

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCES SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCES SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21 JANUARY 2010 IN COMMITTEE ROOM III, COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE.

Present:

Cllr Chris Caswill, Cllr Tony Deane (Vice-Chair), Cllr Christopher Devine, Cllr Peter Doyle, Cllr Nick Fogg, Cllr Charles Howard, Cllr David Jenkins (Reserve), Cllr Jacqui Lay, Cllr Jeff Osborn (Chairman) and Cllr Bill Roberts

Also Present:

Cllr Allison Bucknell, Cllr Christopher Cochrane and Cllr John Noeken

35. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 November 2009 were approved as a correct record.

36. **Apologies and Substitutions**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Nigel Carter, Cllr Ricky Rogers, Cllr Judy Rooke and Cllr Jonathon Seed. Cllr David Jenkins substituted for Cllr Judy Rooke.

37. **LGR Appointments Procedure**

The Committee considered a report by the Service Director, Human Resources and Organisational Development which provided details of the development, agreement and application on the process of staff appointments to the unitary council and staff displaced by the local government reorganisation.

Cllr John Noeken - Cabinet Member Human Resources, Allison Bucknell – Portfolio Holder Human Resources, Barrie Pirie – Service Director Human Resources and Organisation Development and Tricia Glover – HR Project Manager attended the meeting to answer questions.

The Chairman reminded Councillors that the Committee had looked at harmonisation at its meeting in November and, previously, as part of transition scrutiny where concerns were raised over the appointment process.

Ensuing discussion included a request for clarification on when the existing appointments/redundancy procedures would be reviewed, how any resulting surplus from the severance budget would be apportioned, the appropriateness of the excess travel procedure, the appeals process and a breakdown on existing redundancy figures.

Clarification was provided on several points, including that the revised appointments/redundancy procedures were currently under review and would be presented to the Corporate Leadership Team for consideration within the next 2 months; surplus funds were anticipated from the initial severance budget although severance costs following the recent senior management restructure had yet to be included.

Staff morale was also raised as a concern with the Service Director confirming that ongoing dialogue between managers and staff continued. A survey was also planned in April to assess morale across the Council with workshops and roadshows under the banner '*shaping the future together*' being rolled out across all areas. The Chief Executive and members of the Corporate Management Team had visited the hubs recently. Cllr John Noeken commented that great attention to the morale of staff was given as a caring employer and believed this to be the right way to operate the new Council.

On request by the Chairman, the Service Director agreed to provide details of the numbers and costs of those entitled to excess travel procedure, further information on the number of appeals to date and the outcomes thereof, and a breakdown of the 92 redundancies (to include the voluntary/compulsory split and the numbers given 'sympathetic consideration').

Resolved:

- (1) To thank the Executive members and officers for attending.**
- (2) To note that the detailed information requested would be circulated after the meeting.**
- (3) To ask that an update on the LGR Appointments Procedure (and Severance Scheme) is included in the Harmonisation report scheduled for the Select Committee in May.**

38. **Business Management Programme (SAP)**

A report by the Service Director Shared Services and Customer Services was presented which informed the Committee of the development issues and work plan for business improvement necessary to ensure the organisation uses SAP effectively to extract maximum performance and cost benefit from the solution. This followed a visit to the Shared Services Centre by members of the Budget and Performance Task Group.

Cllr John Noeken, Cabinet member ICT, Carlton Brand, Corporate Director Resources and Jackie White, Service Director Shared Services and Customer Services attended the meeting to answer questions. Jacqui White confirmed an open door policy for Councillors to discuss SAP related issues.

Ensuing discussion included an acknowledgement that an independent audit of financial aspects of SAP had taken place which would be submitted to the Committee upon it's completion. The Committee was asked to note that SAP, as a significant programme, would continue to develop as the adoption of procedures and processes took place for the Council as a whole.

Although several bugs had been found on the coding of the system, significant progress had still been made, including other organisations now requesting to visit Wiltshire Council to see how the system had been developed here.

