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SCRUTINY BOARD (STRATEGY AND RESOURCES)

MONDAY, 17TH JUNE, 2024

PRESENT: Councillor A Khan in the Chair

Councillors E Carlisle, D Chapman,
S Hamilton, T Hinchcliffe, W Kidger,
A Parnham, K Renshaw, S Seary,
E Thomson and C Timmins

CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

Before moving on to the formal meeting agenda the Chair, Cllr Khan, put on record his thanks for the work of past members of the Board who have either stepped down from public office or moved to other boards, and also welcomed new board members for the 2024/25 municipal year.

102 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals.

103 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There was no exempt information.

104 Late Items

There were no late items.

105 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

106 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies were received from:

Cllr Billy Flynn, with Cllr Simon Seary as substitute
Cllr Pauleen Grahame, with Cllr Karen Renshaw as substitute
Cllr Andrew Carter
Cllr Debra Coupar

107 Minutes - 25 March 2024

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Monday, 22nd July, 2024

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 March 2024, be approved as an accurate record.

MATTERS ARISING

The Principal Scrutiny Adviser raised the following matters arising from the March meeting of the Board:

Min 96 – On Procurement the Board were asked to note that in line with the 25 March minutes, procurement has been added to the draft work programme which is considered in more detail at item 9.
Min 97 – Similarly IDS Service Desk features in the draft work programme in line with the March 2024 minutes.
Min 98 – The Statement on workforce Equality Diversity and Inclusion that was approved by the Board in March is due to be considered by the Executive Board this Summer in line with scrutiny board procedure rules.

108 Co-Opted Members

RESOLVED – That the options for appointments of co-opted members to the Scrutiny Board (Strategy & Resources) are noted.

109 Scrutiny Board Terms of Reference

The Board received a report from the Head of Democratic Services, which presented the terms of reference for the Scrutiny Board (Strategy & Resources).

In attendance for this item were:

- Mariana Pexton - Director of Strategy and Resources
- John Mulcahy - Chief Officer Elections and Regulatory
- Rob Clayton - Principal Scrutiny Advisor

The Director of Strategy and Resources provided a presentation which introduced the services that are in the Directorate and fall under the Board's remit.

Challenges and opportunities for the council as a whole and the Directorate were identified as: demographic changes that will be described in the upcoming Joint Strategic Needs assessment, continuing impacts of Covid-19 especially on inequality and demand for services, increases in cost of living pressures, increased demand for services as well as increased complexity of issues within communities, financial challenges and efficiencies and an increase in Section 114 notices issued by other local authorities, embedding digital approaches, improving customer experience, recruitment and retention,

workloads and burnout, collaboration between services and organisations including the anchor network through the Team Leeds approach, managing major risks such as safeguarding, cyber threats and major incidents.

The Director noted the positive comments made through the recent Peer Challenge, as well as the recommendations made by the Peer Review and also provided the strategic context for the work delivered by the council and within the Directorate. The Best City Ambition (BCA) underpins the three pillars; inclusive growth, health & wellbeing and zero carbon. With the Organisational Plan (which will feature at the July Board meeting) being the main planning document for the council and a key strategy document for the authority including setting out manager expectations.

It was also noted that the BCA is a city-wide approach not just unique to the Council. The BCA underwent a refresh in 2023/24 with updates made to the Health and Well Being Strategy and Inclusive Growth Strategy along with updates messaging linked to Net Zero. Other changes included embedding the Marmot work as a key way of tackling inequality in the city as well as sharpening Team Leeds descriptions.

The Director of Strategy and Resources provided an oversight into how the Directorate works. The following services are delivered from within the Strategy & Resources Directorate's with staffing levels at around 5,000 working in the services listed;

- Front line services often provided to the most vulnerable, alongside organisational leadership for key support services such as business administration.
- Civic Enterprise Leeds – including facilities management, passenger transport, catering, fleet, building and cleaning.
- Integrated Digital Service – digital & technology strategy, digital change & inclusion and data analytics.
- Legal, Democratic & Information Governance - legal advice across council, democratic and governance services including member support, information governance, committee support and the Lord Mayor's office.
- Financial - budget, financial monitoring, treasury management, internal audit, council tax, business rates, core business transformation.
- Freedom to Speak Up Guardian.
- Human Resources including equality, diversity and inclusion, and health and safety.
- Business Administration and Business Support Centre (including Payroll).

The Chief Officer Elections and Regulatory provided an overview of services that fall under the Board's remit;

- Entertainment licensing – licensing committee sets policy, licensing subcommittees make majority of decisions where representations received, personal licence holders, premises licenses, TENS, gambling and other licensable activities such as scrap metal
- Registrars – births, marriages and civil partnerships, deaths, citizenships
- Elections – conducting all polls, maintaining the register of electors. This service reported to scrutiny in 2023/24 on the introduction of voter ID.

- Taxi and private hire licensing – licencing committee agrees policy, most decisions made by officers, Private Hire (PH) operators, PH vehicle proprietors, PD drivers, HC proprietors, HC drivers
- Land and property search services – Local land charges, searches, street registration – dealing with property inquiries linked to transactions and purchases and on street registration.

