

SCRUTINY BOARD (RESOURCES AND COUNCIL SERVICES)

MONDAY, 18TH NOVEMBER, 2013

PRESENT: Councillor P Grahame in the Chair

Councillors B Anderson, S Bentley,
J L Carter, N Dawson, J Hardy, M Harland,
A Lowe and C Macniven

42 Late Items

There were no late items. However additional papers had been circulated in relation to item 10, Draft Inquiry Report – Night Time Levy (Minute No. 49 refers)

The above document was not available at the time of agenda despatch, but was subsequently made available on the Council's website.

43 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations made at this point, however a declaration was submitted at a later point of the meeting. (Minute No. 47 refers)

44 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors A Khan and R Wood. Notification had been received that Councillor M Harland was substituting for Councillor A Khan and Councillor B Anderson for Councillor R Wood.

45 Minutes - 14 October 2013

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 October be confirmed as a correct record.

46 Executive Board Minutes - 9 October 2013

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Executive Board held on 9 October be noted.

47 Monitoring of Projected Savings

The Chief Officer, Financial Services submitted a report responding to a question raised at the Board's October meeting into what arrangements the Council has in place for the identification and monitoring of projected savings.

Maureen Taylor, Chief Officer, Financial Management, was in attendance.

In brief summary, the main areas of discussion were:

- That financial monitoring was at the heart of the Council's financial management arrangements.
- That the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee receives an annual report on these arrangements.
- That monthly projections are reported to the Executive Board.

In response to a specific question around instances where budget actions cannot be delivered or are delayed, it was reported that, directorates would be expected to find alternative savings/income to make up the shortfall. It was noted that there had been exceptional circumstances in the past where the extent of the shortfall was such that the service could not bridge the gap and in such circumstances identified savings either from other directorates or from central budgets could be applied to balance the financial position.

A discussion was also held on the use of virements. It was noted that a virement scheme existed within the Council's Financial Regulations within the Constitution and this would be circulated to Board Members.

During the course of this agenda item reference was made to public health contracts at which point Councillor A Lowe and J Hardy declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest. Councillor A Lowe in relation to her position as Chief Executive of Touchstone and Councillor J Hardy in relation to his employment with an organisation that receives funding from the City Council. Both Councillors left the room during the discussion on public health contracts.

RESOLVED – To note the contents of the report.

48 Interpreting and Translation Services

The Chief Officer Customer Services submitted a report providing an update on interpreting and translation services.

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

- Susan Murray, Head of Face to Face Contact, Customer Services
- Jayne Grant, Interpreting and Translation Team Co-ordinator.

In brief summary, the main areas of discussion were:

- The current demand for interpreting and translations services.
- The criteria adopted for approving requests for services and whether these were robust enough.
- The promotion of alternative solutions including the better use of on-line translation services and the promotion of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ELSOL) courses.
- Protocols used by front line staff to ensure entitlement.

RESOLVED – To support the on-going review of the interpretation and translation service and specifically to support;

- (i) Work to produce a formal policy, improve decision making in terms of spend and the work with colleagues in Legal services in terms of requirements for interpreting and translations for potential court cases.
- (ii) That further guidance is sought from Legal Services to see what the minimum requirements are in relation to safeguarding and legal cases.
- (iii) The development of a robust policy and criteria, making it clear to directorates when the Council does and does not provide interpreters and translations.
- (iv) That the policy includes a broad scope on types of sessions where interpreters and/or written translations should be provided e.g. child protection, safeguarding issues, legal cases, domestic violent, benefits etc. To also look at who makes the decisions of spend.
- (v) The review of current demand by service and how this can be prioritised by either the use of scripts in main languages answering the most frequently asked questions or looking at ways of rationalising use depending on the type of meeting.
- (vi) A review of risks involved if an interpreter or translation is not provided by ITT and how ITT can ensure Leeds City Council staff doesn't use external agencies for these services.
- (vii) A review of ways in which the Council can promote social integration and the learning of ESOL to reduce the need for interpreters.
- (viii) That the Interpreting and Translation Team Co-ordinator be asked to report progress on the above at the Boards February meeting.

49 Draft Inquiry Report - Night Time Levy

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a draft final inquiry report in relation to the night time levy.

RESOLVED – That the draft final inquiry report be approved and submitted to the Executive Board for its consideration.

50 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.

51 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday, 16th December 10.00 a.m. (Pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.30 a.m.)

(The meeting concluded at 11.00 am).