

CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 5 March 2009

Present: Councillor L Fraser (Chair)

Councillors C Meaden K Wood
C Tegg P Southwood
J Crabtree J Keeley

Cabinet Member Councillor S Holbrook

47 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/PARTY WHIP

Members were asked to consider whether they had personal or prejudicial interests in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state what they were. Members were reminded that they should also declare, pursuant to paragraph 18 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, whether they were subject to a party whip in connection with any item(s) to be considered and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of the whipping arrangement.

No such declarations were made.

48 MINUTES

Members were requested to receive the minutes of the meetings of the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 12 January and 4 February, 2009.

Resolved – That the minutes of the meetings held on 12 January and 4 February, 2009, be approved as a correct record.

49 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT - QUARTER 3

The Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Corporate Services submitted the third quarter Performance Monitoring report. The report included progress on key actions and performance indicator exceptions together with sickness absence figures and a financial summary as at 31 December, 2008 for both the Corporate Services and Law, HR and Asset Management Departments.

Both the Directors of Corporate Services and Law, HR and Asset Management responded to comments from Members on the sickness figures and the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management stated that he would provide a written response to clarify the performance indicator figures on the percentage of local authority employees declaring that they met the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 disability definition.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

50 ACCOMMODATION CHANGE - UPDATE

Further to minute 43 (12/1/09), the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management submitted a report on the development of an implementation programme for office change.

In agreeing the Strategic Asset Review, the Council had also resolved that the office accommodation aspects of the review be implemented and that officers be asked to accelerate the process of making savings from the rationalisation of the Council's office accommodation.

The Council's Asset Management Plan contained its accommodation strategy, the key elements of which were to reduce the average office space occupied by employees to 10 sq. m. per person and concentrate directorate staff in fewer locations. Implementation of the plan had resulted in some smaller administrative buildings being vacated and released for disposal. In the light of the SAR and the savings target created the Council's accommodation strategy now required review. The lead officer on the review would be the Head of Asset Management.

At the same time the Head of Transformation had been examining the use of and need for office space by different services and functions across the authority, and researching accommodation change programmes in other authorities. This, coupled with an understanding of service and business changes currently in progress, had enabled the identification of areas most suitable and ready for change. In addition some pilot agile working projects had been undertaken, and lessons learned from these, together with learning from other authorities, would be used to shape Wirral's accommodation change programme. The report went on to outline the next steps which would be taken and also detailed the lease arrangements for the Cheshire Lines building.

In response to comments from Members, the Director stated that it was probable that the proposed Project Manager for accommodation change would be an internal appointment utilising existing resources within the department and that it would need to be a full time position. The Project Team would contain officers from across the Council; in particular from the key resource areas (Asset Management, IT, HR, Finance and Transformation) and from the major services affected.

There was a budget of up to £100,000 for consultancy work in relation to the office accommodation review although if some of this work could be undertaken in-house, subject to existing capacity, then it would be.

The Director also explained the restrictions on the lease arrangements for the Cheshire Lines building.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

51 UPDATE ON WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received an update on its work programme, which indicated those reports which it had considered over the past municipal year.

The Director of Corporate Services explained how the Committee's work programme had been set for the year.

A member suggested that the Committee could do some more pro-active work, setting the agenda for scrutiny rather than reacting to issues as they arose. The Chair stated that Committee members were always able to ask for reports.

With the permission of the Chair, the Cabinet Member addressed the Committee and stated that he would welcome a more pro-active role by the Committee and Committee members generating ideas for debate.

On a motion by Councillor Southwood, seconded by Councillor Teggins, it was then –

Resolved – That an extra meeting of the Committee be arranged prior to the 9 April Cabinet, on a date to be agreed by the Chair in consultation with the Party spokespersons, to consider 2 issues:

- **The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act**
- **Buildings Maintenance**