Resolved – The Board noted the Terms of Reference as they relate to the Scrutiny Board (Strategy and Resources) and further noted the remit of the board as set out through presentation.

110 Sources of Work and Draft Work Programme 2024/25

The Board received a report from the Head of Democratic Services on potential sources of work for the Scrutiny Board and an initial draft work programme for the 2024/25 municipal year.

The Principal Scrutiny Adviser introduced the report and highlighted the focus on adding value through scrutiny and on pre-decision scrutiny where appropriate as a positive way of working and on making the biggest impact from a scrutiny perspective.

In response to questions, the following points were covered:

- In response to a question on external partners the Board were informed that the scrutiny function has made some initial links with the University of Leeds but that there is a possibility of seeking wider expertise from other sources and this will be done as opportunity arises.
- The Board expressed an interest in receiving an update from Civic Enterprise Leeds in 2024/25 and the scrutiny adviser said that this will be factored into the work programme for the next meeting.
- The Core Business Transformation work was also highlighted as a possible area of work and depending on timing it was agreed that this will be brought forward during 2024/25 either as an update item for comment or pre-decision, if that is possible.
- Board members were keen to understand how the Council captures the voices of young people and on the 12 wishes in the Children and Young People's Plan. In response the Board were informed that whilst consultation sits in the remit of this Board, it would be better to be captured by the Children and Families Board through links being developed with the Voice and Influence Team by that scrutiny board.

Resolved - Members noted the information and guidance provided within the report when considering potential areas for scrutiny for the forthcoming municipal year and noted the draft work programme provided at appendix 2.

111 Performance Report

The Board considered a report from the Director of Strategy and Resources which presents a summary of performance data relating to Council and city priorities that fall within the remit of the Scrutiny Board (Strategy & Resources) including coverage of Office for Local Government (OFLOG) indicators.

In attendance for this item were

- Mariana Pexton, Director of Strategy and Resources
- Emma Kamillo-Price, Senior Intelligence and Policy Officer
- Richard Ellis, Deputy Chief Finance Officer
- Lisa Colver, Head of Health, Safety and Well-Being

The Senior Intelligence and Policy Officer introduced the item setting out the twice yearly reporting approach, the OFLOG indicators and that performance covers quarter 4 from 2023/24.

The following key points were highlighted:

- Healthy Workforce - showing a small increase in absence rates and also that long-term sickness accounts for between 65% and 70% of all time lost through sickness.
- Gender pay gap – this has dropped since the last reporting period to 3.4%.
- Customer complaints – performance in some directorates remains below target albeit it this is up on the previous year's Quarter 4 position.
- Information Management and Governance – both targets have been met and performance is improving with a target of 95% having been set for future performance.
- OFLOG – where the metrics have been established these are covered in today's report, but as further metrics are announced these will be built into scrutiny performance reporting based on where they fall in terms of board remits.

Responding to comments and questions from board members the following areas were discussed:

- Board members requested comparison with previous year's performance where it is possible and where it would add value in terms of analysis and spotting changes and trends. The Board were informed that this will be looked into for the next report where that yearly comparison is possible, some indicators would not be as suitable to this type of approach.
- Members also asked about comparison with other authorities and core cities and around musculoskeletal sickness absence which is increasing. On the comparison issue, this will be looked at for the next report in January, on musculoskeletal conditions members were informed that this issue sits in the ergonomic work stream (within the Health and Safety work) and that joint work is ongoing across services to make more data informed choices to tackle the issue. In addition, work is ongoing to

develop a musculoskeletal toolkit for priority services which will offer free training and will be launched next year.

- The Board inquired about SENSAP service complaints and delays in EHCPs being delivered linked to education psychologists (EPs). Members had concerns about delays and complaints within this service and the impacts on families. In response the Board heard that this issue has been picked up by the Children and Families Scrutiny Board who conducted a scrutiny inquiry on the provision of EHCP Support in Leeds, with plans also for these issues to be considered through a report to Executive Board in June that builds on previous reports in October and December 2023. On EPs the board heard that there has been a national shortage of these staff and that more widely demand for EHCP support is a national issue that has increased significantly in recent years.
- The Board asked about long-term sickness and whether waiting times for health treatment being experienced by the public are impacting long-term sickness for LCC colleagues. This will be taken away with a view to seeing if there is any data available to assist with the query.
- In relation to KPI 1 the board asked about city wide disability data and the gap between city demographics and the workforce the Council has. In response it was noted that work is ongoing with recruitment processes through HR and the staff networks to remove barriers and to also support disabled colleagues to progress more. It was also noted that the DAWN Network supports disabled colleagues through their employment at the Council and as a specific example support disabled colleagues through the provision of reasonable adjustments.
- The Board wanted to hear more about how staff are supported to progress at the Council. The Be Your Best Manager Programme has been introduced to support managers and provide training, coaching and shadowing opportunities. In addition, the appraisal process is aimed at drawing out personal development requirements and trying to support staff to meet their career ambitions. The Council has also launched the Aspiring Leaders Programme with a detailed training and support programme to support their development.
- The Board welcomed the support for managers as set out. However, there was also concern that support should be given to staff more generally. In response the Board heard that the appraisal process is there to support staff development and that appraisal completion rates are good albeit there is work to do and support for managers will help in improving appraisals and ensuring that all staff receive a quality appraisal.
- On support for local businesses members asked about longer-term trends on contractual engagement with Leeds businesses. It was noted that procurement is on the work programme, and it will come through as part of that item but also that, if available, a note will be provided on that to the Board.
- Board members expressed an interest in hearing more about the improvements that have taken place in Information Management and Governance and that this should feature on the work programme for the board this municipal year, whilst recognising this also features on the Corporate Governance and Audit work programme annually.

