

STRATEGY & PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Thursday, 30 September 2010 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 1.42 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Melinda Tilley – in the Chair

Councillor Norman Bolster
Councillor Liz Brighthouse OBE
Councillor Nick Carter
Councillor Jean Fooks
Councillor A.M. Lovatt
Councillor Dr Peter Skolar
Councillor David Wilmshurst

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor Couchman (for Agenda Item 8)
Councillor Mitchell (for Agenda Item 11)

Officers:

Whole of meeting Ms M Holyman (Corporate Core)

Part of meeting

Agenda Item

Agenda Item	Officer Attending
5	Mr S Capaldi (Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy))
6	Mr J Parry (Associate Director for Shared Services)
6, 7, 8 and 9	Ms S Scane (Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer)
10	Mr J Clark (Head of Communications, Marketing & Public Affairs)
11	Mr M Tugwell (Interim Head of Sustainable Development)
12	Ms A Bailey (Corporate Performance and Review Manager)

The Scrutiny Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting, together with the following additional documents:

Lists of main scrutiny reviews held in the period April 2005 to April 2010 and of scrutiny work undertaken in, or programmed for, 2010/11

and agreed as set out below. Copies of the agenda, reports and additional documents are attached to the signed Minutes.

33/10 MINUTES

(Agenda No. 3)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2010 were approved and signed subject to, in minute 27/10, paragraph 5, line 2, where "Youth Services" should read "Youth *Offending Services*".

34/10 DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

(Agenda No. 5)

The Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy) reported that budget preparation was the main issue currently affecting the Chief Executive's Office. A number of Oxfordshire Big Debate events had already been held. He reported that the Government had issued a number of consultation documents during the summer but the publication of the Localism Bill was still awaited. The Local Government Boundary Committee would be conducting an electoral review shortly. Work was in progress on the Corporate ICT Strategy and the Customer Services Strategy. In response to Councillor Wilmshurst's question, the Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy) reported that the Customer Services Strategy needed to be updated to take account of changes in customer relationships with the Council.

It was AGREED to note the update.

35/10 SERVICE AND RESOURCE PLANNING

(Agenda No. 6)

The Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer made a presentation to the Committee on the functions of the Chief Executive's Office (copy of the presentation is appended to the signed copy of the minutes). The Associate Director for Shared Services made a presentation to the Committee on the functions of Shared Services, including outlining partnership opportunities currently being explored (copy of the presentation is appended to the signed copy of the minutes).

In response to a question from Councillor Brighouse, the Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy) replied that consideration had been given to outsourcing services but, for example, provision of legal services in-house was currently cheaper.

In response to a question from Councillor Fooks, the Associate Director for Shared Services reported that discussions were being held with other county councils on sharing costs of help desk advice, for example, on SAP. In response to a question from Councillor Dr Skolar, the Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer reported that, for example, internal audit services were already being provided to Buckinghamshire County Council and Thames Valley Police. The Associate Director for Shared Services added that health and safety advice was being provided to two district councils. On invoicing and accounts payable, it was proposed to offer these services to schools to save them officer time.

It was AGREED:

- (a) that the Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer would provide a breakdown on the salary ranges of employees within the Chief Executive's Office including the number of employees within each salary range and the cost of all salaries within the Service;
- (b) that the Associate Director for Shared Services would provide members of the Committee with more information on the work of the Staff Care Team, including the number of cases within each category;
- (c) to note the presentations and to welcome the work being undertaken to share services with/supply services to other local authorities and organisations.

36/10 CAPITAL PROGRAMME REVIEW/CAPITAL PLANNING PROCESSES 2011/12

(Agenda No. 7)

The Committee considered a report (SYP7) .

It was AGREED to note the report.

37/10 FINANCIAL MONITORING OVERVIEW

(Agenda No. 8)

The Committee considered a report (SYP8).

In response to a question from Councillor Dr Skolar, Councillor Couchman reported that he had asked for further information on social care responsibilities for Section 117 clients. In response to a question from Councillor Tilley on the reduction in capital grant, the Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer confirmed that these grants had to be spent by the end of the financial year.

It was AGREED:

- (a) to note the report;
- (b) that the Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer would provide information to members of the Committee about the level of loss of direct grants to schools for schemes, for example, Every Child a Reader since June 2010.

38/10 BUSINESS STRATEGY 2010-2015

(Agenda No. 9)

The Committee considered a report (SYP9).

It was AGREED to note the report.

39/10 COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

(Agenda No. 10)

The Committee considered the report (SYP10).

It was AGREED to note the report and to ask the Head of Communications, Marketing & Public Affairs to report on progress on the strategy to the next meeting of the Committee.

40/10 LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIPS

(Agenda No. 11)

Mr Tugwell (Interim Head of Sustainable Development) reported that the Oxfordshire City-Region Enterprise Bid (copies of the Bid had been circulated to all members of the Committee) had been submitted to the Government and the Government's decision on the bid was expected on or around the Spending Review announcement (20 October). Bids to the Regional Growth Fund would be invited before the end of the calendar year. He outlined the proposal and proposed management arrangements. Councillor Mitchell welcomed the support the proposal had had from a variety of organisations across a broad range of sectors.

It was AGREED to note the report and that the Interim Head of Sustainable Development would report on progress regularly to the Committee.

41/10 TRACKING REVIEWS UNDERTAKEN

(Agenda No. 12)

The Corporate Performance and Review Manager circulated lists of main scrutiny reviews held in the period April 2005 to April 2010 and of scrutiny work undertaken in, or programmed for, 2010/11. She reported that the average costs had been as follows:

Scrutiny review - £13,500-£18,000 in 2007/8 and £9,300 in 2008/9;

Select committee - £1123;

Question and answer session - £200.

Councillor Brighthouse pointed out that the list did not include the review entitled 'Are We Included? Why Not?'

It was AGREED to ask:

- (a) the Corporate Performance and Review Manager to submit a report reflecting on the lessons to be learnt from the scrutiny work already undertaken to the next meeting of the Committee;
- (b) Councillor Tilley to present a progress report on the work of the Social Inclusion Strategy Group to the next meeting of the Committee.

42/10 FORWARD PLAN
(Agenda No. 13)

No items from the current Forward Plan were identified for scrutiny.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing