

VALUE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday 5 April 2011

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillor Brown (Chair), Councillor Coulter (Vice-Chair), Councillors, Gotch, Keen, Jahan Khan, McCready, Rowley, Seamons and Wolff.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Tim Sadler (Executive Director, City Services), Andrew Bradfield-Barnes (Parking Manager); Helen Bishop and Paul Wilding (Customer Services); Pat Jones and Alec Dubberley (Law and Governance).

54 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillors Abassi and Baxter plus Barrie Finch and Anita Fisher. Councillor Rowley attended as a substitute member.

55 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

56 EQUALITIES STANDARDS

The Head of People and Equalities submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) updating the Committee on the work done towards reaching “achieving” level under the Qualities Framework for Local Government.

The Committee welcomed the Head of People and Equalities to present the report. He made the following points:-

- The Corporate Management Team had taken a decision to focus on 10 key standards focusing on core Council services
- He believed that the Council would reach “achieving” level by September 2011. A ‘dry run’ for achieving this standard was recently undertaken and initial feedback was appended to the report;
- All of the proposals outlined in the budget were all the subject of an equality impact assessment.

Members asked for officers to pay particular attention to vulnerable members of the community who may be disproportionately affected by cuts to the City Council budget.

Resolved to:-

- (1) Note the report
- (2) Request that a further report is presented to the September meeting of the with a progress report which should include the results of the peer challenge.

57 REVIEW OF BENEFITS SERVICE

The Committee received the report of the Audit Commission (previously circulated, now appended) detailing the results of an inspection of the Council's Benefits Service.

The Committee welcomed the Head of Customer Services to highlight key points of the report and any actions that had been taken to address the commission's concerns. The following points were covered:-

A fundamental service review group was now meeting regularly to monitor progress. This group's membership included Councillors from all parties.

It was anticipated that projected savings for the service could be achieved by not filling vacant staff posts

Members were concerned that despite extra resources being allocated to benefit assessment, the cost per claim and performance remained poor, when compared with similar local authority performance. The Executive Director assured the Committee that performance improvement was a key priority for fundamental service review and this would lead to an eventual decrease in cost and ultimately better value for money.

The Committee agreed that

Resolved to:-

- (1) Note the report and briefing from, the Head of Customer Services
- (2) Request that a progress report concerning key areas agreed by the Chair would be presented to a future meeting in six months time.

58 CAR PARKING CHARGES IN PARKS

The Head of Direct Services submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) summarising the results of public consultation into charging for parking in areas adjacent to City Parks.

The Committee noted that a permit scheme for sports clubs members would be introduced and that the scheme would be operational from the 1 July at the latest.

Resolved

- (1) Note the report
- (2) Ask officers to submit a report to the Committee in six months time which would monitor the effectiveness of the scheme.

59 WORK PROGRAMME 2010/11

The Principal Scrutiny Officer presented a summary of the Committee's activities for the previous Council year.

Members felt that much had been achieved in the year with some very positive outcomes as a result. In particular the work of panels was felt to be very effective – particularly the work of the Finance and Performance Panel. The Chair thanked members and officers for their efforts.

The Committee felt that a more detailed discussion on the work programme for the next Council year should take place at the next meeting.

Resolved to note the report

60 MINUTES

Resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on held on 22 February 2011.

The meeting began at 5.00 pm and ended at 7.35 pm.

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