

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CORPORATE RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THE EARL BALDWIN SUITE, DUKE HOUSE, CLENSMORE STREET,
KIDDERMINSTER

THURSDAY, 9TH JULY 2009 (6.00PM)

Present:

Councillors: G W Ballinger (Chairman), Mrs J Greener (Vice-Chairman), A J Buckley, Mrs H E Dyke, B T Glass, D R Godwin, Miss S C Meekings, C D Nicholls, M W Partridge, M A Salter, K J Stokes, J Thomas and N J Thomas.

Observers

Councillors J-P Campion and Mrs A T Hingley.

CR.15 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Aston, N J Desmond and J Holden.

CR.16 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor D R Godwin was appointed as a substitute for Councillor Aston.

CR.17 Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

CR.18 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 11th June 2009 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CR.19 Sickness Monitoring

The Committee received a report from the Head of Human Resources which advised Members on the levels of employee absence relating to sickness for 2008/2009.

Members were informed of the following:

- a. Sickness absence had been a problem for local authorities for some time.
- b. In 2007/08 sickness levels for the Council went up to 12.5 days per employee. However, with good work by Managers and Human Resources, the figure had reduced significantly to 8.8 days.
- c. If long term sickness were to be taken out of the equation, the sickness figure came down to 3.9 days per person.

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- d. Staff on long term sickness were referred to Occupational Health to assist and advise.
- e. There was a mixture of reasons for people being off sick. All staff who returned from sickness had to attend a "return to work" interview with their line manager.
- f. If there were a swine flu epidemic, the Council's sickness figure would be greatly affected.

The Leader of the Council informed Members that it was not clear what Shared Services for Human Resources would bring to the authority, it was doubtful there would be any savings.

Agreed:

- 1. The information be noted.**
- 2. The Committee wished to pass on thanks and congratulations to all staff on an excellent year for sickness.**

CR.20

Budget Scrutiny

The Committee considered the budget scrutiny process for 2010/11 as outlined by the Director of Resources. A briefing paper was handed out to all of Members of the Committee.

Members were informed of the following:

- a. The proposals contained in the briefing paper looked at the potential role of the budget review panel for the forthcoming year.
- b. The 2009/10 budget process had been challenging due to the credit crunch, Icelandic bank issues and a drop in bank interest rates.
- c. Following the budget questionnaire that was issued last year to a number of residents in the Wyre Forest area, the priorities from that report would be rolled forward into this years budget process, i.e. taxpayer priorities.
- d. Shared Services was an area that needed to be considered.
- e. The Council's settlement for 2010/2011 was subject to the new comprehensive spending review.

If members had any questions, they could contact the Director of Resources.

Agreed:

- 1. The Director of Resources to provide Budget Review Panel Terms of Reference to the next meeting of this Committee.**
- 2. The Director of Resources and the Committee/Scrutiny Officer to arrange for the dates and membership of the Budget Review Panel meetings.**

CR.21 Annual Report 2008/09

The Committee received a report from the Policy & Performance Officer which informed Members on the Council's end-of year performance with regard to Corporate Plan Priorities, National and Local Performance Indicators and achievements in the form of an Annual Report.

Members considered the report and were informed of the following:

- a. The current budget book listed all charges relating to waste which the Council charged for.
- b. The Corporate Performance Clinic would look at key areas of work such as communication. Quarterly press releases would be issued.

Members asked if the Worcestershire Hub could give out a reference number each time a call was logged with them.

Members also asked what the definition of "broadly complaint" was in relation of food hygiene law on food establishments.

Members felt that the overall assessment from the Audit Commission was relatively low – 2 out of 4. The Director of Resources would obtain statistics on Use of Resources from other authorities.

Agreed:

- 1. The content of the Annual Report 2008/2009 be noted.**
- 2. The Committee/Scrutiny Officer to contact the Director of Community & Partnership Services asking for the Worcestershire Hub to provide a reference number each time a call was logged.**
- 3. The Policy & Performance Officer to circulate to Members a list of definitions used for the National Performance Indicators.**
- 4. The Director of Resources to obtain statistics from other authorities on the assessment of the Use of Resources.**

Recommended to Cabinet:

The Annual Report for 2008/09 be approved.

CR.22 Directorate Business Plans

The Committee received a report from the Corporate Development and Improvement Manager which provided Members with information relating to the five Directorate Business Plans for 2009/10.

The Chairman of the Corporate Resources Scrutiny Committee asked Members to take ownership of the Directorate Business Plans and to monitor progress throughout the current municipal year.

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Members were informed of the following:

- a. The Directorate Business Plans were produced each year.
- b. Members would receive information on performance data on a quarterly basis.
- c. Training would be undertaken for all service managers in preparation for next year's business plans.

Agreed:

1. **The Committee be advised through the quarterly 'highlight' and 'exception' reports from the Corporate Performance Clinics of progress being made by Directorates in the delivery of their Business Plan and the positive contribution from the Corporate Resources Scrutiny Committee as to what was happening and reinforcement the Committee's involvement.**
2. **The following Councillors to take ownership of the relevant directorates:**
 - a. **Resources – Councillors Miss S C Meekings and J Thomas.**
 - b. **Legal & Corporate Services – Councillors Miss S C Meekings, A J Buckley and B T Glass.**
 - c. **Planning & Regulatory Services – Councillors K J Stokes, M Partridge and J Holden.**
 - d. **Community & Partnership Services – Councillors Mrs H E Dyke and J Aston.**
 - e. **Chief Executive – Councillors C D Nicholls and N Thomas.**

Recommendation to Cabinet:

The Directorate Business Plans for 2009/2010 be approved.

Councillor Mrs H E Dyke left the meeting at this point, 7.35pm.

CR.23 Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA)

The Committee received a report from the Corporate Development and Improvement Manager which updated Members on the area assessment element of the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA).

Members were informed that a report would be presented to the Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee at the end of 2009 which would report the items that required action.

Agreed: The Corporate Resources Scrutiny Committee continue to receive updates on the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) when available.

CR.24 Work Programme

Agreed: The Committee/Scrutiny Officer to arrange to add Directorate Plans to the work programme.

Councillor Mrs H E Dyke came back to the meeting at 7.40pm.

CR.25 Press Involvement

No items were identified for scrutiny that might require publicity.

CR.26 Exempt Information

Decision: Under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of “Exempt Information” as defined in paragraphs 2, 6 and 7 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

CR.27 Summary of Minutes

The following proceedings were considered after the press and public had been excluded from the meeting. A summary of the minutes relating to these items has been made as “exempt Information” would be disclosed if the minutes were published in full.

CR.28 Exempt Minutes

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on the 11th June 2009 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

CR.29 Single Site

The Committee were updated on the progress of Single Site.

The meeting ended at 7.52 pm.