

## **CORPORATE ISSUES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

MEETING, 7TH DECEMBER, 2009

Present – Councillors Shaw (Chairman), Ayub, Mrs. Brierley, Chadwick, Cottam, Harkin, Hayes, Hollick, Mistry, J. Silvester, and J. Walsh.

### Also in attendance

Councillor Morris	-	Executive Member for Strategy and External Relationships
Councillor Kay	-	Executive Member for Human Resources and Diversity
Mr. P. Molyneux	-	Assistant Director, Highways and Engineering and Committee Chief Officer Support
Mr. I.D. Mulholland	-	Principal Scrutiny Officer
Mr. S. Harriss	-	Chief Executive
Mr. S. Arnfield	-	Director of Corporate Resources
Mr. A. Eastwood	-	Director of Chief Executive's Department
Ms. L. Ridsdale	-	Assistant Director Human Resources and Organisation Development
Mrs. M. Stoney	-	Assistant Director – Legal
Ms. K. Johnston	-	Head of Consultation and Communication
Ms. N. Brown	-	Head of Marketing

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ashcroft, P. Brierley, Hornby and Spencer.

Councillor Shaw in the Chair.

## **21. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 12th October, 2009 were submitted.

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

## **22. MONITORING OF DECISIONS**

The Director of the Chief Executive's Department submitted a report which provided details of the progress of decisions taken at previous meetings of this Committee.

Further to the savings strategy item in respect of a report to a future meeting on details of savings made due to improvements in technology, the Director of Corporate Resources explained that data was currently being collected and a report would be provided for the next meeting.

Members also referred to the issue of the numerous mobile telephones operated by the Council. It was indicated that the Council currently had a cost effective contract in this regard.

Resolved – (i) That the report be noted.

(ii) That the report relating to, savings owing to improvements in technology, be submitted to the next meeting

## **23. ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME**

The Director of the Chief Executive's Department submitted a report which set out details of the Committee Work Programme for the 2009/2010 Municipal Year.

Members discussed the Work Programme, in terms of any amendments that could be made.

Resolved – That the updated Work Programme be approved.

## **24. MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Chief Executive's Department updating Members on the work of the

Communications and Marketing Agency for the first six months of the 2009/10 Financial Year. The report provided detailed information on a number of key developments that would impact on the Agency and on communications with customers, detailed spend on behalf of Departments and on Bolton Scene and identified efficiencies realised both in terms of service delivery and spend.

Members in their discussions referred to:-

- the fact that the costings for Environmental Services, Highways and Engineering and Policy and Performance were not detailed.

It was explained that this information had not been available at the time the report was prepared and that only capital cost(s) for materials were shown.

- the utilisation of value for money principles in respect of the use of certain publications.

It was indicated that such an analysis was undertaken and this was an area under constant review, together with the various Departmental Management Teams.

- in respect of Appendix 2, Bolton Scene, Members referred to the issue of bought in photographs and cost effectiveness issues in this area.

It was indicated that this was an area that could be reviewed again and a previous review had shown the current practice to be cost effective.

- under Appendix 2, what was the actual total spend in relation to each of the initiatives.

Resolved – (i) That the Marketing and Communications work and spend update be welcomed.

(ii) The Members of this Committee be provided with details of the actual spend position in respect of the initiatives set out

in Appendix 2 of the report.

(iii) That a further report in this regard be presented to this Committee in due course setting out the Year End position.

## **25. REGULATORY SERVICES AND ENFORCEMENT**

The Committee received a presentation from the Assistant Director of Legal Services outlining the current position in relation to the Council's Regulatory Services, including enforcement.

The presentation focused on the following key points:-

In respect of the review of Regulatory Services, Members were advised that this comprised:-

- Food, Health and Safety;
  - Trading Standards and Consumer Advice;
  - Pollution Control; and
  - Licensing
- but not
- Housing and Public Health; and
  - Environmental Protection.

