

## **CORPORATE SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL**

Thursday 25 February 2010 at 6.00pm

**Panel Members Present**      Councillor Nazir (Chair)  
   Councillor Chambers  
   Councillor Cook  
   Councillor Douglas-Maul  
   Councillor Rochelle  
   Councillor Turner

**Portfolio Holders Present**    Cllr Arif- Business Support Services  
   Cllr Towe- Finance and Personnel

**Officers Present**    Rory Borealis- Executive Director (Resources)  
                                 Martin Sadler- Head of Shared Services and Procurement  
                                 Lawrence Brazier- Head of Procurement  
                                 Kevin Williams- Print and Design Manager  
                                 Helen Dudson- Acting Manager Corporate Performance Management  
                                 Steph Simcox- Service Accounting and Financial Training Manager  
                                 Colin Teasdale- Performance and Scrutiny Officer

### **57/09 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors Longhi, Coughlan and Young

### **58/09 SUBSTITUTIONS**

The following substitution(s) to the panel were submitted for the duration of the meeting:-

- Delete: Councillor Young
- Substitute: Councillor Chambers

### **59/09 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP**

There were no declarations of interest or party whip identified at this meeting

### **60/09 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

#### **Resolved:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2010, copies having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

### **61/09 VALUE FOR MONEY REVIEW- PROCUREMENT**

The Head of Procurement introduced the report (annexed) detailing the findings of a Value for Money review of the service that had been carried out in conjunction with Councillor M Longhi. In particular he referred to the key

findings and forward looking statement of the report which highlighted the need to a fundamental shift in the way the Council delivers procurement which at present was too fragmented and lacking in proper project governance structures to consistently provide real value for money despite some notable savings delivered by the service.

In response to a Member query it was clarified that the difference in anticipated savings and savings targets on page 13 of the report was that the targets were those set at the start of the year whilst anticipated savings were what they projected would actually be achieved by the end of the year based on current information. This prompted questions relating to the target setting process and Members were reminded that the budget process that had just been agreed by full Council, as reported to the Panel in December and January, included a change in the target setting process from aspirational to more realistic evidence based assessments.

The Portfolio Holder for Business Support Services stated that lessons had been learnt from the past

## **62/09 VALUE FOR MONEY REVIEW- PRINT AND DESIGN**

The Print and Design Manager presented the report and delivered a short PowerPoint presentation (annexed) summarising the work of the unit and the findings of the review. As a matter of accuracy he pointed out to Members that the finance figures on the presentation were an update on the figures stated in the report previously distributed, based on the most contemporary information available.

Members welcomed the commercial outlook and expansion of the unit and were encouraged by the work highlighted with Lichfield District Council and NHS Walsall. The Panel were keen to see that opportunities were explored to build on the success of the Lichfield contract by offering services to other authorities, particularly smaller districts in the region. They also suggested that the unit did not limit themselves to just looking at other councils but also explored other public sector markets such as police, fire and transport authorities.

In response to a Member question, the Print and Design Manager confirmed that all internal council departments now came through the unit for their external publication requirements and that the only printing that was still done elsewhere within the council were payslips and the council tax leaflet produced by ICT but that these were moving across when the current printers expired.

Members sought assurances that the financing of the unit did not subsidise it in such away as to result in unfair competition in the market place. The Head of Shared Services and Procurement confirmed that they were recovering costs only and not making a profit he also clarified that built into the Lichfield contract were provisions to benchmark costs against the market rate. The Service Accounting and Financial Training Manager informed members that they were currently looking at how to communicate overhead costs so as to make them

more transparent.

#### **63/09 COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT- ORGANISATIONAL ASSESSMENT**

The Acting Manager of Corporate Performance Management introduced the report and delivered a presentation (annexed) summarising the contents which outlined the assessment process, the first year results and plans for improvement.

Members queried comments in the Audit Commission findings relating to health inequalities and deprivation levels. They were informed that the Audit Commission made their judgements against our stated local priorities, which included improving health and reducing worklessness, and that they looked at our success against meeting these priorities. Whilst the report acknowledged a lot of good work by the Council in these areas it also recognised there was a long way to go for the borough to close the gap nationally.

#### **64/09 FINANCIAL MONITORING 2009/10 THIRD QUARTER FORECAST**

The Service Accounting and Financial Training Manager presented the report outlining the in-year financial monitoring position as at the end of the third quarter for services within the Panel's remit. The report highlighted an improvement on the quarter two position and a projected underspend for both the revenue and capital budgets. The Panel were informed that the underspend within the capital budget will be requested to carry forward to allow projects to be completed.

Members commended Officers for doing a good job in very difficult financial circumstances and were pleased that the Resources Directorate were able to contribute to reducing the Council's overall overspend position.

#### **65/09 WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN**

**Resolved**

**That the Forward Plan issued on 8 February 2010 be noted**

**66/09 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 8 April 2010 at 6pm.

*The meeting terminated at 7.25pm*

Signed (Chair):

Date: