
Meeting	Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee
Date	15 July 2013
Present	Councillors Galvin (Chair), Fraser, Horton, Jeffries, King, McIlveen, Potter, Runciman (Vice-Chair) and Steward
In Attendance	Councillors Semlyen and Williams

7. 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 might have in respect of business on the agenda. No further interests were declared.

8. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 24 June 2013 be approved, and signed by the Chair as a correct record subject to the following amendment:

Minute 4 – The Council’s Journey to Excellence in Equalities – in the penultimate paragraph, the deletion of the words ‘*about* the continuing use of the term “disabled people” and its replacement with ‘~~terms used in the report~~’ ‘*that disabled people continued to be termed*’.

[As amended at the CSMC meeting on 9 September 2013]

9. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION/OTHER SPEAKERS

It was reported that there had been one registration to speak at the meeting under the Council’s Public Participation Scheme, and one Member of Council had also requested to speak.

Mr Hopwood spoke to support evidence based research and decision making, providing a number of examples and stressing the importance of this research to those making decisions. Whilst recognising budget cutbacks he reiterated support for Cllr Semlyen's proposed scrutiny review on this subject, in an effort to improve the quality of decision making within the authority.

Councillor Semlyen also spoke in support of evidence based decision making and the researching of best practice. Confirming that this would provide the most effective and cost effective decision making. She went on to present her suggested topic for the support of staff health and well being, with particular reference to lower back pain and supporting staff health at West Offices.

Consideration was given to an information sheet in support of the topic, circulated at the meeting, which provided further details in relation to absenteeism and research regarding health interventions having cost effective results. The HR and Officers responses in respect of the topic submission were also reported which confirmed that stress appeared to be a bigger factor and that, in their view, no review was required on this topic. It was pointed out that future occupational health procurement would focus on the wellbeing of employees.

10. ATTENDANCE OF NEW CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, PERFORMANCE & CUSTOMER SERVICES - DISCUSSION AROUND PRIORITIES & CHALLENGES

The new Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Customer Services attended the meeting and presented his priorities for the forthcoming year.

He spoke about the changes made to his portfolio area which now included corporate communications and Emergency Planning in order to provide joined up business continuity. He reported the main areas of interest as:

Budget 2013/14

The delivery of the 6 Council priorities had been delivered on budget. Although not without difficulties the year end had been under spent by £84k. Reference was made to the likely reductions in central government funding and continued pressures on resources against the rising demand for services.

The 2 year budget had already been set and it was hoped to continue with 2 year budgets in the future. A saving of £11m had already been made with an additional £8m saving proposed for 2015/16.

Comprehensive Spending Review

It was understood that the New Homes Bonus would be top sliced meaning a reduction of around £1m for the city.

Capital Budget

A different approach was being undertaken on next year's budget, looking at large scale spending challenging those areas and to how services could be delivered differently.

Reference to the reprofiling of funds, part of which included delays in DfT approval for the Access York scheme. The West Offices development was however still expected to be under spent and on time, a significant achievement.

Customer Services

Confirmed that his focus was on the important priority of customer contact and the enhancement of the authority's reputation.

Performance Monitoring

Reference to the overview and monitoring role which the Scrutiny Committee could provide in this area, receiving and overseeing performance figures to ensure a continued focus.

Financial Inclusion

This was an important part of the portfolio with the delivery of the Strategy on which the previous Cabinet Member had worked hard to improve.

Members thanked the Cabinet Member for his report and went on to question a number of areas including:

- Concerns regarding public contact with the Council, questioned whether this was an issue or a trend. The Cabinet Member confirmed that, following recent benefit changes and staff turnover problems had been encountered, however it was hoped that this was short term.

- An examination of the impact of the delivery of the Financial Inclusion Strategy should be considered as a corporate issue.
- Call Centre, questioned ring back facilities and Customer Centre etiquette. It was confirmed that lessons could be learnt from other good service providers.
- Questioned whether a 2 year budget was prudent financially. Confirmed that this provided a degree of predictability for all.

Officers pointed out that, although other Scrutiny Committees received performance information, the CSMC had previously made a decision not to receive these details owing to the corporate nature of the Committee.

Members discussed how and when this information could be presented to future meetings to ensure current information to enable value to be added to the overview.

