

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY ORGANISATION AND RESOURCES SELECT COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY ORGANISATION AND RESOURCES SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 25 MARCH 2010 AT COMMITTEE ROOM III, COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE.

Present:

Cllr Chris Caswill, Cllr Tony Deane (Vice Chairman), Cllr Peter Doyle, Cllr Jacqui Lay, Cllr Jeff Osborn (Chairman), Cllr Bill Roberts, Cllr Judy Rooke and Cllr Jonathon Seed

Also Present:

Cllr Jon Hubbard, Cllr Fleur de Rhe-Philipe, Cllr Jane Scott OBE and Cllr John Thomson

46. **Apologies and Substitutions**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Nigel Carter, Cllr Christopher Devine, Cllr Nick Fogg and Cllr Ricky Rogers.

No substitutions were received.

47. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Cllr Caswill requested that a note was made to record that regular updates should be received by the Select Committees from the newly formed Liaison Board under item 39 – Role of a Future Management and Co-ordination Body.

With the above note made the minutes were approved as a correct record.

48. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were received.

49. **Chairman's Announcements**

- (1) The Chairman welcomed the Chief Executive and his senior staff to the Committee.

- (2) The issue of the new in-house ICT service implementation was raised, as approved by Cabinet on Tuesday 23 March and announced in the Hot Wire release on Wednesday 24 March. The Chairman felt that the Committee should take an interest in the level of service provided in the period up to the termination of the Steria contract on 13 January 2011 and the structures put in place to implement the new in-house arrangements. ICT services would be added to the forward work programme accordingly.

50. **Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

51. **Partnerships Task Group Update**

The Partnerships Task Group held its first meeting on 16 March to agree its work programme. The Community Safety Delivery Partnership was chosen as the topic for the first review.

The Committee would meet again in April to scope the review with an invitation extended to partners (i.e. police, health authority) thereafter for their contribution.

Resolved:

To note the update.

52. **Budget & Performance Task Group Update**

- (1) Following the update provided with the agenda, the Chairman of the Budget and Performance Task Group confirmed that the next meeting of the Task Group was scheduled to take place on Tuesday 30 March where one of the items for discussion would be the Business Management Programme (SAP) independent audit.
- (2) The Committee then considered the report by Ian Gibbons, Service Director Legal and Democratic Services, which requested that the committee consider the representations of the Budget and Performance Task Group following the decisions on restructuring taken at the last meeting of the committee in January 2010.

At the meeting held in January 2010 it was resolved that an over-arching body (the Overview and Scrutiny Management and Co-ordination Liaison Board) would be established. As a consequence the management of the overview and scrutiny function would be removed from the Management and Resources Select Committee (it now being the responsibility of the Liaison Board with the Budget and Performance Task Group dissolved).

Following the decision some members of the Task Group expressed concerns on the consultation process undertaken and that the removal of the Task Group would result in a loss of knowledge brought together from the four existing Select Committees.

Resolved:

To rescind the previous decision and reinstate the Budget & Performance Task Group.

53. **Major Contracts Task Group Update**

The update included details on the review of the Logica Contract and that the next meeting on 28 April 2010 would review Jarvis (responsible for office accommodation at the Monkton Park hub in Chippenham).

Resolved:

To note the update.

54. **Workplace Transformation Programme Task Group Update**

The Task Group met on 22 March 2010 when the Service Director for Business Transformation and ICT gave an introduction to the work stream and the services that had so far undergone lean/systems thinking transformation or were in the process.

Cllr Jonathon Seed, as a member on the Task Group, also provided details on the workplace transformation campus project. Cllr Seed confirmed that the project would review the number of sites owned by Wiltshire Council with a view to reducing assets and costs without a reduction in service delivery.

Ensuing discussion included the need for clarification over the role of the Task Group in scrutinising the Programme. Cllr Rooke confirmed that at her request this would be done at the beginning of the next meeting.

Resolved:

To note the update.

55. **Local Service Review Task Group Update**

The meeting on 16 March considered the Area Boards – Leader’s Review Report. A summary report (considered by Cabinet on 23 March) expressing the views of the Task Group on the report was also circulated.