Resolved:

- (1) To thank the Executive members and officers for attending.**
- (2) To note the report and workplan.**
- (3) To receive details of the independent audit of the financial aspects of SAP once completed (anticipated as no later than the end of March 2010).**
- (4) To received an update report in May 2010 to include KPI measurements and progress against the work plan and an introduction to the HR and Procurement aspects of SAP.**

39. **Role of a Future Management and Co-ordination Body**

The Service Director Legal and Democratic Services attended the meeting to answer questions arising from the report on the role of a future Overview and Scrutiny management and co-ordination body following agreement at the last meeting for more coordination of scrutiny activities by a single body.

The Chairman highlighted the key elements of the report and favoured the establishment of a liaison board as outlined in the report as it would not require constitutional change and could be implemented immediately.

It was confirmed that that the Scrutiny Manager and Service Director Legal and Democratic Services would ensure draft terms of reference were available for the first meeting of the Liaison Board which would not hold decision making powers on behalf of the other committees. Councillors also felt that scrutiny of the Corporate Management of the authority should rest with the Resources Select Committee and it's name to reflect this responsibility.

Resolved:

- (1) To note that the last meeting the Committee decided to opt for the establishment of an over-arching body subject to further consideration at this meeting.**
- (2) To note the research done on the OS arrangements adopted by a range of other local authorities, many of which operate with a 'management style' body.**
- (3) To approve the creation of an Overview and Scrutiny Management and Co-ordination Liaison Board made up of the chairman and vice-chairman of the four select committees as the over-arching body with immediate effect.**
- (4) As a consequence, to**
 - (i) remove the management of the overview and scrutiny function from the Management and Resources Select Committee (it now being the responsibility of the new Liaison Board) and rename it appropriately to reflect its responsibilities for scrutinising Corporate Management and Resources, and;**
 - (ii) dissolve the standing Budget and Performance Task Group with its responsibilities being undertaken by the main Select Committee.**
- (5) To note that a new standing Partnerships Task Group of this Committee was being proposed under a later agenda item.**
- (6) To note the constitutional review work to be undertaken by the recently appointed Focus Group of the Standards Committee and the original intention to review the current OS arrangements after 12 months of operational experience.**

- (7) **To confirm the appointment of Cllr Chuck Berry as Scrutiny's representative on the Standards Committee's Constitutional Focus Group and, as part of the review of the Overview and Procedure Rules in the Constitution, to consider moving towards a more formal Overview and Scrutiny Management and Co-ordination Committee in the future.**

40. **Task Group - Updates**

Updates on standing task groups were provided as follows:

i) Local Area Agreement/Partnerships

Cllr Roy While as Chairman of the Task Group presented it's final report for endorsement by the Committee.

The Chairman confirmed that pre Unitary a standing 'Performance Task Group' existed to look at local and national indicators but it did not consider Local Area Agreements in depth.

The Community Safety Partnership was chosen for more detailed consideration by the Task Group to gain an understanding on the specifics of partnership working. The focus was to ensure the right priorities were adopted, appropriate targets set and that the system worked and delivered.

The Group felt the most appropriate line of approach for the immediate future would be to adopt a standing 'partnerships' task group under this Committee but would work across all Select committees.

Ensuing discussion included the need to understand key pinch points as the Committee would not be able to scrutinise all National Indicators set; the importance of understanding LAAs; how area boards were involved with LAAs; the impact of new legislation which included local authorities being given a role in leading and coordinating services within their area.

The Committee felt it was important for continuity that as many of the existing members of the Group as possible should remain on the future Partnerships Task Group. Cllr While and Cllr Caswill confirmed they would be happy to do so and it was further proposed to extend the membership in order to deal with the increased workload if undertaken well.

