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MEETING	CORPORATE AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
DATE	10 SEPTEMBER 2012
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS RUNCIMAN (VICE-CHAIR, IN THE CHAIR), BARNES, HORTON, MCILVEEN, POTTER, STEWARD, WARTERS, SEMLYEN (SUB FOR CLLR KING) AND BARTON (SUB FOR CLLR WISEMAN)
IN ATTENDANCE	COUNCILLOR GUNNELL
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLORS WISEMAN AND KING

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#### **16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

At this point in the meeting, Members were asked to declare any personal, prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests they might have in the business on the agenda. No declarations were made.

#### **17. MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee held on 16 July 2012 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

#### **18. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

It was reported that there had been one registration to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme however this had since been withdrawn owing to illness.

#### **19. BRIEFING ON THE FINANCIAL INCLUSION BOARD**

The Head of Strategy, Partnerships and Communication gave a presentation on the work of the Financial Inclusion Board and the forthcoming Inclusion Strategy, due to be presented to Cabinet for approval in November 2012, a copy of which has been attached to the online agenda for this meeting.

The key issues raised related to:

- Information on the wider context of economic and financial inclusion in respect of individuals
- The meaning of financial inclusion
- The extent of disadvantage in the city
- Knock on effects of financial exclusion
- The impact on York
- Information on work being undertaken in this area
- Future plans to assist all residents
- Problems in early identification of traditionally hard to reach customers
- New ideas being examined and the long term vision

Members went on to discuss and question a number of points including:

- That the introduction of universal benefits would have a detrimental effect on financial inclusion
- Methods of tackling high interest rates and 'loan sharks'
- Need for the city to be more welcoming to social enterprises e.g. Co-op directory, better advertising for credit unions etc
- How to address the stigma of benefit claimants, as they soon became hard to reach
- The Youth Council had requested provision of improved financial advice to young people of secondary school age
- Barriers to youth employment also included travel costs, purchase of interview attire and out of school childcare
- Number of people without bank accounts and how to reduce this figure
- Concerns that too many different access points may be created/offered which may deter further contact
- Need for whole joined up approach
- Parish Council's would be excellent bodies for promoting this work

Councillor Gunnell, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Officers updated and replied to members questions.

Members were asked to take all of the information provided into consideration when deciding whether to progress the 'Engaging the Disaffected' topic suggested for scrutiny review.

RESOLVED:                      That the presentation be received and noted.

REASON: To inform Members in their consideration of the scrutiny topics later in the meeting.

## 20. **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

The Head of Neighbourhood Management gave Members a progress update on the Council's new Community Engagement Strategy, a copy of which has now been attached to the online agenda for this meeting.

The main points arising from the presentation were:

- The strategy had been refreshed to meet the needs of the new public health agenda and white papers, the Localism Act, changing demographics and lower resources
- Information on current engagement through the Health and Wellbeing Board, Neighbourhood Planning, Council Budgets and community conversations
- The 5 Strategy principles
- Details of the Engagement Toolkit
- Timetable
  - October 2012 – draft strategy, consultation and toolkit development
  - November – secure funding for web portal
  - December – draft strategy to Cabinet
  - March 2013 – final strategy, toolkit training package
  - April 2013 – web portal goes live

Member's comments and questions were requested the main points raised being:

- Need to ensure that people were clear of the type of engagement they could make at each level on the ladder of community engagement
- Pressure groups were not currently consulted on literature that was produced
- Concern that contact would not be made with those hard to reach residents in the city
- Need to consult all relevant groups to prevent any future misunderstanding
- Whether the toolkit would be commercially suitable to sell to other authorities
- The method of communicating/promotion once finalised, needed to be proactive and draw out as many responses as possible

- Take up of Neighbourhood Plans and their value
- Following receipt of consultation responses, and subject to resources, suggest addition of every response with comparison of documents ?

The Chair thanked officers for their informative briefing, and Members were asked to take all the information provided into consideration when deciding whether to progress the 'Engaging the Disaffected' topic suggested for scrutiny review.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be received and noted.