Cllr Bill Roberts as a member on the Task Group provided further information on the content of the summary report and concluded that the Task Group were

supportive of all 24 recommendations made as a way of seeking improvement to the operation of Area Boards.

Ensuing discussion included acknowledgement that there had been an increase in attendance at area boards since their commencement although it was understood that some confusion still remained over the powers granted and the differing responsibilities between the Area Boards, Parish and Town Councils. An overlap also existed between the area boards and other bodies, such as Chippenham Vision. Clarification was provided by the Leader of the Council that the focus of the Chippenham Vision board was to engage residents in the economic development of the town but that this should not deter those residents involvement in area boards on other matters.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Communities and Libraries clarified that as a new structure for this Council Area Boards were still evolving and necessitated Councillors and officers as a whole working together to promote their existence and to ensure appropriate issues were raised through the members for each board.

Resulting discussion drew attention to how issues raised were subsequently handled with clarification that a process was in place to ensure these were logged. Community Area Managers were responsible for logging the issues and ensuring the due process was followed. No issues could be closed without approval of the individual area board.

It was reported that the area board handbook provided general policies on how the boards should be run, including details of the 'issue log'. Each area board also had the flexibility to allow a focus on community issues relevant to their individual areas.

Further response was provided that the reference to public scrutiny within the report did not refer to the statutory OS function exercised by the select committees and that details of the funding allocation provided to date would be circulated.

Resolved:

- 1) To note the matters considered by the Task Group and it's overall support for the recommendations in the report submitted to Cabinet on 23 March 2010.**
- 2) To agree that Overview and Scrutiny should be involved in the further review of the Area Boards in 12 months time.**

56. **Corporate Plan**

A copy of the draft Corporate Plan approved by Cabinet on 23rd March for wider communication was considered by the Committee so that it's views could be taken into account in preparing the final version.

The Leader, Chief Executive and Director of Policy and Communications attended the meeting to answer questions.

The Chief Executive explained that the objective of becoming the 'best local authority in the UK' was to ensure high aspirations were maintained whilst providing the best service to the community who would ultimately decide how 'best' was defined. All plans would be developed to ensure the organisation maintained a clear view on how it shaped itself to deliver the best service to the community as the authority continued to mature.

The Chairman acknowledged that the Corporate Plan would be the building block to provide the Business Plan and individual Departmental Delivery Plans and confirmed that the select committees would look to monitor all elements as they progressed.

In order to assist with future scrutiny, the Committee requested greater clarity around some of the targets (to include cross-referencing to LAA, CAA and benchmarks where appropriate) outlined in the Corporate Plan.

The Leader of the Council confirmed that the Corporate Plan would be submitted to Cabinet again in April and Council in May for final approval and that the final document would be easily accessible to the public who should also be able to access the related documentation behind the plan as and when completed.

Clarification was also provided that although the nine priorities set out within the Plan did not reflect the order of priority, Cabinet had already made comment that customer focus should always appear first and foremost.

Ensuing discussion included the current economic climate, the benefit implications of partnership working and what benchmarking would be in place to monitor progress and evaluate completion.

The Medium Term Financial Plan and Business Plan were highlighted as documents to provide further information on how the business would cope with less funding during the current economic climate. It was also noted that Wiltshire Council was already considered by the Government Office South West and central government as one of the best authorities in the south west in terms of working together with partners to support individuals, young people and businesses through the current climate.

'High quality, low cost' services and how these would be achieved was also raised with the Corporate Director for Resources clarifying that the principle had already been applied to parts of the Resource Service and had resulted in a stronger service with reduced costs.

Further discussion included harmonisation of youth services and whether the allocation of funding was considered a fair apportionment, the procurement strategy and how this would support localised suppliers and the involvement of area boards in influencing the Corporate Plan. Educational attainment at key stage 2 was also acknowledged to be an area of concern with the Chief Executive confirming that a complex programme on intervention was being drawn up to tackle the issues and develop long term goals to address the problem.

The Chairman in concluding discussion due to time constraints identified that the specific views and detailed questions of the Committee would be circulated to Cabinet for consideration following the meeting.

The Chairman thanked the Leader, Chief Executive and Director of Policy and Communication for their attendance.