Resolved:

- (1) To thank the Task Group members for their work and endorse the findings and recommendations in the final report.**
- (2) To create a standing 'Partnerships' Task Group falling within the remit of this Committee to undertake scrutiny reviews on cross cutting issues in relation to the LAA and partnership scrutiny (for example NI 8 Adult participation in sport) and also carry out a co-ordinating role involving referrals to relevant Select Committees to undertake further scrutiny where necessary.**

ii) Local Service Review

Cllr Roberts addressed the Committee and confirmed that the Executive would be reviewing the Area Boards lead by Cllr John Thomson and Cllr Chris Williams. A survey would be sent to key stakeholders, the task group and the standards committee, the findings of which would be submitted to the Task Group on 2 March and Cabinet on 23 March. This evaluation process was now anticipated to take place between 1 and 16 February.

Ensuing discussion included that the Task Group would need to adjust it's terms of reference to account for its involvement in the area boards review; concerns over the speed in which the review was being conducted and the importance that all councillors had the opportunity to contribute to the survey; how the delayed issue of the Area Board handbook may have caused difficulty to their operation and how the Constitution Focus Group may help to improve Area Boards as a whole.

In conclusion, the Chairman requested the attendance of the Cabinet Member responsible for Area Boards at the next Committee meeting in March to answer any questions arising from the consultation process.

iii) Budget & Performance

The Chairman confirmed there was little to add in addition to the information previously provided within the Agenda other than clarification received that profile budget reports and a balanced budget were expected by year end.

iv) Major Contracts

The Scrutiny Officer reported on the outcome of the meeting on 12 January. Clarification was received by the Head of Procurement and Contract Management that a revised contracts register incorporating

previous district council contracts would be available for the next Committee meeting in March. It was also confirmed that Scrutiny would be invited to appoint a representative to serve on the Project Board for the new ICT contract at the appropriate time.

v) Workplace Transformation Programme

In addition to the information provided in the Agenda, clarification was given that Area Boards would be informed of the disposal of surplus building assets to ensure that local communities were advised at as early a stage as possible.

41. **Corporate Procurement Strategy Implementation**

The Committee received a report on the outcome of the Rapid Scrutiny exercise on the Corporate Procurement Strategy held on 11 January.

Cllr John Noeken, Cabinet Member, had formally accepted the recommendations made by the Task Group and attended the meeting to answer questions.

Ensuing discussion included confirmation from Cllr Noeken that the comments received through the Task Group were beneficial and, as a result, the Corporate Procurement Strategy was now easier to understand. The Director of Resources also reported that £7.5m savings were built into next year's budget on procurement and from 1st April waste contract management would fall under the Corporate Procurement Unit remit.

Resolved:

To note the report.

42. **Councillors ICT Provision**

The Vice Chairman of the Committee presented the report which outlined the outcome of the rapid scrutiny exercise of the Councillors ICT provision held on 11 December 2009.

Cllr John Noeken, Cabinet Member for ICT, Cllr Chris Cochrane, Portfolio Holder ICT and Deborah Farrow, Service Director ICT attended the meeting to answer questions. Cllr Noeken confirmed that he had accepted the findings and recommendations from the rapid scrutiny exercise as set out in the report.

Positive feedback was provided on the hard work carried out by contractor, who, having identified various problems, had developed a priority list to action. Cllr Noeken confirmed that following the establishment of the priority list, 20 Councillors had been identified to receive hard-wiring (anticipated as taking approximately 3 weeks to complete).

Resolved:

- (1) To thank the Councillors who undertook the rapid scrutiny exercise and the Executive members and officers who attended the Select Committee.
- (2) To endorse the findings and recommendations in the report and note that these had been formally accepted by the Cabinet member.

43. **South West Overview & Scrutiny Officer Network**

Resolved:

To appoint Cllr Tony Deane as the Wiltshire Council representative on the South West Overview & Scrutiny Members Network and note that he would be supported by Ceri Williams as the Scrutiny Officer representative.

44. **Forward Work Programme**

Members of the Committee were asked to consider the draft Forward Work Programme.

Resolved:

To note the Forward Work Programme and the changes to be made as a consequence of decisions taken at today's meeting.

45. **Date of next Meeting**

25 March 2010 at County Hall, Trowbridge.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 12.50 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Sharon Smith, of Democratic & Members' Services, direct line (01249) 718378, e-mail sharonl.smith@wiltshire.gov.uk

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