This involved the bringing together of services from:-

- Adult Services, including B-Safe Partnership; and
- Development and Regeneration.

There was an overall budget of £1.6m, with a total staff of 60 full time equivalents.

With regard to the service, the Committee was advised that this involved providing public protection to Bolton's residents and visitors by:-

- meeting statutory requirements;
- proportionate regulation;
- protecting the vulnerable;
- helping businesses; and

- maintaining a level playing field.

In terms of Food Safety, Members were advised that there were 2,300 food businesses in Bolton and the work of the section included:-

- risk based inspection programme for food hygiene and food standards;
- food sampling programme;
- investigating food complaints/infections; and
- providing advice and training.

In terms of Health and Safety there were 7,500 businesses across the Borough, which involved:-

- a risk based inspection programme;
- investigating incidents and health and safety complaints; and
- promoting awareness of health and safety and training.

With regard to Trading Standards, Members were advised that there were currently 7,386 registered businesses in Bolton in this field, which involved:-

- product safety/counterfeit goods/weights and measures;
- consumer advice;
- underage sales; and
- licensing enforcement.

Pollution Control work involved:-

- complaint investigation noise/nuisance smoke/light nuisance, contaminated land;
- advising planning on pollution control;
- monitoring air quality;
- sampling air quality and providing statistics for DEFRA.

In terms of proposals for the new Regulatory Services in Bolton, Mrs. Stoney explained that possible efficiencies in this area included:-

- generic working;
- ICT – mobile working;
- flexible working patterns; and
- new accommodation.

The Committee was further advised that the Value for Money Review on Regulatory Services would be a rigorous review of all activities and not just a savings exercise. In terms of enforcement, this would include better targeted outcomes and more working with partners.

Furthermore, there were three other key aims:-

- service level maintained;
- targeting high risk premises and businesses; and
- a seamless service.

In conclusion, Members were advised that the ongoing review journey included:-

- a) reporting to Members on the outcome of the Value for Money Review in March, 2010;
- b) service priorities reported to the Policy Development Group in April/May, 2010; and
- c)

reporting of the Food Plan to Members in July, 2010.

Following the presentation, Members raised the following salient issues:-

- issues around income generation from, for example, taxi vehicle licensing.
- the exclusion of Housing and Public Health and Environmental Protection in the review.
- moves towards cost centred accounting in each service area.

It was explained that this had not been undertaken to date but would be looked at as part of the Value for Money Review.

- moves towards single service working.

It was indicated that more work was being undertaken with other authorities and the issue of what was inspection and what was enforcement. Such matters would be teased out during the Value for Money Review.

- the outcome of the Planning Division Value for Money Review and the Member consultation for this.

It was indicated that existing Bolton Council political consultation routes had been used which could be reviewed in the future.

- income maximisation.
- effectiveness of regulatory work and the focus of the targets, i.e. protection of young people.
- decreasing resources and increased public expectation.

Resolved – (i) That the presentation and discussions thereon be noted and welcomed.

(ii) That Members of this Committee be kept apprised of the ongoing work and consultation in relation to Regulatory Services and Enforcement.

## **26. MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

The Committee received the extract of minutes of other meetings of the Council relevant to the remit of this Committee:

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- a) Extracts of the Executive held on 26th October and 23rd November, 2009;
- b) Extracts of the Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Health held on 27th October and 30th November, 2009;
- c) Extracts of the Executive Member for Strategy and External Relationships held on 12th and 28th October and 25th November, 2009;
- d) Extracts of the Executive Member for Human Resources and Diversity held on 28th October and 25th November, 2009;
- e) Corporate Resources and Health Policy Development Group held on 11th November, 2009; and
- f) Budget Policy Development Group held on 11th November, 2009.

Resolved – That the minutes of various meetings be noted.

(The meeting commenced at 5.15 p.m. and ended at 6.14 p.m.)