Resolved:

- (1) To note the decision of Cabinet on 23 March to approve the plan as drafted for wider communication.**
- (2) To recommend Cabinet to take into account the specific views of Scrutiny when it receives the revised Plan in April (as set out in Appendix A).**
- (3) To agree that the relevant Select Committees scrutinise the key outcomes in the Plan, and the departmental delivery plans and sections from the new business plan when available.**
- (4) To note that the final version of the Plan would be taken to Full Council on 18 May for approval.**
- (5) To note that an annual refresh is planned (over the 4 year life of the Plan) which will provide further opportunities to hold the Leader and Chief Executive to public account for its delivery.**

57. Framework Contract for the Provision of Agency Staff

In order to comply with Council Financial and Contract Regulations relating to contracts with a value great than £1m and European Union 'Restricted Tender' Provision, a competitive tender exercise for the future supply of Temporary Agency Staff was required.

A Project Board was established to consider the framework required and, as a result, a preferred option for the provision of Agency Staff was considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 23 February 2010. A copy of the Cabinet report and a response from Cllr Jonathon Seed, the appointed Scrutiny representative on the Board, were circulated.

Cllr Seed reported that issues with employment and accountability of agency and contract staff were evident including difficulty in monitoring due to lack of transparency. However, Cllr Seed concluded that both officers and the Cabinet Member had responded positively to the problem. All agency and contract staff would now be declared through a neutral vendor managed service monitored through the SAP system.

Cllr Seed also reported that Wiltshire Council was considering partnership working with Bath and North East Somerset Council as a way to share agency resource and to reduce costs in the future.

Clarification was provided by the Corporate Director for Resources that approximately 20% of staff were agency and consultants but that this figure was anticipated to reduce within the next 12 to 18 months as services were harmonised. The SAP system would continue to monitor over this period.

Resolved:

- 1) To note the update provided and the decision of Cabinet to approve the commencement of the competitive tendering process.**
- 2) To receive a further update report in July 2010 being aware that a new contract arrangement should be in place by 1 November 2010.**

58. Committee Name

It was reported that the Committee, at its meeting in January 2010, took a decision to create an (informal) Liaison Board resulting in the management of the overview and scrutiny function moving from the Committee to the Liaison Board subsequently leaving the Committee with a Resource only function.

As part of this function it was recognised that resources included more than the scrutiny of the executive activities associated with the Resources Department but that it would also retain and cover scrutiny of corporate and organisational affairs.

The Committee was keen to see this responsibility reflected in its title in order to give clear visibility and clarity to its work. As a result the following options were suggested:

- (i) Corporate and Resources Select Committee

(ii) Organisational Management and Resources Select Committee

Ensuing discussion concluded that neither proposal was felt to represent the Committee's responsibilities accurately so alternatives were offered by members.

Resolved:

That the title for the Committee will be 'Organisation and Resources Select Committee'.

59. **Meeting with Resources Service Directors - Ian Gibbons**

It was reported that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Scrutiny Manager had been meeting with Resources Service Directors to gain a better understanding on service delivery, funding, priorities, departmental developments and pressures applying to each.

Meetings had already taken place with Deborah Farrow (Business Transformation, ICT and Information Management), Barry Pirrie (HR and Organisational Development) and Jacqui White (Shared Services and Customer Care) and the outcomes reported to the Committee.

A similar meeting was held with Ian Gibbons (Legal and Democratic Services) on 11 March where several issues, as outlined in the agenda, were discussed. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman, following this discussion, asked for staffing structures to be supplied and further details on the market supplements scheme and considered that reviews of Section 106 agreements and members support in the locality should be added to the Committee's future work plan.

Resolved:

- 1) **To agree that a Task Group be established to consider the responsibilities and pressures of S106 agreements with membership to be determined by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman subject to report to the next meeting.**
- 2) **To agree that a Task Group be established to consider the level of local support provided to Councillors and how it is organised and managed with the membership to be determined by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman subject to report to the next meeting.**

60. **Forward Work Programme**

The Committee noted the Forward Work Plan provided and the changes to be made as a consequence of decisions taken at today's meeting.

61. **Date of Next Meeting**

27 May 2010 to be held at County Hall, Trowbridge.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 1.00 pm)

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