REASON: To provide an overview for the Committee on the new Community Engagement Strategy.

## **21. CUSTOMER STRATEGY 2012-2015**

Consideration was given to a report which set out details of the Council's new Customer Strategy which would sit alongside the Workforce and Procurement and Commissioning Strategies to support delivery of the Council Plan.

Following completion of work under the 2009-12 Strategy, the authority had found it necessary to re-evaluate its basis for interacting with customers in view of recent financial settlements, a changing and increasingly diverse population together with demands for increasingly technological and web based solutions for accessing services. This Strategy now provided a single vision for interaction with customers in the future and was closely tied in with the imminent move to West Offices.

Officers reported on a number of ongoing key projects including:

- Standards accreditation hopefully being received shortly
- Management of customer flow
- Auto attendant telephone system

Members questioned whether the automatic transfer of customers via the phone system would now allow staff time to focus on more vulnerable resident groups. Officers confirmed that there would be telephone system improvements as part of a developing strategy for access to information at the new Customer Centre opening at West Offices in 2013.

Members were asked to consider the information provided on this agenda item together with information provided on the previous two agenda items when deciding whether to progress the 'engaging the disaffected' scrutiny topic previously suggested by Cllr Barnes.

Whilst it was recognised that the issues affecting levels of engagement were present across all wards, Members agreed it would be useful to carry out a comparison between two wards e.g. Heworth & Rural West to compare and contrast, two areas with differing levels of deprivation and reasons for lack of engagement.

Following further discussion Members confirmed their wish to proceed with a scrutiny review on Improving Customer Engagement.

The Chair thanked all the officers for their interesting and informative presentations and briefings.

- RESOLVED:
- i) That the report and briefing be received and noted.
  - ii) That a Task Group comprising of Councillors Barnes, Steward, Potter, Runciman and Wiseman be formed to scope the agreed review detailed above, and report back to the next meeting of the Committee.

REASON: To inform the Committee's future work plan.

## **22. PROCUREMENT STRATEGY**

Members considered information provided in the CYC Procurement and Commissioning Strategy 2012-14, together with recommendations arising from the Resources Scrutiny Board procurement review undertaken in June 2005.

Officers provided a further general update in respect of progress with the implementation of the recommendations arising from the earlier review, raising the following points:

- A revised procurement blueprint had been prepared in 2010 to comply with EU legislation

- Work was being undertaken with the voluntary and community sector organisations together with interaction with smaller providers
- 'Meet the Buyer' days were held regionally
- Collaborative buyer days were in the process of being arranged with Higher York
- If at all possible Fair Trade products were sourced however these were often at a premium cost
- It was being made easier for local suppliers to access contracts and framework agreements were used, where appropriate
- Launch of an e-interface with suppliers through the introduction of a new Supplier Contact Management System and a procurement toolkit

Members commented and questioned a number of the points raised including:

- The need for a full contract review system – it was confirmed that this would shortly be in operation and provide automated reviews of contracts
- The tender award criteria – it was confirmed that this was organised on a case by case basis but normally a 60% quality and 40% price split would be used
- The need to be inclusive and assist people in supported employment e.g. Yorkcraft

- RESOLVED:
- i) That the reports and briefing be received and noted.
  - ii) That an update on the Procurement Strategy be added to the Committee's work plan for April/May 2013.

REASON: To ensure that Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee members are kept updated on procurement issues.

## **23. WORK PLAN 2012-2013**

Consideration was given to the Committee's work plan for the remainder of the 2012-13 municipal year. Having identified issues for inclusion in the plan earlier in the meeting Members agreed to:

Add

- 12 November 2012 –Improving Customer Engagement Scrutiny Review– scoping report

RESOLVED: That the work plan and briefing notes be received and noted subject to the addition of the above item to the plan.

REASON: To assist in the formulation of the Committee's work plan for the remainder of this municipal year.

Councillor C Runciman, Vice Chair

[The meeting started at 5.00 pm and finished at 7.00 pm].