

**Minute extract from the Organisation & Resources Select Committee
held on 18 November 2010**

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Future Scrutiny of Procurement and Commissioning

The Select Committee, at its meeting in September, considered the findings of a Rapid Scrutiny Exercise undertaken on the Corporate Procurement Strategy in addition to a presentation made by the Corporate Director, Resources on the proposed strategy and approach to future procurement and commissioning.

The Committee resolved that a paper be submitted to this meeting providing details of the options available on how the Committee could carry out its scrutiny work of contracts and procurement, where there was a need for £9m cost savings to be achieved by April 2011 as part of the overall £40m savings for the Council.

The report proposed several options for consideration to include that the Major Contract Task Groups within Select Committees be disbanded taking into consideration that commissioning and procurement would now fall under the remit of the Corporate Director, Resources and that an alternative structure should be implemented to reflect this change.

Ensuing discussion included concern that this proposal would reduce the overall number of members involved in the process and that this could result in a reliance on a small group of councillors without the necessary expertise which could open up the potential for politically focused debate.

There was also concern over the scale of control in place with regards to the procurement process where it was noted that the training programme established as part of the Procurement Board had been withdrawn due to the level of take-up.

The Committee further discussed the benefits of the options provided to include the potential to establish a new single Task Group with a focus on the delivery of the new Programme and potential scrutiny representation on the Corporate Procurement Board.

The Corporate Director was requested to voice his preferred option of approach and could see the benefit to members of retaining the existing Major Contracts Task Groups with reporting to the Committee where required on the strategic and policy issues relating to the Programme.

Resolved:

To retain the 4 Major Contract Task Groups each linked to the individual Select Committees but that these Task Groups would now also hold the Procurement Board to account. The Task Groups would continue to report to the parent Select Committee and now also to the Overview and Scrutiny Organisation and Resources Select Committee by exception. The Terms of Reference would be revised accordingly.

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