

SCRUTINY BOARD (RESOURCES AND COUNCIL SERVICES)

TUESDAY, 22ND JULY, 2014

PRESENT: Councillor P Grahame in the Chair

Councillors J L Carter, J Cummins,
N Dawson, J Jarosz, A Khan, S Lay,
A Lowe and C Macniven

11 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair thanked Members of the Board for agreeing to the change of date for this meeting.

12 Late Items

There were no late items.

13 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared to the meeting.

14 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Bentley, T Wilford and R Wood.

Councillor S Lay substituted for Councillor S Bentley.

15 Minutes - 23 June 2014

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2014 be confirmed as a correct record.

16 Executive Board Minutes - 25 June 2014

RESOLVED – That the Executive Board minutes of 25 June 2014 be noted.

17 Financial Performance - Outturn Financial year ended 31 March 2014

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report presenting the Council's financial outturn position for 2013/2014 for both revenue and capital elements, whilst also outlining details regarding Housing Revenue Account and spending on schools.

Helen Mylan, Head of Finance was in attendance.

RESOLVED – That the outturn position as detailed within the submitted report be noted.

18 People Plan Performance Reporting

The Chief Officer (HR) submitted a report detailing the latest position against four areas; FTE staffing, agency, overtime and attendance for the first 2 months of the financial year.

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

- Dave Almond, Head of Human Resources
- Sophie Thompson, Team Manager (HR).

RESOLVED –

- (a) To note the current position as detailed within the submitted report
- (b) To request that the detail shown in appendix 2 of the submitted report in relation to Agency Challenge Panels are updated and issued to Board Members
- (c) That a Working Group of the Scrutiny Board be established to receive further People Plan performance reports.

19 Enterprise Leeds

The Chief Officer Civic Enterprise Leeds submitted a report on trading and enterprise across the Council.

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

- Julie Meakin, Chief Officer (Civic Enterprise)
- Many Snaith, Head of Catering and Cleaning.

In summary the main areas of discussion were:

- Growth, turnover and profit
- Assurances around the integrity of the accounts and the role of the Council's statutory Section 151 officer (The Deputy Chief Executive)
- The offer from the Deputy Chief Executive Officer to meet with any Member for further briefings on the matter of the accounts
- The level of tendering and open competition with regards work undertaken
- The use of new technologies
- The use of the third sector.

RESOLVED – To note the contents of the report and to request additional information in relation to tendering and growth.

20 Interpreting and Translation Services

The Chief Officer Customer Services submitted a report updating the Scrutiny Board on the progress of the Interpreting and Translation Team policy following the recommendations made by this Scrutiny Board in April 2014.

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

- Jayne Grant, CITU Co-ordinator
- Lee Hemsworth, Chief Officer (Customer Access)
- Geoff Turnbull, Senior Policy and Performance Officer.

In summary the main areas of discussion were:

- The intention to submit a report to Executive Board in September for approval of the policy
- The development of British Sign Language video interpreting
- The possibilities of using trained volunteers to reduce costs and enhance the service.

RESOLVED –

- (a) To note the contents of the report
- (b) To congratulate the team on the development of the policy

21 Recommendation Tracking - Scrutiny Inquiry on Welfare Reform

The Chief Officer Statutory Housing and Chief Officer Welfare and Benefits submitted a joint report setting out the progress made in relation to the recommendations arising from the Scrutiny Board Inquiry on Welfare reform Benefit Changes.

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

- Steve Carey, Chief Officer (Welfare and Benefits)
- Simon Costigan, Chief Officer (Strategic Housing)
- Mandy Sawyer, Head of Neighbourhood Services
- Dave Levitt, Recovery Manager
- Simon Swift, Service Manager.

In summary the main areas of discussion were:

- A resume of the general developments since the Board's last discussion on this topic in July 2013
- Statistics around Council Tax and Housing Leeds' rent collection
- The future pressures facing Discretionary Housing Payments
- The current process for applying for deductions from national benefits in relation to Council Tax arrears and the legal requirement for

Council's to secure a Liability Order from the Magistrates Court and the resulted costs placed on the debt

RESOLVED –

- (a) To note the contents of the report
- (b) That the Chair writes again to the Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions in relation to the process of applying for deductions from national benefits
- (c) That those recommendations made by the Scrutiny Board classified as complete will no longer be tracked.

(Councillor Lowe left the meeting during the consideration of this item.)

(Councillor Jarosz and Councillor JL Carter left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.)

22 Corporate Centre Contact Performance

The Head of Service Corporate Contact Centre submitted a report updating the Scrutiny Board on the performance of the Corporate Contact Centre since April 2013

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

- Lee Hemsworth, Chief Officer (Customer Access)
- Barry Ibbetson, Head of Contact Centre.

In summary the main areas of discussion were:

- The reasons for the drop in performance in 2013/14 and the measures to address this
- The challenges brought by the increased use of self service and the consequences for call lengths
- Staff retention
- The management of spikes in activity
- Plans for creating three Centres of Excellence to include, Health and Wellbeing, Welfare, Benefits and Revenues and Environment and Community Infrastructure
- Plans for other services to join the Contact Centre

RESOLVED –

- (a) To note the contents of the report
- (b) That further information be provided with regards staff leavers.

23 Work Schedule

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

29th September 2014 Meeting

To add a discussion on the planned new performance indicators to be used to performance manage the council and direct resources

27th October 2014 Meeting

Mr Richard Corbett MEP to attend the Scrutiny Board.

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

24 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday, 29th September 2014 at 10.00am (Pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.30am)

(The meeting concluded at 12.30pm).