

Support Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Thursday 15 March 2012

PRESENT:

Councillor Lowry, in the Chair.

Councillor Berrow, Vice Chair.

Councillors Browne (substitute for Councillor James), Casey, McDonald (substitute for Councillor Evans), Murphy, Rennie, Stark and Stevens.

Co-opted Representative: Janet Isaac, University of Plymouth

Apologies for absence: Councillors Evans and James

Also in attendance: Councillor Ian Bowyer – Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and People, Mark Grimley, Assistant Director for Human Resources and Organisational Development, David Northey – Head of Finance and Ross Johnston – Democratic Support Officer.

The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 11.00 am.

Note: At a future meeting, the committee will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.

75. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR**

Agreed that Councillor Berrow is appointed as Vice-Chair for this meeting.

76. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest in accordance with the code of conduct.

77. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

Postponement of Sickness and Occupational Health Services Review

With regard to minute 79 - Sickness and Occupational Health Services Review the Chair proposed that, as a result of a written report not being submitted and the panel's dissatisfaction with the proposed option of a powerpoint presentation, this item be postponed.

Agreed that the Sickness and Occupational Health Services Review is postponed until a future meeting of the panel.

78. **UNISON DERECOGNITION**

Ian Bowyer, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and People and Mark Grimley, Assistant Director for Human Resources and Organisational Development presented a report on Unison derecognition. The panel were informed that –

- (a) more than six months had past since the decision to derecognise Unison was taken on 18 August 2011;
- (b) the decision was taken for the right reasons at the right time and achieved the right outcome, which resulted in the three Unions agreeing and signing the Collective Agreement on 16 September 2011;
- (c) the Collective Agreement was the conclusion of intense negotiations and consultations with the three recognised trade unions in respect of changes to employee terms and conditions.

Following questions from members it was reported that –

- (d) all parties involved in the negotiations acted in a constructive manner and the council acted correctly at all times;
- (e) looking forward the council and Unison had made steps to improve relations and deal with underlying issues in a positive fashion, this had resulted in –
 - additional time had been allocated to Unison representatives working for the council;
 - a joint commitment to future collective bargaining;
- (f) the council's relationship with both GMB and Unite unions had been a key factor in brokering a deal that led to the implementation of the Collective Agreement.

79. **SICKNESS AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SERVICES REVIEW**

With regard to minute 77 this item was postponed.

80. **VALUE FOR MONEY (VFM) UPDATE**

Ian Bowyer, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and People and David Northey, Head of Finance provided the panel with a presentation on VFM. The panel were informed that –

- (a) the VFM programme was initially set up in response to National Indicator 179 and had ensured the council had a plan and commitment to deliver VFM and achieve savings and efficiencies;
- (b) there were three major projects being delivered by the council that

aimed to achieve improved VFM. These were the Accommodation Strategy, the Procurement project and carbon management;

- (c) the Accommodation Strategy was now in its second phase and was progressing well with current revenue savings being £529k per annum;
- (d) the procurement project incorporated both the purchase to pay (P2P) and Category Management projects, which aimed to deliver more control of expenditure across the council and over the course of a three year programme achieve savings of £3.6m by 2013 – 2014;
- (e) the procurement service now had six dedicated buyers in place and purchasing had become more effective through this system and had realised savings of £510k for 2011 – 2012;
- (f) the Category Management project focused on higher spend purchasing above £75k and throughout its operation savings were estimated to be £339k in 2012 – 2013 rising to £1.165m in 2013 – 2014;
- (g) the Council had made a commitment to deliver an ambitious ICT shared services programme, which was being headed up by Neville Cannon, in an attempt to deliver efficient services that can be utilised by other businesses and organisations;
- (h) the VFM team were reviewing CIPFA reports on a number of departments within Corporate Services to identify if any service improvements could be made;
- (i) one area that required review and improvements identified from the CIPFA reports was the council's property costs and energy consumption;
- (j) the council were far exceeding its target in the Carbon Management Plan, which had been assisted by the development of the Plymouth Life Centre and implementation of the Accommodation Strategy.

Following questions by councillors it was reported that –

- (k) the council had the cost of securing buildings once they had been vacated unless they were being demolished, this cost was considered necessary especially on sites such as the Former Pluss Factory Site, Clittaford Road, Southway, which was currently being marketed for sale;
- (l) currently the Schools Library Service was located at Chaucer Primary School and until this service was relocated to a suitable building the school site would not be demolished;
- (m) the council had a responsibility to become more efficient and in order to help achieve this the council's online transactions would be

improved;

- (n) the council were on course to deliver 95 per cent of its budget delivery plans and were identifying further areas to achieve the remaining 5 per cent of the £15m savings for 2011 – 2012.

Agreed that –

- (1) a copy of the Powerpoint presentation is emailed to all those present at the meeting;
- (2) any future Powerpoint presentations are provided to panel members via email prior to the meeting.

81. **TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORT - IMPACT OF THE RESTRUCTURE IN REVENUES AND BENEFITS, CUSTOMER SERVICES, CASHIERS AND INCOMES AND CREDITORS**

The panel received the task and finish group report on the Impact of the Restructure in Revenues and Benefits, Customer Services, Cashiers and Incomes and Cashiers.

Councillors were informed that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board approved the recommendations contained in the report and agreed to add two further recommendations which would be considered by Cabinet on 27 March 2012.

Agreed that –

- (1) Ross Johnston, Democratic Support Officer would email a copy of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board minutes from 29 February 2012 to all panel members;
- (2) an update on the staffing levels within the Adult Social Care and Proof of Concept Teams is requested.

82. **TRACKING RESOLUTIONS AND FEEDBACK FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**

The panel noted its tracking resolutions document.

83. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The panel noted its work programme for 2011-2012 and agreed to request that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board –

- (1) a review of the Shared Services work programme is include on the Support Services OSP work programme for 2012-2013;
- (2) approve a Task and Finish Group to undertake a review of the value for money ethos across the council.

84. **MINUTES**

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2012 are confirmed as a correct record.

85. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.