
MEETING	CORPORATE AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
DATE	25 JUNE 2012
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS WISEMAN (CHAIR), BARNES, HORTON, KING, MCILVEEN, RUNCIMAN (VICE-CHAIR), STEWARD AND WARTERS
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLOR POTTER

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

At this point in the meeting, Members were asked to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they might have in the business on the agenda.

Councillor Barnes declared a personal non prejudicial interest as a Trustee of the York Museums Trust in relation to agenda item 6 (Annual Scrutiny Report 2011/12 – 8. York Museums Trust Review). He also made reference to page 31 of the Annual Report, to a previously called in item ‘The Community Stadium & Council Leisure Facilities – Procurement of Operator Arrangements’, in the event of there being any further discussion on this item. Although he had had no previous interest to declare, since that time his employer had undertaken sponsorship of the York City Football Club.

2. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Scrutiny Management Committee held on 27 February 2012 and the Effective Organisation Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 19 April 2012 be approved and signed by the Chair as correct records.

3. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

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

4. PRESENTATION ON WELFARE REFORMS AND THE LIKELY IMPACTS ON THE VULNERABLE

Members received a joint presentation from the Head of Financial Procedures and the Benefits Manager on the forthcoming national welfare reforms. This also included details of ongoing preparation work within Customer Support Services, full details of which were circulated at the meeting and added to the on-line agenda.

Details were given of the key welfare changes arising from the Government's Localisation agenda, in April 2013, of Council Tax support and reforms and the localisation of social fund and business rates. The national agenda would introduce Universal Credits from October 2013 and had involved changes to the Housing Benefit in April 2012.

Information was given on the key drivers for change together with the Government's aims of:

- Developing local Council Tax Support schemes to encourage work
- Increasing council tax through technical reforms
- Removing the need to issue Council Tax information with bills
- Providing an option of 12 month instalments for Council Tax
- Providing growth for the local economy through Business Rate Discounts
- Financial benefit from business rate growth
- Localisation of the Social Fund to help better targeting at a local level and reduce demand

Further information on what the Council was doing in the areas of Council Tax Support and reform in the areas of Business Rates and Housing Benefit changes together with areas of support were outlined. Officers confirmed that communication was a key issue in how the information was presented to residents.

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

- Further clarity on the drivers for change
- Information on annual student exemptions and the impact on the York customer base

- Further information on technical reforms and the removal of exemptions
- Business Rate schemes/discounts
- The financial impact
- Confirmation that this would also affect the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust
- A solution was required to prevent tenants being penalised for living in family homes
- Continuing affect of changes on customers and staff

Officers also referred to a briefing paper submitted to Cabinet in March on the proposed reforms. This had shown the impact of changes on York residents, provided a plan showing the areas most affected and given anonymous case studies.

The Chair thanked officers for their informative presentation and update.

RESOLVED: i) That the presentation be received and noted.

ii) That a quarterly update on these changes and their effects on York residents be scheduled into the Committee's work plan for 2012/13.

iii) That consideration be given to the possibility of arranging a pre-Council seminar to inform all members on the Welfare Reforms to include details of any assistance that could be provided for residents.

REASON: To keep members updated on the forthcoming national welfare reforms

5. REVIEW OF STAFF SICKNESS ABSENCE

Consideration was given to an interim report which detailed the findings to date from a review of staff sickness absence, instigated by the previous Effective Organisation Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2011.

Further information regarding the background to the review, its objectives and the review findings to date were detailed in the report. It was reported that the Task Group had confirmed that they would like to continue their work on the review.

Those Members of the Task Group who were present confirmed their conclusion that the problem had been found, not to be the number of days taken off by staff due to sickness but, the figures themselves and how they were logged together with the accompanying HR procedures.

Officers confirmed that the introduction of the absence management module part of iTrent would be in place by Autumn and in use by December 2012. The new system required revised policies which it was agreed could incorporate the change in style, suggested by the Task Group. Any revised policy would be sent to the unions for comment.

