
MEETING	CORPORATE AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
DATE	11 MARCH 2013
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS WISEMAN (CHAIR), BARNES, HORTON, KING, MCILVEEN, POTTER, RUNCIMAN (VICE-CHAIR), STEWART AND WARTERS

40. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare at this point in the meeting any personal interests, not included on the Register of Interests, or any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests they may have in respect of business on the agenda. No additional interests were declared.

41. MINUTES

Arising out of consideration of the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, the Chair requested clarification in respect of declarations of interest made by members in respect of outside bodies.

Officers confirmed that declarations were entirely down to the judgement of individual members however, generally membership of an organisation which was applying for a grant was unlikely to create a prejudicial interest in respect of a potential scrutiny topic looking at how grants are managed generally.

Following further discussion it was

- RESOLVED:
- i) That the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 21 January 2013 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record subject to the following amendments:
 - In the list of members present at the meeting, following the name of

Cllr Douglas add 'substitute for Cllr Horton'.

- In Minute 31(Declarations of Interest) amend Cllr Barnes and Cllr Wiseman's declarations of interest to 'personal' rather than 'prejudicial'.

- ii) That the minutes of the final meeting of the Sickness Absence Management Task Group held on 28 January 2013 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.
- iii) That the minutes of the final meeting of the City Centre Ad Hoc Scrutiny Committee held on 20 February 2013 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

42. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was reported that there had been no requests to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

43. SICKNESS ABSENCE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY REVIEW - DRAFT FINAL REPORT

Consideration was given to the draft final report and findings of the Sickness Absence Management Task Group, and associated Annexes which had been set up to carry out a scrutiny review on staff sickness, specifically to identify ways of reducing sickness absence levels across the organisation.

Cllr Steward, as a Task Group member, outlined the background to the review and information received together with the review findings to date which were set out in the report at paragraphs 2 to 17.

He went on to outline the review objectives:

- i. To revise the Council's Absence Management Policy & procedures to ensure they take account of iTrent, are in line with best practice, and written in a more formal assertive language;

- ii. To identify improvements in:
 - a. the provision of Management training
 - b. the induction programme for all new staff
- iii. To explore ways of introducing a change in culture within the workforce moving away from a policy of 'managing absence', towards one of 'encouraging attendance'.

He confirmed that a major issue had been the collation of sickness absence figures which the Task Group had clarified had not consistent throughout the authority. However, following the introduction of the second phase of iTrent it had been confirmed that this would include the recording of sickness absence, providing fuller information. The rewarding of good staff attendance had also been highlighted as requiring a recommendation. It was noted that some recommendations had already been incorporated into the new HR policy.

Consideration was then given to full list of review recommendations as set out at paragraph 64 i) to xii) of the report.

Members confirmed their support for the recommendations, particularly the encouragement of attendance however the suggested examples in the recommendation were not supported by all. It was suggested that it would be more motivational if staff were able to gain access to additional training or development opportunities, and/or the presentation of a certificate by the Lord Mayor at the Mansion House may be more tangible options

Concerns were expressed regarding inconsistencies with staff induction and to the possible underlying problems behind sickness absence, which may require further examination.

Officers referred to the Staff Survey sent out to staff every 2 years which included a section focussing on morale and stress which it was confirmed could be compared year on year. Members suggested the inclusion of an additional question asking what incentive could be used to encourage good attendance. Officers confirmed that this would be put forward for consideration.

The Chair then thanked the Group for completion of the review and final report and it was

- RESOLVED:
- i) That the draft final report and recommendations of the Sickness Absence Management Scrutiny Review be agreed and noted.
 - ii) That the above report and recommendations be forwarded to Cabinet with a cover report for their information.

REASON: To conclude the work of this review in line with scrutiny procedures and protocols.

44. WORK PLAN

Consideration was given to the Committees work plan for the 2012/13 municipal year.

Officers confirmed that the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services would be attending the April meeting to update on their priorities and challenges for both this and the forthcoming year which would inform members in their decision making on possible future scrutiny topics.

It was confirmed that there would be a meeting of the new Grants and Loan scrutiny review Task Group, later in the week. It had become apparent however that, owing to there being no corporate record of individual sign offs, this would require the individual Finance Managers to undertake this work which may not be completed and available for the May meeting.

Members also questioned the delay with the slipping of the briefing on the Innovation Strategy which was to be rescheduled for a future meeting in the new municipal year. It was suggested that this was a question that could be asked of the Cabinet Members at the next meeting. Officers confirmed that they would confirm this with the Cabinet Members.

RESOLVED: That the work plan be received and noted subject to incorporation of the above updates.

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

Councillor S Wiseman, Chair
[The meeting started at 5.00 pm and finished at 5.40 pm].