

SCRUTINY BOARD (STRATEGY AND RESOURCES)

MONDAY, 24TH APRIL, 2017

PRESENT: Councillor K Groves in the Chair

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

83 Late Items

There were no late items.

84 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of pecuniary interests.

85 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor S McKenna and Councillor R Wood.

Councillor C Towler was in attendance as a substitute member for Councillor S McKenna.

86 Minutes - 20 March 2017

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2017 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

87 Minutes of Executive Board - 22 March 2017 and 19 April 2017

RESOLVED – That the minutes from the Executive Board meetings held on 22 March 2017 and 19 April 2017, be noted.

88 Chair's Update

The Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support submitted a report that provided an opportunity for the Chair to update other members of the Scrutiny Board on any specific activity since the previous Board meeting, not otherwise included elsewhere on the agenda.

The Chair raised the following matters:

- Meetings to discuss the development of Best Council Plan (BCP) Performance Indicators and involvement of Community Committees.
- Completion of the draft report on Commissioning, which would be formally considered by the Scrutiny Board at a future meeting, alongside any advice from the appropriate Director.

RESOLVED – That the Chair's update be noted.

89 Financial Health Monitoring 2016/17

The Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support submitted a report that introduced the 'Financial health monitoring 2016/17 – Provisional Outturn' report considered by Executive Board at its meeting on 19 April 2017.

The following representatives were in attendance for consideration of this item:

- Councillor James Lewis – Executive Member for Strategy and Resources
- Doug Meeson – Chief Officer, Financial Services
- Richard Ellis, Head of Finance – Corporate

The Executive Member gave a brief introduction to the report, highlighting a number of issues, including:

- The small overall underspend in 2016/17 – in part due to the windfall position from the Street Lighting PFI Contract;
- Bolstering the Council's financial reserves;
- Increased funding for Children's Services for 2017/18
- Longer-term issues to be addressed, including Looked After Children.

Members of the Scrutiny Board highlighted a number of matters and raised a series of queries, including:

- Making better use of historical data when considering future budgets (the number of placements for Looked After Children, highlighted as a specific example).
- The Council's support for small to medium sized companies through its approach to prompt payment.
- Levels of early payment discount.
- Further assurance requested in relation to the level of Council reserves and how the Council compares to comparable authorities.
- Further assurance needed regarding the 2017/18 budget levels and the likelihood of variances across the Council.
- More details associated with the costs for the redesign of refuse collection routes.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the Financial health monitoring 2016/17 – Provisional Outturn report and details discussed at the meeting, be noted.
- (b) That the Scrutiny Board be provided with further information in relation to the specific issues identified at the meeting, namely:
 - i. Further assurance in relation to the level of Council reserves.
 - ii. Further assurance about the 2017/18 budget levels and the likelihood of variances across the Council.
 - iii. Costs associated with the redesign of refuse collection routes.

90 Summary of Workforce issues in Leeds City Council

The Director of Resources and Housing submitted a report for consideration by the Scrutiny Board that provided an update on the Council's position across a range of workforce planning matters.

The following representatives were in attendance for consideration of this item:

- Councillor James Lewis – Executive Member for Strategy and Resources
- Tom Riordan – Chief Executive
- Lorraine Hallam – Chief Officer, Human Resources
- Alex Watson – Head of Human Resources

The Executive Member and Chief Executive gave a brief introduction, highlighting that the information presented provided a good overview of the workforce issues across the Council.

Members of the Scrutiny Board discussed the information provided and highlighted a number of matters and questions, including:

- Levels of staff retention and recruitment.
- Levels of staff vacancies and overtime payments.
- Details of the most recent staff survey results.
- The Council's relationship with employment agencies and personal service companies following recent changes in legislation.
- Measures deployed by the Council to help avoid compulsory redundancies.
- Pressures within specific work areas – for example social workers and across social worker teams.
- The Council's relationship with schools and the level of staff redundancies across Leeds.
- Succession planning during a period of continued austerity.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That a further report on agency workers, highlighting the impact of recent changes in legislation, be presented to the Scrutiny Board in October 2017.
- (b) That the Scrutiny Board be provided with further information in relation to the specific issues identified at the meeting, namely:
 - i. Further details on the level and use of overtime payments across the Council in the last 3 years.
 - ii. Details of the latest staff survey results.
 - iii. Details of the level of redundancies within Leeds schools over the last 3 years.

91 Work Schedule (April 2017)

The Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support submitted a report that summarised progress against the Scrutiny Board's work schedule for the current municipal year (2016/17), any outstanding matters and an assessment of matters to be considered as part of the work schedule for the forthcoming municipal year (2017/18).

The Board discussed arrangements for an additional meeting to formally consider its final report and recommendations on Commissioning, alongside any outstanding details from earlier discussions.

In terms of issues for 2017/18, the Board highlighted the following issues as possible considerations:

- Follow-up on the commissioning recommendations;
- Sickness rates / monitoring;
- Follow-up the suggestions arising from the budget/ Best Council Plan actions agreed by Executive Board.
- The Leeds £.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That an additional meeting be arranged to consider the Board's draft report and recommendations in relation to Commissioning.
- (b) That the potential issues for 2017/18 be considered as part of the initial planning for the appropriate Scrutiny Board.

92 Date and Time of Next Meeting

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Chair thanked all members of the Scrutiny Board for their attendance and contributions over the course of the year.

The date and time of the next meeting was to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 12:35pm.