

CORPORATE SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

Thursday, 19 July, 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 D. Turner
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
Paul Milmore	Head of Business Solutions
Sharon Tait	Programme Lead
Mohammed Irfan	Senior Accountancy Officer
Neil Picken	Senior Democratic Services Officer

142/12 APOLOGIES

None received.

143/12 SUBSTITUTIONS

There were no substitutions.

144/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

None received.

145/12 MINUTES

The Finance and Personnel Portfolio Holder provided a response to matters raised at the meeting held on 21 June, 2012, in relation to the use of agency staff. The Council had utilised 228 agency staff across the Council, 119 of which lived in Walsall, 71 lived within a 10 mile radius and 38 lived over 10 miles away. Whilst some agency staff lived more than 10 miles away it was stated that it was important to ensure the right calibre of people were in place to ensure that services were delivered effectively.

The Finance and Personnel Portfolio Holder also distributed copies of a list of savings made over the last three years, in response to a question at the last meeting.

The Chair thanked the Portfolio Holder for his response.

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 June, 2012, a copy having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

146/12 DRAFT REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN 2011/12 (PRE AUDIT)

Members considered the draft revenue and capital outturn 2011/12 (pre audit). The Panel noted that the draft year and financial position for services under the remit of the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel was a Revenue underspend against budget of £998k (net of use of earmarked reserves/carry forwards) and a capital underspend of £730k (net of approved carry forward into 2012/13).

The Executive Director (Resources) explained that many of the savings had been achieved due to better use of people resources.

Resolved

That the 2011/12 year end financial position for services under the remit of the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel be noted.

147/12 ITEM 6 - HELP ME WITH MY MONEY, MY HOME, MY JOB AND ITEM 7 - HELP MY BUSINESS GROW AND BE SUCCESSFUL

The Chairman sought the Panels agreement to take items 6 & 7 together as they were intrinsically linked. Members of the Panel agreed.

The Executive Director (Resources) provided a brief outline of the two reviews. In doing so, he advised that the 'Help me with my money, my home and my job' work stream had been operating for a number of months. In contrast, the 'Help my business grow and be successful' work stream had only commenced recently.

With regard to the 'Help my business grow and be successful' work stream, an opportunity existed for Members of the Panel to become involved in the process by attending meetings/briefings with Officers. This would provide Members with an insight into the Vanguard method which sought to design services around customers needs and eradicate waste. It would also enable members to better understand how such reviews are undertaken.

It was explained that the main thrust of the 'Help my business grow and be successful' work stream was to delve further than the Council has traditionally gone in the past. Officers were contacting numerous businesses to better understand their position and identify the type of support they required from the Council. Officers provided examples such as contacting estate/letting agents to renegotiate lease terms for struggling businesses. Assistance was also being given to a local company with their marketing

and networking to enable them to attract new business. The planning process was a further are under review to ensure that it was streamlined and customer focussed.

Members led a discussion on the problems faced by businesses wishing to expand but unable to secure loans from banks. Officers advised that they would contact banks as part of the review to discuss these issues.

A further discussion took place on the allocation and type of use of land. Officers advised that a detailed map of all available land and associated uses was being produced. Once completed, the uses attached to each piece of land could be revisited to establish whether it was still the most suitable designation for its location or whether a different use would be more appropriate. A comprehensive list of available land would also greatly assist those businesses looking to expand or move premises and prevent them moving outside of the Borough.

The Executive Director (Resources) advised that the local authority were now able to go further and deeper to help people. The focus was to assist people with their problems and deal with them holistically rather than as separate issues in separate sections which was both time consuming and costly.

The Chair invited Members to become involved in the 'Help my business grow and be successful' workstream as doing so would provide an opportunity to see the process from start to finish. Any Member interested in taking up the offer were advised to contact the Executive Director (Resources) directly.

Resolved

That Members wishing to take part in the Help my business grow and be successful' workstream advise the Executive Director (Resources).

149/12 FORWARD PLAN

During consideration of this item, it was requested that a report be considered by the Panel on the election service following the Police and Crime Commissioner elections in November, 2012.

Resolved

1. That the forward plan be noted.
2. That the Panel receive a report on the Police and Crime Commissioner elections at the meeting scheduled to take place on 29th November, 2012.

150/12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Panel would take place on 11 September, 2012 at 6.00pm.

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 7.00 p.m.

Signed:

Date: