

SCRUTINY BOARD (RESOURCES AND COUNCIL SERVICES)

MONDAY, 17TH DECEMBER, 2012

PRESENT: Councillor P Grahame in the Chair

Councillors S Bentley, J L Carter,
N Dawson, R Grahame, J Hardy, A Lowe,
C Macniven and R Wood

57 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone to the December meeting of the Scrutiny Board (Resources and Council Services).

58 Late Items

There were no late items

59 Declarations of Interest

In accordance with paragraphs 19-20 of the Members Code of Conduct, the following declaration was made by Councillor Ron Grahame in relation to Agenda item 9 as a local authority appointed member of West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service (minute 64 refers).

60 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

There were no apologies for absence

61 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED -That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 19th November 2010/2 be confirmed as a correct record.

62 Executive Board Minutes - 7th November 2012

RESOLVED -That the minutes of the Executive Board held on 7th November 2012 be noted.

63 Personal Service Companies

The Chief Officer HR presented to the Board an overview of the key issues in relation to personal service companies and how the Council engages for short term work.

The following were in attendance:

Daniel Hartley – Deputy Chief Officer HR and Head of HR Children’s Services
Alex Watson – Head of HR

In brief summary, the main issues of discussion were;

- The progress made to ensure that no permanent member of staff is being paid off payroll
- Why such arrangements were not challenged in the past
- The issue of ensuring guidelines are in place for senior officers to enable them to sensibly decide how to fill interim positions
- Long term skill planning to reduce the need for relying on external expertise
- The proposed changes to the Contract Procedure Rules
- The need to reflect revised arrangements in the Senior pay policy statement to be agreed by Full Council in 2013

RESOLVED

- (i) To note the contents of the report and endorse the proposals there in
- (ii) To recommend that the implementation of the proposals is a high priority for HR and Procurement and that HR, in conjunction with Audit and Procurement, report back to this Board by April 2013 on the implementation and adherence to the new arrangements.

64 Strategic and Financial Plan 2013/14 to 2016/17 Including Initial Budget Proposals for 2013

The Director of Resources presented a paper setting out the Initial Budget proposals for 2013/14 within the context of developing a financial plan for the period 2013/14 to 2016/17

The following were in attendance

Councillor Keith Wakefield – Leader of Council
Alan Gay – Director of Resources
Doug Meeson – Chief Officer (Financial Management)

In brief summary, the main issues of discussion were;

- An explanation on the make-up of the funding reductions for 2013/14 totalling £51.3m.
- Changes in the Council Tax Base and the governments Council Tax freeze grant
- The Welfare Reform changes and the management of the consequences of their implementation
- Assumptions around council tax collection and the consequences of not meeting targets
- The capacity for the Council to generate income either through increased trading of the raising of charges
- The capacity for shared services
- Grants to voluntary organisations and value for money
- The targeted pupil premium funding and its use.

RESOLVED

- (i) To note the Initial Budget proposals
- (ii) To submit any comments along with those from other Scrutiny Boards to the Executive as part of the Budget and Policy Framework procedure.

65 2012/13 Quarter Two Performance Report

The Assistant Chief Executive (Customer Access and Performance) introduced a summary of performance against the strategic priorities for the council.

The following were in attendance:

James Rogers – Assistant Chief Executive (Customer Access and Performance)

Doug Meeson - Chief Officer (Financial Management)

Daniel Hartley – Deputy Chief Officer HR and Head of HR Children’s Services

In brief summary, the main issues of discussion were;

- The Council Business Plan – Cross Council priorities
- The Council Business Plan – Directorate Priorities and Indicators

Specific discussion was held on;

- Sickness levels
- Processing time for Council Tax benefit/Housing Benefit new claims and updates
- Council Tax collection rates and Universal Credit
- Consultation on Key delegated decisions

RESOLVED – To note the Q2 performance information and the issues highlighted.

(Councillor R Wood left at the start of this item at 11.30 am
Councillor R Grahame left during the discussion on this item at 11.40am)

66 Work Schedule

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a copy of the Board's work schedule. A discussion on potential work items was held.

RESOLVED –

(i) To add to the work schedule the following items;

- Personal Service Companies (update on implementation)
- Grants Income generation

(ii) To authorise the Chair and the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development to refine and schedule these items as appropriate.

67 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED – To note the date of the next meeting as Monday 21st January at 10am

(All meetings to take place in the Civic Hall, Leeds, commencing at 10.00am)

(The meeting concluded at 12 noon)