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MEETING	EFFECTIVE ORGANISATION OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	30 SEPTEMBER 2009
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS WATT (CHAIR), D'AGORNE, FIRTH, GUNNELL, HYMAN, MERRETT, R WATSON AND PIERCE (SUBSTITUTE)
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLORS HORTON

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## **8. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

At this point in the meeting, Members were asked to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they may have in the business on the agenda. None were declared.

## **9. MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the last meeting held on 30 June 2009 be approved and signed as a correct record by the Chair.

## **10. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak under the Council's Public Participation Scheme, on general issues within the remit of the Committee.

## **11. UPDATE REPORT ON ISSUES RAISED AT LAST MEETING AND RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS REFERRALS MADE BY THIS COMMITTEE**

Members received a report which provided them with update information on issues arising at their last meeting in June 2009 and feedback from the Scrutiny Management Committee on the referrals made at that time by this Committee.

The Scrutiny Officer clarified that further to the report on the Single Improvement Plan Refresh 2009/10 which was considered at the last meeting of the Committee, it had been confirmed by the Assistant Director of Customer Service and Governance that the Audit and Governance Committee would not be looking at the following three work streams:

- Member Training
- Internal Communications
- Risk Management.

The Scrutiny Officer advised that although this Committee had the right to scrutinise whatever they wish to, the above had been identified in order to avoid duplication of work with the Audit and Governance Committee.

Members agreed that Project Management was an area of interest to the Committee together with Risk Management, as risks are calculated by Project Managers for inclusion in reports. The Scrutiny Officer advised that the way risks are calculated for reports is a complicated process, despite Officers receiving training on it and the simplification of it may help engagement within the Council. Members were advised it would be difficult to look at both Project Management and Risk Management and that they should initially focus on one of the topics.

After further discussions members felt that they would like to first focus on Risk Management to see how it links into Project Management and requested that they receive a presentation on Risk Management to incorporate the following:

- How risk is calculated
- Monitoring of how staff approach risk management and if they are getting it right.
- How it is measured and monitored.

RESOLVED: (i) That members note the information in the report  
(ii) That a presentation on risk management be added to the Committees work plan.

REASON: To ensure a robust and relevant work plan is agreed for this municipal year.

## **12. REVIEW OF THE EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN**

Members considered a report which advised them of the regulations around the use of the Executive Forward Plan including how it is used and whether it enables and supports the pre-decision scrutiny of forthcoming decisions. The report identified alternative options for its use in order to support the recent changes to the decision making process and the overview and scrutiny function in York.

Members queried why the Forward Plan did not include forthcoming decisions for a whole 4 month period. The Scrutiny Officer advised that the Council's Forward Plan is currently not being used in line with that aspect of the legislation and that is one of the reasons why the review had been proposed.

Members suggested that the Forward Plan should be displayed in a public area such as a reception or on a notice board.

They also expressed disappointment at the comments made by Officers regarding the Forward Plan and questioned whether better training was required in order for officers to use it more effectively.

The Scrutiny Officer agreed to produce a scoping report detailing the purpose of the forward plan and its structure for the next meeting.

**RESOLVED:** That Members wish to proceed with a review of the Executive Forward Plan taking into consideration the following key objectives:

- (i) To understand how the Forward Plan currently operates
- (ii) To ensure the Forward Plan works effectively within legislative requirements
- (iii) To recommend appropriate changes to the Forward Plan working practices, to deliver an agreed corporate approach.

**REASON:** To review the effectiveness of the Executive Forward Plan and its role in providing public information and supporting the decision making process.

### **13. FIRST PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MONITOR FOR 2009/10**

Members received a report which provided details of how the Council had performed during the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2009. Three areas of performance were covered in the report; finance, performance and key projects and priorities.

Officers outlined the report and highlighted the following:

Financial:

- The general fund budget for 2009/10 is £117,705k
- The current projection is that there will be a gross overspend of £4,457k
- Economic Climate is a reason for the pressures.
- Increased demand in Social Care, including Children's Services, has contributed to the overspend.

Performance

- A quarter of the national performance indicators have data available at this point in the year.
- 54% are improving compared to last year
- 29% have seen a decline.

Members expressed concern on certain aspects of the report such as the significant pressures arising due to the economic recession and the overspend in Social Care. The Scrutiny Officer advised that the Learning &

Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee had already agreed to look at the social care overspend in more detail.

In context of the Park and Ride scheme and the provision of free passes for Council staff, members queried if the Green Travel Plan for the Council could be looked at to establish how it has been delivered to individual Council departments and whether it was being co-ordinated from a central point. The Chair commented that it would be useful to know how the organisation of the Green Travel Plan had been approached up to now. The Scrutiny Officer suggested a presentation at a future meeting would be useful to provide members with more information and to assist the committee in deciding if the Green Travel Plan would be a suitable topic for scrutiny review.

RESOLVED: (i) That Members noted the performance and finance issues identified in the report in particular;

- The work already undertaken within directorates to reduce the potential overspending.
- The need for further work to bring expenditure in line with the budget.
- The longer term need for growth in some budgets, which will require compensating efficiencies and service transformation across the Council.

REASON: To monitor the performance of the service plan areas relevant to the remit of the committee.

RESOLVED: (iii) That a presentation on the Green Travel Plan be received at the meeting in January 2010.

REASON: To consider whether the issue is a suitable topic for scrutiny review.

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Councillor Watt, Chair  
[The meeting started at 4.30 pm and finished at 5.30 pm].