Following further discussion it was

RESOLVED: That performance information be presented to future meetings of the Committee on an exceptions basis to include both those showing under and over performance.

REASON: To provide an overview and update the Committee on the latest financial and performance position for the 2013/14 financial year.

11. MONITORING THE WORKFORCE STRATEGY 2012-15

Consideration was given to a progress report on the 2012-15 Workforce Strategy, for the six months January to June 2013, following the report to Committee in January.

The Assistant Director, Customer and People, reported on progress and future proposals in the development of the Council's workforce in the following priority areas:

- Skills and behaviours development
- Recruitment and retention
- Pay, reward and recognition

- Wellbeing and engagement and
- Performance and change

Members questioned a number of points in relation to the report, including:

- FERA reference in paragraph 23 of the report, confirmed as the Food and Environment Research Agency. Concerns raised at inclusion of acronyms in reports. Reference made to corporate style in their use which should be used in reports.
- The guidance for managers to support staff who were victims of domestic violence, in response to an increase in reported incidents to the Police.
- Work experience placements and the potential to increase these. Officers referred to the need for meaningful work experience and to the impact on services as placements were concentrated over a short period of time.
- 'From Service to City' and Skills and Behaviours Development programmes suggested evaluation at September meeting of the Committee.
- Need for generic traineeships/apprenticeships as specialisation reinforced the silo approach. Officers confirmed these comments had been noted.
- Support for report back on the results of the recent Staff Survey and Peer Review.

- RESOLVED:
- i) That the progress made against the Workforce Strategy in the six months between January to June 2013 be noted.
 - ii) That a six monthly update be provided to the Committee in January 2014, to include a review of achievements and details of the agreed 2013-15 priorities going forward.

REASON: To ensure Members are kept informed of progress against the Workforce Strategy 2012-15.

12. NIGHT TIME ECONOMY - BRIEFING ON KEY ISSUES FOR POTENTIAL REVIEW

Members considered a proposal made by Cllr Douglas to introduce an overall theme for scrutiny review in this municipal year. The suggestion made was that each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's would carry out a review specific to their individual terms of reference, which collectively would result in recommendations for improvement on an agreed theme.

The Chair confirmed the proposal had already been discussed at a recent Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs meeting, and that two topics had been suggested - Night Time Economy and Mental Health.

A report on the 'night time economy' as a potential theme was presented and Officers circulated a list of example topics each Overview and Scrutiny Committee might choose to review – a copy was republished with the online agenda.

The Committee indicated their support for this themed approach and, requested that each Overview and Scrutiny Committee carry out an appropriate review and present their draft final reports to the Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee in March 2014. The Committee agreed that this would give them sufficient time to collate the findings and recommendations from each of the reviews into one report to go to Cabinet before the end of the municipal year.

- RESOLVED:
- i) That the Committee agreed to pilot a themed approach to scrutiny in this municipal year.
 - ii) That the theme adopted be on the 'night time economy in York'.
 - iii) That the findings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees be reported back to CSMC for inclusion in a final report, for presentation to Cabinet in May 2014.

REASON: In order to ensure effective scrutiny of key Council priorities.

13. **WORKPLAN 2013/14**

Consideration was given to the Committee's work plan for the 2013/14 municipal year. It was confirmed that it had been decided, at the Committee's last meeting, not to proceed with the topic on evidence based decision making and this was reiterated at the meeting. Further consideration was given to the topic suggested, earlier in the meeting, on Staff Wellbeing and the Cabinet Members suggestion on Performance Monitoring.

Following responses received from Officers and further discussion it was agreed not to pursue the suggested topic on Staff Wellbeing.

RESOLVED: i) That the 2013/14 work plan be received and noted subject to the following amendments and additions:

11 November 2013 - Additions

- Staff Survey Results
- Update on the Implementation of recommendations arising from Managing Sickness Absence Review and Community Engagement Review (brought forward from 13 January 2014 meeting)

10 March 2014

- Night Time Economy Report.

ii) That following further discussion with Officers as to the most relevant time for the Committee to examine quarterly performance reports this work be fed into the Committee's programme of work for the 2013/14 municipal year.

REASON: To provide an overview of the Committee's work for the 2013/14 municipal year.

Councillor J Galvin, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.00 pm and finished at 6.50 pm].