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| MEETING | EFFECTIVE ORGANISATION OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE |
| DATE | 14 SEPTEMBER 2010 |
| PRESENT | COUNCILLORS HEALEY (CHAIR), CRISP, HORTON (VICE-CHAIR), D'AGORNE, FIRTH, GUNNELL AND HYMAN |
| APOLOGIES | COUNCILLORS JAMIESON-BALL |

10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare at this point in the meeting any personal or prejudicial interests they may have in the business on the agenda. No interests were declared.

11. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings of the Effective Organisation Overview and Scrutiny Committee's held on 6 July and 14 July 2010 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

12. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

13. PRESENTATION ON CUSTOMER SERVICES

Members received a presentation from the Assistant Director of Customer and Business Support Services which outlined recent changes made to customer services and future plans for transformation in line with the Council's Customer Strategy which was approved in 2009 and the More for York programme.

The Assistant Director of Customer and Business Support Services answered Members queries in relation to specific issues raised in the presentation and Members made the following comments:

- Improvements need to be made to the process of logging and handling Member queries and Customer queries.
- Up to date ombudsman complaint forms and information needs to be available to customers.

- Home care invoices need to be clearer when money has been paid by direct debit as they can be confusing for the elderly.
- The work being undertaken is to be commended.

Members agreed that a possible topic for this Committee to look at could be the current process for logging and responding to Customer queries as they had heard of differing experiences from the public i.e. some complaints are responded to swiftly and others do not hear anything back following a complaint.

RESOLVED: (i) That the Committee notes the current services, performance and developments for Customer and Business Support Services.

(ii) That the Assistant Director of Customer and Business Support will prepare an introductory paper on a possible review of the customer feedback/complaints and resulting actions.¹

REASON: To monitor developments in Customer and Business Support Services as a relevant service area to the remit of this Committee.

Action Required

1. Prepare paper on possible scrutiny topic for 6th Oct meeting. PS

14. QUARTER 1 FINANCE & PERFORMANCE MONITOR FOR 2010-11

Members received a report that provided details of council performance for the period 1 April 2010 to 30 June 2010. Consideration was given to two areas:

- Performance – covering how well the Council performed across a wide range of performance indicators, at both corporate and directorate level including progress on priority actions and projects.
- Finance – covering the councils service and corporate budget management.

Officers highlighted the key issues and responded to Members queries on the data that had been provided.

A report (Customer and Business Support Services Finance Report 2010/11) was tabled containing detailed information on service areas covered by the Customer & Business Support Directorate. The report contained detailed information on issues such as customer statistics and staff sickness. Members were asked to consider the tabled report and provide feedback to officers on how useful the additional information is to them in relation to this scrutiny committee, and whether the report would be useful in the future. The report is attached to these minutes online.

Members queried paragraph 44 on page 26 of the report relating to the new coalition government's proposed cuts in funding and asked whether officers could provide any further information relating to the cuts. Officers advised the information would be going to Executive Member Decision Sessions in due course.

RESOLVED: (i)That the performance issues identified in the report be noted.

REASON: So that corrective action on these performance issues can be taken by members and directorates.

RESOLVED: (ii)That the finance issues identified on the report, in particular the current forecasted pressures and that members acknowledged that work is ongoing to reduce these in time for the Monitor 2 report, due before Executive on 16 November 2010.

REASON: So that the Councils expenditure can be contained within budget, where possible by the end of the financial year.

RESOLVED (iii)That in accordance with Financial Regulations and referencing paragraph 54 of the officers report, approval is requested for a release from Contingency of £20k to fund the inward investment post.

REASON: To enable the continuation of the council's role in promoting inward investment in the city.

That the three new Key Corporate Risks set out at paragraph 70 of the officers report be approved.

REASON: So that monitoring of these risks is presented to Members on a regular basis.

15. BRIEFING ON LEGAL SERVICES

Members considered a report which provided information about the role of the in-house legal team and steps which have been taken to minimise expenditure on legal advice from external solicitors.

The Head of Civic, Democratic and Legal Services went through the key issues and reported the following areas of progress:

- The Interim head had identified what work was being outsourced and had identified the areas with a high legal spend.
- Two new Solicitors are due to start work in Autumn to work on contract and commercial work and locum solicitors had been recruited in the meantime.
- The locum solicitors had saved approximately £100,000 between February to June 2010
- Social Services work continues to be high volume and following decisions by Members as part of the budget process the legal team had been able to recruit two solicitors and a legal assistant to work in this area.

Members welcomed the progress in reducing expenditure and were happy to let the new arrangements run until the end of the municipal year before deciding whether to scrutinise the matter further.

RESOLVED: That Members note the steps that have been taken to secure that competent and cost effective legal advice is available to the Council.

REASON In order that the Committee has undertaken its role to monitor performance.

16. PRESENTATION ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICT)

Members received a presentation from the Head of ICT on projects within the ICT blueprint and other projects with the ICT theme of sustainability and the new dark fibre network.

The Head of ICT went through the key projects and responded to Members questions on the information presented. The following areas were covered:

- Rationalisation Programme
- HR and the implications for ICT at the new Head Quarters.
- Multipurpose devices for desktop and bulk printing
- Software Review
- Citrix and office upgrade
- New Intranet site – Colin.
- City of York Council Website
- Sustainability
- Dark Fibre Network for York.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the contents of the presentation.

REASON: In order that the Committee is consulted on developments in ICT.

17. WORKPLAN

Members considered a draft workplan for the Effective Organisation Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the remainder of the 2010-11 municipal year.

Members agreed to receive a budget update report at the meeting on 23 November and a further budget update at the meeting in January 2011.

Members acknowledged that the briefing on Equalities had been slipped to the January meeting.

RESOLVED: That the draft Workplan be approved with the amendments detailed above.

REASON: To ensure a robust and relevant work plan is in place for the municipal year.

TABLED REPORT - CUSTOMER & BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICES FINANCE REPORT 2010/11.

Councillor Healey, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.00 pm and finished at 8.00 pm].