

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CORPORATE RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

THURSDAY, 3RD JUNE 2010 (6.00PM)

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**Present:**

Councillors: G W Ballinger (Chairman), P B Harrison (Vice-Chairman), J Aston, A J Buckley, H E Dyke, N Gale, P V Hayward, T Ingham, M B Kelly, M A Salter, J Thomas, N J Thomas, and S J Williams.

**Observers:**

Councillors: J-P Campion, F M Oborski, and G C Yarranton.

**CR.1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: D J McCann, and J W Parish.

**CR.2 Appointment of Substitutes**

Councillor S J Williams was appointed as a substitute for Councillor D J McCann.

**CR.3 Declaration of Interests**

No declarations of interest were made.

**CR.4 Minutes**

**Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 15th April 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**CR.5 Introductions**

The Committee considered an introductory note from the Assistant Scrutiny / Committee Officer which outlined the Committee's Terms of Reference.

The Chairman introduced and welcomed the new Members to the Committee.

Members were advised that later in the agenda were two urgent items to be considered under "any other business".

**Agreed: To note the contents of the introductory note regarding the Committee's Terms of Reference.**

**CR.6 ICT Strategy**

The Committee received a report from the ICT Manager which provided an update

on the ICT Strategy.

The Director of Resources advised Members that a key aspect of the strategy with regard to achieving efficiencies was the reduction in the number of servers from nearly 100 to approximately 10 or 12. Members were informed that this process had been slowed by a problem with migrating data across servers.

Members were informed that there had been considerable progress in the implementation of the Procure to Pay system, which had been operational since April 2010.

**Agreed:**

**1) To receive quarterly updates on the ICT Strategy.**

**2) To note the contents of the report.**

**CR.7 Mortgage Review Panel**

Members were advised that this agenda item was deferred until the July meeting of the Committee.

**CR.8 Directorate Business Plans**

The Chairman advised the Committee that in the previous municipal year, each member of the Committee had been assigned to a particular Directorate, with the expectation that they met with Directors in order to scrutinise their assigned Directorate's Business Plan.

The Chairman suggested to the Committee that this arrangement should continue in order to facilitate in depth scrutiny of Directorate Business Plans.

Members were asked to nominate themselves to particular Directorates, and the Chairman advised that the Assistant Scrutiny / Committee Officer would contact Members to ascertain their preferred Directorate.

**Agreed:**

**1) To assign each Member to a Directorate, in order for them to scrutinise a specific Directorate Business Plan.**

**2) The Assistant Scrutiny / Committee Officer to contact Members to assign them to Directorate Business Plans.**

**CR.9 Covalent Training**

The Committee received some training from the Policy and Performance Officer in the use of the Covalent Software System.

Members were advised that Covalent was the Council's Performance Management Software System, which was used to measure Performance Indicators (PIs), which included National Indicators (NIs) and Local Indicators. The system contained performance information which was central to the scrutiny of Directorate Business

Plans.

Members were informed that they had read only access, which meant that they would not have to worry about accidentally deleting or editing any information on the system.

The Policy and Performance Officer advised that she would be happy to provide one to one training sessions in the use of the system and on performance management more generally.

A Member requested that the training handout which was distributed at the meeting be circulated to Members electronically.

A Member asked what the implications of the Comprehensive Area Assessment's abolition would be. In response the Corporate Development and Improvement Manager advised that a letter to Councils had been sent by the Audit Commission regarding this, which would be circulated to Members after the meeting.

A Member requested that a glossary of acronyms related to performance management be provided to the Members.

**Agreed:**

- 1) The Covalent Training Handout be circulated to Members electronically.**
- 2) A glossary of performance management acronyms be provided to Members.**
- 3) The Audit Commission's letter to Councils regarding the abolition of the Comprehensive Area Assessment be circulated to Members electronically.**

**CR.10 Feedback From Cabinet**

**Agreed: To note the content of the Cabinet action list, following consideration of the recommendations from its meeting of the 20th April 2010.**

**CR.11 Work Programme**

Members received a Work Programme for the Committee for the municipal year.

A Member queried why the item "Wyre Forest Matters Partnership Performance" was listed, as she perceived that it fell within the terms of reference of the Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee. In response, the Corporate Development and Improvement Manager advised that this item referred to performance management of Local Area Agreement targets, and would be reworded.

The Chairman advised the Committee that the item on the Mortgage Review Panel would now be considered at the July 2010 meeting of the Committee.

Members were advised of an item to be considered at the July 2010 meeting of the Committee which would provide an update on the financial position of the authority in the context of central government spending cuts, and suggested that it be received

on a regular basis.

**Agreed:**

- 1) To note the contents of the Work Programme.**
- 2) To receive a regular update on the financial position of the Council.**

**CR.12 Press Involvement**

**Agreed: There were no items identified as requiring publicity.**

**CR.13 Any Other Business**

**Treasury Management Review Panel**

The Chairman advised the Committee of two urgent items to be considered, the first of which was a report from the Director of Resources requesting the establishment of a Treasury Management Review Panel.

The Director of Resources advised the Committee that consideration of Treasury Management Arrangements had previously been undertaken by a sub-group of the Cabinet, but that revised guidance from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) had been recently been issued which stated that this should be a scrutiny function and not that of an executive.

Members were advised that the Review Panel needed to commence quickly, as it would consider the arrangements for appointing new Treasury Management Advisors, as the existing contract for this was due to expire in September 2010.

A draft Scoping Form suggesting the Terms of Reference of the Committee was tabled to Members.

The Chairman of the Committee advised that it was intended to have the first meeting of the Review Panel on Thursday 8th July 2010, at 2pm.

**Agreed:**

- 1) To agree to the establishment of a Treasury Management Review Panel, made up of 6 members of the Corporate Resources Scrutiny Committee.**
- 2) The following Members to comprise the Review Panel, Councillors: T Ingham, P B Harrison, A J Buckley, J Thomas, H E Dyke, and N Gale.**
- 3) The first meeting of the Review Panel be scheduled for 2pm, Thursday 8th July 2010.**

**Recommendation from the Transformation Board**

The Corporate Development and Improvement Manager informed Members of a recommendation made by the Transformation Board at the meeting of the 2nd June 2010, which requested the formation of a Corporate Plan Development Review Panel.

#### **Agenda Item No. 4**

Members were advised that the purpose of the Review Panel was to involve members in the development of the 2011 to 2014 Corporate Plan.

The Chairman of the Committee suggested that Group Leaders be asked to nominate Members to participate in the Review Panel.

#### **Agreed:**

- 1) A Corporate Plan Development Review Panel be established.**
- 2) The Assistant Scrutiny / Committee Officer to contact Group Leaders to request nominations for Membership.**

#### **CR.14 Single Site Update**

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Executive and Director of Legal and Corporate Services which updated Members on the progress of the Single Site of Office Accommodation Project.

Members were advised by the Chairman that this item would be considered in open session, as it was felt that the information contained within the report was no longer exempt, as was listed in the agenda.

The Leader of the Council advised Members that a meeting was being arranged which would introduce Members to both the Council's appointed Project Management and Design Team for Single Site, and also the developers and operators of the new District Cemetery and Crematorium.

The Director of Legal and Corporate Services advised that some preliminary designs for the Single Site were expected to be received in July 2010, for Members to view.

#### **Agreed: To note the contents of the report.**

The meeting ended at 19:01 pm.