

SCRUTINY BOARD (RESOURCES AND COUNCIL SERVICES)

MONDAY, 16TH DECEMBER, 2013

PRESENT: Councillor P Grahame in the Chair

Councillors S Bentley, N Dawson, J Hardy,
A Khan, A Lowe, C Macniven and R Wood

52 Late Items

There were no late items.

53 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared to the meeting.

54 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor JL Carter.

55 Minutes - 18 November 2013

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2013 be confirmed as a correct record.

56 Executive Board Minutes - 6 November 2013

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Executive Board held on 6 November 2013 be noted.

57 Members ICT

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development provided an update on the proposed ICT support arrangements for Members. Members also received a report on this matter previously discussed by Member Management Committee on 12 November 2013.

The following were in attendance and responded to Board Members questions and comments:

- Councillor Peter Gruen, Executive Member, Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services
- Dylan Roberts, Chief Officer ICT
- Andy Keightley, Business Relationship Manager.

In brief summary, the main areas of discussion were:

- Council Tablet usage abroad

- Review of support arrangements.

Member Management Committee had resolved at its meeting on 12 November 2013 to recommend that Members be recharged the full cost of using tablet devices abroad. This was not supported by the Scrutiny Board or the Executive Member. It was therefore recommended that data roaming abroad be allowed and that Members not be charged for costs incurred if related solely to their work as an Elected Member of the City Council.

In relation to support arrangements, the Scrutiny Board recommended that the opening hours of the Drop-In Centre in the Civic Hall be extended to a minimum of 8am to 8pm and that the out of hours services provided by the ICT Service Centre be reviewed with the intention that out of hours support is increased.

RESOLVED –

- (i) To recommend that data roaming abroad be allowed and that Members not be charged for costs incurred if related solely to their work as an Elected Member of the City Council.
- (ii) To recommend that the opening hours of the Drop-In Centre in the Civic Hall be extended to a minimum of 8am to 8pm and that the out of hours services provided by the ICT Service Centre be reviewed with the intention that out of hours support is increased.
- (iii) That officers report back to this Scrutiny Board in February 2014 progress on the above.

58 Grant Expenditure with Third Sector Bodies

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report providing an update on grant expenditure with third sector bodies. Attached to the report was detailed information provided by finance including a summary of total expenditure for 2012/13, detail of specific expenditure over £10,000, and a schedule of all grants paid in that financial year.

The following officers were in attendance and responded to Board Members questions and comments:

- Maureen Taylor, Chief Officer, Financial Management
- Anne McMaster, Executive Officer, (Citizens and Communities).

In brief summary, the main areas of discussion were:

- The criteria used to support individual grant giving.
- The existence of different approaches to grant giving in Directorates.
- The difference between grants and commissioned services.
- Whether rigorous financial checks are undertaken on organisations receiving grants to assess their solvency.

- The work currently being undertaken corporately by the Corporate Commissioning Group.

It was agreed that the Board's initial thoughts around the current arrangements for grant giving would be incorporated into any comments provided to the Executive as part of scrutiny of the budget.

The Scrutiny Board also agreed to invite representatives from City Development, Environment & Housing and Adult Social Care (as high grant givers) to its February meeting to discuss the issues raised.

A representative from the Corporate Commissioning Group would also be invited.

RESOLVED –

- (i) To flag up the Scrutiny Boards initial thoughts when responding to the Executive's initial budget proposals.
- (ii) To undertake further Scrutiny in February inviting representatives from City Development, Environment & Housing and Adult Social Care and the Corporate Commissioning Group.

59 Work Schedule

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development presented the draft work schedule for the forthcoming municipal year.

RESOLVED – That the Board's work schedule be updated to reflect the work areas identified during today's meeting.

60 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday, 20th January 2014 10.45am (Pre-meeting for all Board Members at 10.30am)

(The meeting concluded at 11.00am).