## SCRUTINY BOARD (RESOURCES AND COUNCIL SERVICES)

## MONDAY, 22ND DECEMBER, 2014

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

Councillors J L Carter, N Dawson, R Grahame, G Hussain, A Khan, A Lowe, T Wilford and R Wood

### 50 Late Items

There were no late items.

## 51 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared to the meeting.

### 52 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Bentley, J Cummins, J Jarosz, and C Macniven.

Councillor R Grahame substituted for J Cummins and Councillor G Hussain substituted for Councillor C Macniven.

#### 53 Minutes - 24 November 2014

**RESOLVED –** That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 November be confirmed as a correct record.

#### 54 Initial Budget Proposals for 2015/16

The Deputy Chief Executive presented a report setting out the Initial Budget proposals for 2015/16 within the context of the Medium Term Financial Strategy for the period 2015/16 - 2016/17.

The following were in attendance to respond to Members' questions

- Alan Gay, Deputy Chief Executive
- Doug Meeson, Chief Officer (Financial Services)

In summary the main areas of discussion were:

- Confirmation that the forecast funding envelope, taking into account other funding sources was a reduction of £36.9 million.
- The huge range of proposals in each of the Directorates to achieve efficiencies of £23.4 million.

- The estimates level of reserves, comparisons with other Core Cities as a proportion of net budget and the measures being taken and considered to increase those reserves.
- The level of 'ear marked' reserves.
- The management of the proposed reduction of 475 fte posts.
- The current trend in business rate income and the levels of rate avoidance.
- The management of demand increases.
- The level of subsidy given to non-statutory services.
- How Leeds City Council ranks in terms of levels of fees and charges and the need to undertake further work in this area given that the council ranks low.

**RESOLVED** – That the Initial Budget Proposals be noted and any comments from this Scrutiny Board and other Scrutiny Boards be forwarded to the Executive for consideration at the February Executive Board.

# 55 How We Work - overview / summary

The Head of Business Improvement submitted a report providing an overview of the three main programmes of work making up the 'How We Work' agenda, namely; Customer Access, Better Business management and Changing the Workplace.

The following were in attendance to respond to Members' questions

- Councillor Peter Gruen, Executive Member, Neighbourhoods, Planning and Personnel
- Jane Watson, Head of Business Improvement

Members viewed a short film outlining the programme followed by discussion.

In summary the main areas of discussion were:

- The role of the Best Council design Team, chaired by Alan Gay and championed by Councillor Peter Gruen.
- The importance of the programme in terms of helping the Council deliver on its budget.
- The acknowledgement that many of the initiatives had been championed by this Scrutiny Board over a number of years, particularly with regards to the better use of assets, reducing duplication and greater integration.
- The use of an action tracker to measure progress of the programmes and the potential role for this Scrutiny Board in monitoring performance.
- The acknowledgement that this was a significant change programme and whilst directorates were responding more positively now there are still varying levels of enthusiasm and 'buy in'.

- The role Scrutiny could have in countering resistance to change and encouraging an increase in the pace of change.
- The need to engage with all staff groups on the change programme.

# RESOLVED -

- (i) That this Scrutiny Board writes to the Chief Executive expressing its full support for the programme and its willingness to help drive change
- (ii) That the Head of Scrutiny works with the Head of Business Improvement in the drawing up of a future reporting back timetable.

## 56 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 including an update on the management of Community lettings.

# 57 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday, 26 January 2015 at 10.00 am (Pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.30 am)

(The meeting concluded at 11.40 am).