

SCRUTINY BOARD (RESOURCES AND COUNCIL SERVICES)

MONDAY, 3RD SEPTEMBER, 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

25 Late Items

There were no late items

26 Declarations of Interest

In accordance with paragraphs 19-20 of the Members Code of Conduct, the following declaration was made by Councillor Ron Grahame who felt it was in the public interest to do so: Agenda Item No. 11 as a local authority appointed member of West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service (Minute No. 33 refers).

27 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

No apologies were received.

28 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED -That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 23rd July 2012 be confirmed as a correct record.

29 Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Licensing Policy

In line with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework, the Scrutiny Board received and considered the draft Statement of Licensing Policy 2010 -2012.

The Principal Project Officer, Legal Licensing and Registration Services presented the report and responded to a series of questions asked by Board Members.

RESOLVED –

- (i) To note the draft Statement of Licensing Policy 2010 -2012 and not to offer any specific comments for Executive Board's consideration in relation to the draft.
- (ii) To request additional information in relation to Planning matters

30 People Plan - Quarter 1 2012/13

The Chief Officer (HR) presented to the Board a report detailing progress against the People Plan 2012/13 at the end of Quarter 1 2012/13.

The following were in attendance:

Councillor Peter Gruen - Executive Member Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services

Lorraine Hallam – Chief Officer HR

Alex Watson – Head of Human resources

Mariana Pexton – Chief Corporate Support Officer

The Board noted the following key points;

- The workforce size had continued to fall and currently stood at 12,503 compared to 12,617 in March 2012
- Projected days lost through sickness absence were at 9.86 days per employee against a target of 8.5, however, targeted action was being taken in known hotspot areas.
- Following the first quarterly engagement 'pulse' survey, Corporate Leadership Team agreed the emphasis should continue to be on the three agreed key actions. Directorate Leadership teams and Chief Officers were currently using the findings as a basis for discussions with colleagues.

In brief summary, the main issues of discussion were;

- An acknowledgement that there had been a significant improvement in the number of appraisals having taken place, currently standing at 94%
- The 'hot spots' for absence levels
- The actions being taken to improve absence levels
- The correlation between absence levels and appraisals undertaken within Directorates

Members requested more detailed information in relation to absence figures within Directorates

RESOLVED

- (i) To note progress against the People Plan 2012/13
- (ii) To receive the additional information requested

31 Agency Workers and Overtime

The Chief Officer HR submitted a report detailing how agency workers and overtime contribute to the delivery of services and proposals that were being developed to improve this.

The following were in attendance:

Councillor Peter Gruen - Executive Member Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services

Lorraine Hallam – Chief Officer HR

Alex Watson – Head of Human resources

Mariana Pexton – Chief Corporate Support Officer

In brief summary, the main issues of discussion were;

- The proportion of spend on agency workers and overtime, which currently stood at approximately £20m and £10.5m respectively. (5% and 2.5% of the overall staffing budget for 2011/12 of £412m)
- The reasons for using agency workers and overtime
- Current contract arrangements for hiring agency workers
- The cost benefits of agency workers
- The relationship between the reduction in overtime expenditure and the use of agency workers
- The operational pressures to deliver services whilst managing budgets

Discussion also took place on options to improve the current situation which included the possible introduction of the use of 'shift swaps' to reduce overtime and the introduction of short term fixed contracts to reduce the use of agency staff

RESOLVED – To support the following improvement measures;

- (i) Finding ways to use our own potentially surplus staff instead of agency workers
- (ii) Bringing aspects of agency work in-house and reducing overtime with core staffing
- (iii) Setting out clearer guidelines and protocols on the use of overtime and agency staffing
- (iv) Internal Audit to undertake a VFM review of agency worker arrangements

- (v) Explore the introduction of 'shift swops' and short term fixed contracts to reduce the use of agency staff and overtime

32 2012/13 Quarter 1 Performance Report

The Assistant Chief Executive (Customer Access and Performance and Director of Resources submitted a report providing a summary of performance against the strategic priorities for the council relevant to the Resources and Council Services Scrutiny Board.

The following were in attendance:

Councillor Peter Gruen - Executive Member Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services

Lorraine Hallam – Chief Officer HR

Alex Watson – Head of Human resources

Mariana Pexton – Chief Corporate Support Officer

Heather Pinches –Executive Officer (Performance Management)

In brief summary, the main issue of discussion was the Council's performance in relation to consultation which was currently showing overall progress as red.

RESOLVED – To note performance against the strategic priorities for the council relevant to the Resources and Council Services Scrutiny Board.

33 Questions to the Leader of Council

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report on Scrutiny engaging with the Leader of Council on matters falling within his portfolio and particularly on partnership working.

The following were in attendance:

Councillor Keith Wakefield – Leader of Council

Martin Dean – Head of Leeds Initiative and International Partnerships

Doug Meeson – Chief Officer, Financial Management

In brief summary, the main issues of discussion were;

- The history of partnership working in Leeds
- The roles of the different partnerships
- The concept behind partnership working
- The success measures of partnership working
- The role of all elected members in championing partnership working through scrutiny, the State of the City Council meetings and other forums.
- Total Place budgeting in the drive to deliver public services

RESOLVED – To note the discussion held with the Leader on partnership working.

34 Financial Health Monitoring 2012/13 - First Quarter Report

The Director of Resources submitted a report which presented the financial health of the authority after three months of the financial year in respect of the revenue budget and the housing revenue account.

The following were in attendance:

Councillor Keith Wakefield – Leader of Council
Martin Dean – Head of Leeds Initiative and International Partnerships
Doug Meeson – Chief Officer, Financial Management

In brief summary, the main issues of discussion were;

- The projected overall overspend of £2.0m
- levels of reserves
- A refund from the DfE of £737.7K in relation to the Local Authority Central Spend Equivalent Grant

RESOLVED – That the report and information appended to the report be noted.

35 Work Schedule

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a copy of the Board's work schedule. Copies of the minutes of the Executive Board meeting held on 18th July 2012 were attached for consideration along with a copy of the Forward Plan.

A discussion on potential work items ensued.

RESOLVED –

- (i) To invite appropriate representatives from the Adult Social Care and Environment & Neighbourhoods Directorates to the October meeting to discuss the use of agency staff and overtime.
- (ii) To invite Richard Corbett or other appropriate representatives to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Board to discuss EU funding for Leeds.
- (iii) To note the contents of the Forward Plan and Executive Board minutes

36 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED – To note the date of the next meeting as Monday 15th October 2012 at 10am

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

(The meeting concluded at 12.30 pm)