Consideration was then given to the following options:

- i) Conclude the review at this stage and recommend that HR:
 - carry out appropriate revisions to CYCs Attendance at Work Policy in line with the review findings to date
 - carry out appropriate consultation on the revised policy and;
 - introduce appropriate management training and new staff induction in line with the review findings to date
- ii) Progress the review as outlined in the interim report, attached to the report.

Following discussion it was

- RESOLVED:
- i) That a Task Group comprising of Councillors King, McIlveen and Steward be set up to conclude the scrutiny review of Staff Sickness Absence in line with the Groups recommendations, set out in paragraph 20 of the interim report, with the review to be concluded by the end of 2012.
 - ii) That the final report from the Task Group be scheduled to report back to the Committee in November 2012.

REASON: To progress the work of the Task Group, in line with agreed Scrutiny procedures and protocols.

6. ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2011-12

Consideration was given to the Annual Scrutiny Report 2011-12 which summarised the work of the five Overview and Scrutiny Committees for the period June 2011 – May 2012.

Officers reported on the following scrutiny reviews carried out by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the last municipal year, further details of which were provided in the report:

- Admission Arrangements and School Travel Policies
- Staff Sickness Absence Management
- York Museums Trust
- Reducing the Carbon Footprint in the Privately Rented Sector
- End of Life Care – The Use and Effectiveness of DNACPR Forms
- City Centre Access

Further information provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's regarding performance and financial monitoring and specific monitoring reports, relating to individual Committees terms of reference, were also set out in paragraphs 20 to 28.

The Chair confirmed that she had now met with all the Scrutiny Chairs which had been very useful and productive. Officers reminded members that the quarterly monitoring reports were no longer presented to the Scrutiny Committee's, as a matter of course, however individually certain committee's had requested this information.

Some members confirmed that it would be helpful if the Overview and Scrutiny Committees raised any concerns they had arising from performance monitoring with the Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee at the earliest opportunity. Following further discussion it was

RESOLVED: i) That approval be given to the Annual Scrutiny Report, covering the period

June 2011 to May 2012, for presentation to Council.

- ii) That Scrutiny Committee Chair's be requested to raise any performance related issues at the regular Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs meetings.

REASON: To enable its presentation to Full Council, in line with Constitutional requirements.

7. DRAFT WORK PLAN 2012/13

Consideration was given to the Committee's draft work plan and suggested list of scrutiny topics and briefings for the 2012/13 municipal year.

Officers referred to the additional topic proposed by Cllr Barnes, at the Scrutiny Work Planning event in May, regarding the engagement of residents who were disaffected from accessing Council services. Officers confirmed that this would be covered in the Customer Strategy presentation at the next meeting. The Chair confirmed that the engagement of residents could also be encompassed within the new Neighbourhood Working and Customer Contracts.

Members made a number of points and commented on the Committee's proposed work plan for the 2012/13 municipal year:

- Engaging the Disaffected – discussions to be undertaken with Officers re focus and review outcome at a future meeting
- Access of local contractors to CYC procurement contracts with the need to retain business in the local economy
- Suggested topic – How households can avoid personal debt/role of CYC re education etc. Agreed await findings from topic put forward at Work Planning event on Financial and Economic Inclusion and further information from the Financial Inclusion Board before consideration of progressing.

Following further discussion it was

RESOLVED: That subject to the following additions and amendments to the Committee's work plan for 2012/13, the plan be received and noted:

16 July 2012

- Briefing on Procurement Strategy & Suggested Topic on Procurement & Commissioning – feasibility to be narrowed to 'how we engage with local business's in the procurement process'

10 September 2012

- Staff Sickness Review – further Interim Report, following agreement to the continuation of the review
- Suggested presentation from Cllr Gunnell on the work of the Financial Inclusion Board

12 November 2012

- Staff Sickness Absence – Final Report
- Welfare Reforms - Update

REASON: To ensure that proper and effective scrutiny work planning is in place for 2012/13.

Councillor S Wiseman, Chair
[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.30 pm].

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