

SCRUTINY BOARD (RESOURCES AND COUNCIL SERVICES)

MONDAY, 15TH OCTOBER, 2012

PRESENT: Councillor P Grahame in the Chair

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

37 CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

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

38 Late Items

There were no late items

39 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 8 as a Member of the GMB Union (minute 43 refers).

40 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lowe and Councillor Wood.

41 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED -That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 3rd September 2010 be confirmed as a correct record.

42 Executive Board Minutes - 5th September 2012

RESOLVED -That the minutes of the Executive Board held on 5th September 2012 be noted.

43 Agency Workers and Overtime

The Chief Officer (HR) presented to the Board a report detailing plans to reduce use and requirements for agency workers and overtime and specifically to indicate steps being taken in those services where there is the greatest use of overtime and agency cover.

The following were in attendance:

Councillor Judith Blake - Executive Member Children's Services
Councillor Mark Dobson – Executive Member Environment
Sandie Keene – Director of Adult Social Services
Steve Hume – Chief Officer, Resources and Strategy, Adult Social Care
Neil Evans – Director of Environment & Neighbourhoods
Steve Walker – Deputy Director – Safeguarding Specialist & Targeted Services, Children's Services
Sal Tariq – Chief Officer, Children's Social Work, Children's Services
Alex Watson – Head of Human Resources
Ian Williams – Human Resources Manager

The Board noted the agreed recommendations made at its September meeting that would support:

- a) Finding ways to use our own potentially surplus staff instead of agency workers
- b) Bringing aspects of agency work in-house and reducing overtime with core staffing
- c) Setting out clearer guidelines and protocols on the use of overtime and agency staffing; including setting limits on how long agency workers ought to be hired before the option on putting them on our payroll could be considered
- d) Internal Audit to undertake a VFM review of agency worker contracting arrangements

In brief summary, the main issues of discussion were;

- The draft guidelines for the use of agency workers and the key principles underpinning the guidance.
- The creation of an internal 'admin-pool' as an alternative to agency workers and the role of staff within the talent pool
- The fact that services will continue to rely on the flexibility of agency workers and overtime to deliver some of the most important front-line services
- The economic advantage of employing agency staff
- The acknowledgement that the three Directorates in discussion had managed agency staff and overtime within their staffing budget

- The values of the City Council as an employer and the desire to move to a situation where there are no agency workers on long term placements and that agency workers and overtime were used on a 'needs must basis' within a well managed, balanced work force.
- The use of other methods to deal with workforce peaks and troughs such as split shifts and shift swaps.
- The acknowledgement of the particular recruitment and retention circumstances with Children's Services which require the use of agency staff to undertake complex cases.
- The circumstances in which agency staff are used in Adult Social Care, particularly during the current period of service change and realignment
- The acknowledgement that since the Board's September meeting the overall number of agency workers had reduced.

RESOLVED

- (i) To note progress against the recommendations agreed at the September Board meeting
- (ii) To note the action taken to reduce the use of agency workers and overtime
- (iii) To endorse guidelines and protocols on the use of overtime and agency staffing

44 Commercial Services Fleet Services

The Chief Commercial Services Officer submitted a report updating Scrutiny Board on the Authority's fleet replacement programme, influences around alternative fuels and carbon reduction, community engagement, additional MOT testing facilities, the co-location of grounds maintenance workshops and the driver certificate in Professional Competence qualification. This followed recommendations made by Scrutiny Board in the 2011/12 municipal year.

The following were in attendance:

Sarah Martin – Chief Officer, Property & Fleet
Terry Pycroft – Head of Fleet Services

In brief summary, the main issues of discussion were;

- The successful trial introduction of alternative fuel vehicles and the proposed further expansion of this fleet as part of the vehicle replacement programme.
- The opportunities provided by the service for training young people through trade apprenticeships, work placements, back to work initiatives and local engagement through schools and colleges.
- The expansion of the MOT testing facility and the additional income this brings to the Authority.
- The ongoing option appraisal for the potential co-location of Fleet Services and Grounds Maintenance at the workshops at York Road.
- The forward plan for CPC training with Directorates provided and monitored by Fleet Services

The Board congratulated the service for the progress made in the above areas.

RESOLVED – To note the further information regarding the operation of the Fleet Services Division of the Resources Directorate.

45 Work Schedule

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

RESOLVED –

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

Financial Strategy 2013 to 2017
Welfare reform
Customer Access

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

46 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED – To note the date of the next meeting as Monday 19th November 2012 at 10.00am

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

(The meeting concluded at 12.30 pm)