

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 5TH MARCH, 2007

PRESENT: Councillor G Driver in the Chair

Councillors B Anderson, J Bale, B Cleasby,
P Grahame, T Leadley and R Pryke

Apologies Councillor B Lancaster

81 Declaration of Interests

The following declarations of interest were made:-

Councillor Anderson – General Fund Financial Health Monitoring 2006/07 – Housing Revenue Account Budget 2007/08 – personal interest in his capacity as a Director of Leeds West/North West Homes ALMO (Agenda Items 8 and 12, Min No 83 refers)

Councillor Grahame - General Fund Financial Health Monitoring 2006/07 – Housing Revenue Account Budget 2007/08 – personal interest in her capacity as a resident of Swarcliffe (Swarcliffe PFI Scheme) and as Chair of Swardale Swarcliffe Eastwood Residents Association (Agenda Items 8 and 12, Minute No 83 refers)

Councillor Bale – Request for Scrutiny – Disability Equality Scheme – personal interest in his capacity as a joint carer for his disabled daughter (Agenda Item 7, Minute No 82 refers)

Councillor Leadley – (a) Request for Scrutiny – Disability Equality Scheme – personal interest in his capacity as a relative of a disabled person (Agenda Item 7, Minute No 82 refers) and (b) Planning Performance – Final Inquiry Report – personal interest in his capacity as a Member of Plans Panel West and the Development Plan Panel (Agenda Item 11, Minute No 86 refers)

Councillor Cleasby – (a) Planning Performance – Final Inquiry Report – personal interest in his capacity as a Member of Development Plan Panel (Agenda Item No 11, Minute No 86 refers) and (b) Minutes of the Executive Board Meeting, 9th February 2007 in his capacity as a Member of the Leeds Bradford Airport Consultative Committee (Agenda Item 12, Minute No 87 refers).

82 Minutes - 29th January and 5th February 2007

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meetings held on 29th January and 5th February 2007 be confirmed as correct records.

83 Request for Scrutiny - Disability Equality Scheme

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Monday, 2nd April, 2007

The Committee considered a request from a Leeds resident, Mr Doug Paulley, for an inquiry into why the City Council had not produced a formal Disability Equality Scheme under the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act, with separate policies covering the various equality strands of race, disability, gender, religion and faith, sexual orientation and age. Other local authorities had done so, but Leeds had instead chosen to adopt an all-encompassing Equality and Diversity Strategy 2006-2008. Mr Paulley's request also made reference to other alleged defects in the Council's approach to the subject – lack of evidence gathering and insufficient involvement of disabled people in producing the current Strategy document, action plan and performance monitoring.

In addition to hearing verbal evidence from Mr Paulley and Ms Jill Jones, who accompanied him, the Committee had before them a report from the Chief Officer (Executive Support) and also took evidence from Anne McMaster and Pauline Ellis of the Council's Equality Unit.

The Committee concluded that whilst it accepted that the Council's current Equality and Diversity Strategy met the Council's legal obligations, it could not at this stage make a judgement as to whether the Council's current approach, involving an all-encompassing Strategy, could be regarded as best practice compared, say, to the Disability Equality Scheme suggested by Mr Paulley and Ms Jones. The Committee also wished to see the performance indicators and timescales associated with the Action Plan for the current Strategy.

The Committee therefore agreed that a further report was required in April, which would include information on the practices adopted by other comparable local authorities, and would also show in greater detail the Action Plan, performance indicators and timescales associated with the current Strategy, in order that the Committee was in a better position to judge whether or not further scrutiny was regarded as necessary.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report be noted, and Mr Paulley and Ms Jones be thanked for attending the meeting.
- (b) That a further report be submitted to the April meeting containing information relating to the approach of other similar local authorities to this subject, further explanation of the reasons behind Leeds' approach and further information in relation to the Action Plan, performance indicators and timescales to assist the Committee to form an opinion regarding best practice
- (c) That on receipt of this further report the Committee consider whether or not to recommend to its successor Committee to pursue an Inquiry in the new municipal year

84 General Fund Financial Health Monitoring 2006/07 - Month 9 Update Report

Further to Minute No 46, 6th November 2006, the Committee considered a financial monitoring report submitted by the Director of Corporate Services, first submitted to the Executive Board meeting held on 9th February 2007.

Alan Gay, Director of Corporate Services and Helen Mylan, Corporate Services Department, attended the meeting and responded to Members' queries and comments. In brief summary, the main areas of discussion were:-

- The continuing trend for year on year increases in expenditure on Social Services , and the monitoring process
- The under-estimate of the take-up by landlords of the HMO Licensing scheme
- The current financial situation of Roseville Enterprises
- Various matters included in the separate report on the HRA budget for 2007/08, including the increases in ALMO management fees, service charges for blocks of flats, additional costs in respect of Little London PFI scheme and the current surplus in respect of the Swarcliffe PFI scheme, and the effects of any possible re-financing scheme. Councillor Pryke stated an intention to pick up some matters at the Scrutiny Board (Neighbourhoods and Housing) and Councillor Grahame indicated that she would be pursuing the latter point separately outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED – That subject to the above comments, the report be received and noted.

85 CPA - Comprehensive Performance Assessment

In the light of the recent CPA announcement regarding the Council's drop from a four star to a three star rated authority, the Committee had invited Steve Clough, the Head of Policy, Performance and Improvement, to the meeting to discuss whether revisions to the performance monitoring framework, recently adopted by the OSC, required amendment. The Committee also discussed the CPA service assessment framework in general.

The Committee concluded that whilst the framework for quarterly reporting on Corporate Plan indicators which measure the delivery of the Council's priorities, together with any performance indicators which could impact on the Council's CPA score, was robust and should be continued, this could be enhanced by 'in-year' statements on predicted CPA scores. This would provide an opportunity for scrutiny to make appropriate interventions.

RESOLVED – That the existing performance monitoring arrangements adopted by this Committee be maintained, but be enhanced by timely 'in-year' predictions on CPA scores.

86 Development of Information Management in Leeds

Further to Minute 77, 5th February 2007, the Committee considered the draft final report of its review of the development of information management in Leeds and progress in implementing the recommendations of the April 2006 Inquiry Report of the Scrutiny Board (Transforming Services).

RESOLVED –

- (a) That subject to the addition of an extra recommendation regarding the proposed establishment of a Lead Member with specific responsibility for Information and Knowledge Management within the Council, the draft final report be approved.
- (b) That OSC receive six monthly update reports on this subject, in order to monitor progress.

87 Planning Performance - Final Report

Further to Minute 74, 29th January 2007, the Committee considered the draft final report of its Inquiry into Planning Performance.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the draft final report be approved;
- (b) That a formal response to the Committee's recommendations be requested from the Chief Planning Officer;
- (c) That OSC receive regular update reports on this subject, in order to monitor progress.

88 Work Programme

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted the Committee's current work programme, updated to reflect decisions taken at previous meetings, together with a relevant extract of the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions and a copy of the minutes of the Executive Board meeting held on 9th February 2007.

RESOLVED – That subject to any changes necessary as a result of today's meeting, the Committee's work programme be approved and accepted.

89 Dates and Times of Next Meeting

Monday 2nd April 2007, at 10.00 am (Pre-meeting at 9.30 am)