Enterprise and Projects, Programmes and Procurement Unit (PPPU));
- General application of Contract Procedural Rules and levels of ‘off-contract’ spending.
- Invest to save developments – and the specific application in relation to ICT developments;
- Matters in relation to the Prevent strategy and the Hate Crime Prevention Agenda – further details requested;
- Elections, voter registration rates and work targeting ‘hard to reach’ groups – further details requested;
- Licencing policy review (due January / February 2018) and monitoring;
- Business rate revenue and appeals;
- General overview of the Council’s financial health;
- Specific reference to Neighbourhood Networks, including whether or not services were the subject to grant funding or commissioned – further confirmation requested.

## **RESOLVED –**

- (a) To request additional information in the areas identified at the meeting – specifically in relation to:
- The Apprenticeships Levy;
  - Hate crime prevention;
  - Voter registration rates and work targeting ‘hard to reach’ groups; and,
  - Funding arrangements for Neighbourhood Networks.

- (b) That the details discussed at the meeting be used to review the Board's draft work schedule to be represented at a future meeting.

## **9 Financial Health Monitoring**

The Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support submitted a report introducing a suite of financial reports which was presented and considered by the Executive Board on 21 June 2017, as follows:

- Treasury Management Outturn Report 2016/17
- Financial Performance – Outturn Financial Year ended 21 March 2017
- Financial Health Monitoring 2017/18 – Month 2 (May 2017)

The Chief Officer (Financial Services) was present for consideration of this item and presented the reports to the Board.

Members of the Scrutiny Board raised and discussed a number of areas, including:

- Levels of Council reserves;
- Overspend in Children and Families Directorate
- Treasury Management;
- The Council's borrowing powers and the balance between long-term and short-term loans;
- Invest to save opportunities; and,
- Business rates – particularly in relation to the potential impact of outstanding appeals.

### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the details presented be noted.
- (b) That the following areas identified in the discussion be considered as part of the Board's overall work schedule for 2017/18:
- i. Treasury Management.
  - ii. Business rates and the potential impact of outstanding appeals.

*NB Councillor Nagle left the meeting at 11:30am during consideration of this item.*

## **10 Work Schedule**

The Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support submitted a report detailing a draft work schedule for the 2017/18 municipal year.

Reflecting on the various discussions during the meeting, the Chair highlighted the additional information identified to be sought and circulated to the membership of the Scrutiny Board and substitute members attending the meeting. The Chair also highlighted Business Rates as a specific area of focus for the Scrutiny Board.

In addition, the Chair proposed an additional meeting to consider the Council's immediate emergency / contingency planning response to recent matters in relation to Grenfell Tower.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That plans be put in place for an additional meeting of the Board to consider the robustness of the Council's immediate emergency / contingency planning arrangements, with a specific focus on recent events in relation to Grenfell Tower.
- (b) That, reflecting the matters highlighted and discussed at the meeting, a revised work schedule be drafted in consultation with the Chair, and submitted to the July meeting of the Scrutiny Board.

**11 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Friday, 21 July 2017 at 10.30am (pre-meeting for Board Members at 10.00am)

The meeting closed at 11:40am.