

SCRUTINY BOARD (CENTRAL AND CORPORATE)

MONDAY, 6TH APRIL, 2009

PRESENT: Councillor M Dobson in the Chair

Councillors B Atha, J Bale, B Chastney,
P Davey, J Dowson, P Ewens, M Hamilton,
V Kendall, A Lowe, B Selby and
P Wadsworth

88 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed all in attendance to the April meeting of the Scrutiny Board (Central and Corporate).

89 Late Items

The Chair admitted to the agenda a report of the Director of Resources in relation to the Board's inquiry into attendance management. The report was not available at the time of agenda despatch and had been submitted as supplementary information (Minute No. 94 refers).

90 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

91 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was submitted by Councillor Bentley.

92 Minutes - 2nd March 2009

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd March 2009 be confirmed as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:

Additional resolution (c) to be inserted under Minute No 84. 'Fair Play Partnership Diversity Champion Project' to read

(c) All Members of the Executive Board to undergo this course.

93 Impact Assessments in the Decision Making Process

The Assistant Chief Executive (Planning, Policy and Improvement) submitted a report, which intended to address the Board's recommendation that 'The Head of Equality develops a realistic and deliverable approach to incorporating impact assessments into the Council's decision making process'.

Final Minutes – approved at the meeting held on 8th June 2009.

The Chair welcomed to the meeting, Lelir Yeung, Head of Equalities, to present the report.

The Board was advised that there was a legal requirement to undertake equality, diversity and community cohesion (EDCC) impact assessments. It was reported that a review had been undertaken and development of a two part process had been proposed, as follows:

- (1) Introduction of an equality assurance process; and
- (2) Full impact assessment process.

In addition, it was reported that the process would build on some of the work undertaken by the Head of Governance Services on impact assessments generally in the decision making process.

Members' questions and comments were then invited and the main areas of discussion were:

- Establishing links with the Council's community engagement programme.
- Building on work undertaken by the Council's Corporate Governance and Audit Committee.

RESOLVED – That the progress made by the Head of Equality in addressing the Board's recommendations, be noted.

94 Scrutiny Inquiry - Sickness Absence Management - Draft Final Report

Further to Minute No. 81 of the meeting held on 2nd March 2009, the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report, attaching the draft final report of the Board's inquiry into attendance management (appendix 1 refers).

In brief summary, the main areas of discussion were:

- The need for regular monitoring and breakdown of figures by department.
- The need for team leader's at all levels to take responsibility for managing staff attendance.
- Management of staff attendance through the appraisal process.
- Concern about the cost of sickness absence to the Council.

RESOLVED –

(a) That the Board agrees the final report and recommendations, subject to additions to recommendation 1 as follows:

'That the Council's most senior officers instil a culture where team leaders at all levels are expected, and are equipped with the skills, to take responsibility

for the attendance management of their staff, which will be included in their performance appraisal'.

(b) That the report be submitted to the Executive Board for a formal response.

(Councillor Lowe left the meeting at 10.32 am, during the consideration of this item).

95 Scrutiny Inquiry - Procurement, Outsourcing and Commissioning Services - Draft Final Report

Further to Minute No. 75 of the meeting held on 2nd February 2009, the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report, attaching the draft final report of the Board's inquiry into the procurement of services (appendix 1 refers).

In brief summary, the key areas of discussion were:

- The need to identify a suitable case study which reflects the current approach to the procurement of services.
- The need for all departments to adopt the One Council Commissioning Framework.
- Identifying services that could be undertaken in-house.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the Board agrees the final report and recommendations;
(b) That the report be submitted to the Executive Board for a formal response; and
(c) That a suitable case study be conducted which reflects the current approach to the procurement of services.

96 Scrutiny Inquiry - Member Development - Draft Final Report

Further to Minute No. 51 of the meeting held on 1st December 2009, the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report, attaching the draft final report of the Board's inquiry into member development (appendix 1 refers).

In brief summary, the main points of discussion were:

- Local authorities spend on member development, excluding staffing costs. Members acknowledged that Leeds' average spend per head was considerably lower than other authorities referred to in the report. Members commented that this was a positive achievement that should be reflected in the final report.
- Concern that only 21 out of 99 Councillors had signed up to Personal Development Plans (PDP). One Member emphasised that PDPs were a pre-requisite for good performance.

- Acknowledging the need for Members to attend compulsory training, e.g. planning and licensing, in addition to other types of training that was provided.
- The need for Members to appraise their own training requirements.
- The extent to which the electorate determined whether Members had the appropriate skills and training.
- Concern that the term 'training' was too general and should only be used when referring to the type of training, e.g. planning or licensing training.

RESOLVED –

(a) That the Board agrees the final report and recommendations, subject to recognition of Leeds' spend on member development being considerably lower than other authorities referred to in the report and an addition to recommendation 3 as follows:

'That all Executive Board Members and group Whips undertake a PDP so as to demonstrate their support for member development as an ongoing process'.

(b) That the report be submitted to the Executive Board for a formal response.

(Councillor Davey left the meeting at 11.07 am, during the consideration of this item).

97 Work Programme, Forward Plan of Key Decisions and Executive Board Minutes

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a copy of the Board's work programme together with a relevant extract of the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1st March 2009 to 30th June 2009 and the minutes of the Executive Board meeting held on 4th March 2009.

One Member reported on the need for further work in relation to proposed academies currently in deficit. It was agreed that the issue be referred to the appropriate Scrutiny Board in the new municipal year.

There was a request that the Board considered various issues and anomalies in relation to travel arrangements for Members. It was agreed to refer this issue to the Chair of the Member Management Committee.

Members discussed the need to review the style of reports, types of language and terminology used by Council Officers. It was reported that the Member Management Committee was undertaking some work to address this issue.

RESOLVED – That the report and work programme be received and noted.

(The meeting concluded at 11.18 am).