

CORPORATE SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

Thursday 29 November, 2012 at 6.00 p.m. in a Conference Room at the Council House, Walsall

Panel Members Present

Councillor S. Coughlan (Chair)
Councillor M. Flower
Councillor G. Illmann-Walker
Councillor J. Rochelle
Councillor D. Shires
Councillor R. Worrall

Portfolio Holders Present

Councillor Mohammed Arif - Business Support Services
Councillor Chris Towe - Finance and Personnel

Officers Present

Rory Borealis - Executive Director (Resources)
Vicky Buckley - Head of Finance
Lyn Hall - Head of Benefits

166/12 APOLOGIES

An apology was received from Councillor D. Turner.

167/12 SUBSTITUTIONS

There were no substitutions.

168/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

None received.

169/12 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 October, 2012, a copy having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

170/12 DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET 2013/14 FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL AND BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICES PORTFOLIO

Members considered a report which outlined the portfolio plans for future delivery, along with the approach being taken to delivering service improvements and cost efficiency for the Finance and Personnel and Business Support services portfolios.

Members of the Panel considered the budget and challenged officers in respect of: the proposed reduction in the communications budget, the costs of value for money reviews undertaken by external audit and operational savings in relation to the reorganisation of support services. Responses were provided explaining that the communication service was being redesigned and that anticipated savings would have an impact on existing posts. The fees for external audit value for money reviews had reduced by circa 90k as the Council had sound financial systems in place and so were low risk which reduced the amount of audit time required. In relation to the reorganisation of support services it was explained that this was directorate wide across all functions which senior management had committed to delivering savings.

Resolved

That the financial plan 2013/14 to 2017/18 and draft revenue proposals be noted.

171/12 FINANCIAL MONITORING – QUARTER 2 UPDATE

A report was submitted which summarized the predicted revenue and capital outturn position for 2012/13 based on the performance to the end of quarter 2 (April to September 2012) for services within the remit of the Panel.

Members questioned the 190k underspend within Human Resources. It was confirmed that this had been achieved by holding posts vacant and reducing spend on training and development.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

172/12 CENTRAL SUPPORT SERVICES 2012/13

Members considered a briefing note in respect of central support services.

Resolved

That Central Support Services be considered further at the meeting scheduled to be held on 3 January, 2013.

173/12 UPDATE ON LOCALISED COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME

Members received an update on the Localised Council Tax Support Scheme.

Members were advised that 15 thousand questionnaires had been distributed. A press release was issued and information made available on the website. Consultation events were also held with the third sector. The overall response was low however there were no proposals to change and so people were unaffected. There were total of 116 responses were received. 111 of which agreed with the proposal. The majority of people submitted their comments via the post. 17 people provided a response electronically.

A member asked if the Council had a consultation policy in place to which Officers confirmed there was a policy in place and agreed to provide a copy.

Members were advised that the proposals would be considered by Cabinet on 12 December, 2012 and if approved reported to Council.

Resolved

- 1) That a copy of the consultation policy be posted to Councillor Richard Worrall.
- 2) That the update be noted.

174/12 FORWARD PLAN

Discussion took place on key decision 31/12 in relation to various schools within Willenhall. Further clarity was requested on the process in relation to the sale of freeholds and the impact of such sales on the Council.

Resolved

- 1) That further details in relation to the sale of freeholds and impact upon the Council be discussed at the meeting to be held on 3rd January, 2012.
- 2) That the forward plan be noted.

175/12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date of the next meeting of the Panel would take place on 3 January, 2013 at 6.00 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 6.30 p.m.

Signed:

Date: