

COUNCIL EXCELLENCE O&S COMMITTEE
26 March 2012

93 MASTERS IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (MBA) PROGRAMME

Further to minute 52 (17 November 2011), the Chair referred to the report of the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management in relation to the return on investment of the MBA Programme and referred also to minute 352 (Cabinet – 15 March 2012), which had agreed the award of the contract for the continued delivery of the MBA programme to the University of Chester. The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Finance provided an explanation to Members for the non-attendance of the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development. The report provided details of the MBA return on investment and highlighted the benefits of the MBA qualification, which was one element of the Council's suite of leadership development options. The report considered how best to improve the return on investment and commented that leadership development was essential to organisational success and was critical when the organisation faced tough challenges and hard times.

Members expressed their dismay that the Cabinet had approved the award of the contract prior to consideration of the matter by this Committee and questioned whether the Cabinet's decision had been fully informed, particularly in relation to negative views expressed by managers who had completed the course that were set out in an evaluation survey. Members suggested that the Council should assess how managers were utilised, having completed the qualification and questioned whether the MBA Programme represented value for money. Further information was also requested in relation to the leadership development options offered by other local authorities.

The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Finance commented that the Cabinet's decision was to agree that if the MBA course was to continue then, having regard to the outcome of a procurement exercise undertaken between June and November 2011, it should be with the University of Chester.

Resolved –

- (1) That the Cabinet be requested to note the significant concerns expressed by the Council Excellence O&S Committee in relation to the MBA Programme, in particular –**
 - (i). that it had not had regard to any comparative information on leadership development programmes from other local authorities;**
 - (ii). that the skills and knowledge gained by managers who have completed the training programme have not been fully utilised;**
 - (iii). that value for money has not been demonstrated;**
 - (iv). that had the Cabinet seen the report now presented, it may have made a more informed decision.**

- (2) That a further more detailed report be presented to the next appropriate meeting, to address the concerns highlighted in (1) above, and to include also, details of the training budget and the percentage of that budget utilised by the provision of the MBA Programme.**