Resolved – The Board noted the performance information contained in Appendix 1, and where appropriate highlighted areas for further scrutiny.

112 Employee Mental Health and Well Being

Members considered a report from the Director of Strategy and Resources setting out the Council's approach to employee mental health and well-being support. This follows consideration of these issues in 2023/24 and a request for further updates to the Board.

In attendance for this item were:

- Mariana Pexton, Director of Strategy and Resources
- Lisa Colver, Head of Health, Safety and Well-Being

To introduce the item the Board heard a presentation from the Head of Health, Safety and Well-Being, which covered the following points:

- Bringing the vision for Health, Safety and Well Being to life in the workplace through additional well-being advisers, business partnering arrangements with chief officers, Director engagement with personal pledges to take action and the use of toolkits to facilitate support to staff.
- Positive examples of good work being developed on the ground across a range of services for example in the Care Delivery Service has a "men working in care" support group and in City Development face to face sessions for 120 depot staff on a whole range of topics including neurodiversity, stress, and mental health support.
- On Well Being the Board heard about Promote, Prevent, Support approaches focussing on leadership accountability, developing the workplace wellbeing community of champions and enhancing the management training offer.
- On Mental Health, joining up internal mental health experts through the Mental Health Action Group, developing and supporting our community of Mental Health First Aiders and preventing and supporting mental health-related sickness absence were emphasised.

In response to questions and comments from Board members the following was discussed:

- Members wanted to know if approaches to tackle staff absence were working across all services given that staff absence has increased based on the data provided in the performance report. In response the Board heard that some services are performing better but that in areas where additional support is needed this is provided. It was noted that approaches on health and safety and on well-being can take time to embed but through the business partnering approach and the additional support approach, positive changes are being and will continue to be delivered.

- Members were concerned that Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA) may not be represented across all services and whether efforts are made to fill any gaps where there are not any trained MHFAs, a suggestion being that they could work across services or directorates. In response, an assurance was provided that colleagues can seek support from any MHFA rather than just one within their service area. It was noted that there are some gaps and work is ongoing to fill those and to provide addition mental health first aiders where job demands make them more necessary. The role played by mental health first aiders was recognised as being hugely valuable to the Council along with the mental health first aid trainer who works for the Council. On a wider note, the Board were informed that the team attended extended BCLT this week about well-being and promoted the role of mental health first aiders and to emphasise the need to have enough of them, and that training is available in house for staff that are interested in the role.
- The Board asked about mid-year appraisals and whether not having them in 2023/24 was a missed opportunity in terms of addressing health and well-being issues given that they are key parts of the appraisal process. The Board heard that a key reason for not doing mid-year appraisals was to balance workloads and to reduce pressure on staff and managers as a result of wider workload pressures resulting from budget challenges. There is an ongoing commitment to well-being through regular one to ones. In the past consideration had been given to a one size fits all approach to one-to-one supervision but given the diversity and complexity of the council in terms of services it was believed it would not work. Re-introducing mid-year appraisals will be considered in the future and staff communications regularly emphasise the importance of well-being discussion in one to ones and the availability of support for staff through the Vivup service and other support measures.
- Responding to questions on management development the Board heard about the Council's approach to supporting and developing managers through the Be Your Best Manager programme. This is a key support programme offering training in key areas such as relationship building, project management and how to manage workload pressures in addition to key areas of focus such as equality, diversity and inclusion and training to support embedding EDI principles in the workforce.
- The Board heard about accessibility to staff survey results for managers to understand how their staff are feeling, this was available to managers through the dashboard that was demonstrated to the previous scrutiny board, and enabled more detailed analysis of survey results, whilst still retaining anonymity. It was also noted that the Board heard in detail about staff survey results last year and it might be that a further update is brought back on the Be Your Best Manager Programme, in 2024/25 there is a focus on health, safety and well-being.
- In response to member queries around comparison and collaboration with other local authorities the Board were informed that work is developing in this area particularly in respect of occupational health with positive relationships developing with other Councils on mental health support, stress and workloads. In addition, the use of data is an area for future

development and that later in the municipal year more could be brought to the Board from a data perspective.

Resolved – The Board noted the content of the report and the ongoing work and progress to promote positive workplace mental health and wellbeing.

113 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next public meeting of the Board will take place on 22 July 2024 at 10.30am. There will be a pre-meeting for all board members at 10.00am

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