

CORPORATE AND EXTERNAL ISSUES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING, 15TH AUGUST, 2012

Present – Councillors Spencer (Chairman), Allen, A. Connell, Critchley (as deputy for Councillor Greenhalgh), Darvesh, Francis, Hayes, A. Ibrahim, Iqbal, Morgan (as deputy for Councillor Mrs. Fairclough) and J. Walsh.

Also in attendance

Councillor Mrs. Thomas	-	As deputy for the Executive Cabinet Member Leader's Portfolio
Councillor Adia	-	Cabinet Member for Human Resources and Cohesion
Councillor Peacock	-	Cabinet Member for Sport, Libraries, Youth and Culture
Councillor Zaman	-	Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood and Community Services
Mr. S. Harriss	-	Chief Executive
Ms. M. Asquith	-	Director of Children's Services
Ms. H. Gorman	-	Borough Solicitor
Ms. S. Johnson	-	Assistant Director Finance and Information Technology
Ms. D. Ball	-	Assistant Director Environmental Services
Ms. G. Hughes	-	Troubled Families Co-ordinator
Mrs. V. Ridge	-	Deputy Democratic Services Manager

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs. Fairclough, Gillies, Greenhalgh and Morris.

Councillor Spencer in the Chair.

6. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 28th June, 2012 were submitted.

Resolved – That the minutes be signed as a correct record.

7. MONITORING OF DECISIONS

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report which detailed the progress of the decisions taken by this Scrutiny Committee.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

8. THE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2012/2013

The Director of Chief Executive's Department submitted a report which set out the remit of the Committee and also put forward a proposed work programme for 2012/2013.

Members discussed the proposed work programme and also made the following suggestions:-

- An update on Bolton Scene to be included on either the October/November, 2012 meeting dependent upon when the most upto date information would be available; and
- That an update on the progress being in respect of the Troubled Families Programme be provided at the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee in April, 2013.

Resolved – That the proposed Work Programme, subject to the inclusion of the items above, for 2012/2013 be approved.

9. TROUBLED FAMILIES PROGRAMME

Ms. M. Asquith, Director of Children's Services, gave a presentation to members which outlined the background and progress made to date with regard to the Troubled Families Programme.

Information was provided in relation to the following areas, viz:-

- Background to the troubled families programme;
- The estimated number of troubled families in Bolton and how they were characterised;
- Analysis and proposal;
- Indicators of success;
- The Bolton strategy;
- The proposed delivery model;
- The proposed outline delivery model;
- The teams from across the partnership who would support the leads;
- The need to access or commission services and support as required; and
- The next steps.

With regard to the proposal, members were informed that the families must be workless, meet two of the standard criteria and then a local indicator. It was explained that there were approximately 600 families which could start to be profiled and the Council had confirmed to Central Government that it would wish to work with 325 families and receive an attachment fee of £3,200 for 270 families which totalled £864,000.

In terms of the next steps, members were advised that officers needed to agree with partners how the additional capacity would be secured and then commence Phase 2 which would involve bringing key people together to develop the detail. It was anticipated that the model would be signed off by the Cabinet in September, 2012.

A discussion ensued with regard to the programme and the following comments/observations were made:-

- The importance of all partner agencies involved;
- How the missing from home criteria would be used;
- The need for flexibility within the programme for any new families ;
- Details on how the payment by result would work in practice; and
- There was a need to set realistic expectations/targets on the measure of success.

Resolved – That the presentation be noted.

10. AGMA BUSINESS SUMMARY

The Director of Chief Executive's Department submitted a report which set out the appointments made by the Council to the various joint authorities and also gave a summary of the business considered at authority meetings.

Members were reminded that part of the remit of this Scrutiny Committee was to monitor and review and, where appropriate, make recommendations regarding the work of outside organisations. The report focused on one aspect of this, in terms of the added value by the AGMA bodies, including AGMA Executive Board, The Combined Authority, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority, Greater Manchester Police Authority and Transport for Greater Manchester Committee.

An issue was raised in relation to possible problems with the tram operating system within Greater Manchester and the impact that this could have financially.

Resolved – (i) That the updated position be noted; and

(ii) That a report be submitted to the next meeting outlining the latest position with regard to the tram operating system within Greater Manchester.

11. MEMBERS BUSINESS

The Committee was informed that a number of questions had been submitted by Councillor Allen for consideration under Standing Order 36.

Q. Contractors in Bolton continue to tell me that they are missing out on work in town, that specifications for work are vague and imprecise and that supervision of contractors is poor. My questions will hopefully give Corporate Property Services the opportunity to produce evidence that will reassure the Committee that such allegations are untrue.

What is the percentage of jobs under £10,000 awarded to Bolton based businesses?

What is the percentage of schools that currently have a repair and maintenance contract with CPS?

What is the percentage of design work outsourced to architects and consultants?

Has the value of work managed by CPS reduced in recent years and has the staffing structure mirrored any changes?

What fees does CPS charge for managing contracts and how do these compare to fees charged by external bodies?

What strategic plans are in place to ensure the survival of CPS? Since approval by the Leader in October 2008 to a policy of disposal of certain of the Council's properties in the agricultural portfolio, can we please be informed how many of these properties have been disposed of?

A response to the questions had been prepared and was circulated at the meeting, however, the answers had not been duplicated in the minutes owing to the length of the response but full details would be available on the website.

The Committee also received the extracts of minutes of other meetings of the Council relevant to the remit of this Committee:-

- (a) The Executive Cabinet Member Leader's Portfolio held on 16th and 23rd July, 2012;
- (b) Human Resources, Organisational Development and Diversity Policy Development Group held on 4th July, 2012;
- (c) Corporate, Strategy and Budget Policy Development Group held on 9th July, 2012; and

- (d) Neighbourhood and Community Services Policy
Development Group held on 16th July, 2012.

Further to minutes of the Executive Cabinet Member Leaders Portfolio members enquired as to whether safeguarding clauses/covenants were put in place when disposing of properties.

In addition a question was raised in relation to the bridge rebuilding at Smithills Open Farm and whether the requirement to reinstate Moss Lea was contained within the lease.

Resolved – (i) That the questions submitted and its response be noted.

(ii) That the minutes of the various meetings be noted and that further information be sought and circulated to members on the issues raised as detailed above.

(The meeting commenced at 5.00p.m. and ended at 6.35 p.m.)