

CORPORATE ISSUES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING, 9TH FEBRUARY, 2009

Present – Councillors Shaw (Chairman), Hollick (Vice-Chairman), P. Allen, Ayub, Cottam, Critchley, Hayes, Hornby, Iqbal, Spencer, J. Silvester and J. Walsh

Also in attendance

Councillor Morris	- Executive Member for Strategy and External Relationships
Councillor Mrs. Thomas	- Executive Member for Corporate Resources
Councillor Kay	- Executive Member for Human Resources and Diversity
Mr. P. Molyneux	- Assistant Director of Highways and Engineering and Committee Chief Officer Support
Mr. I.D. Mulholland	- Scrutiny Team Leader
Mr. S.M. Arnfield	- Director of Corporate Resources and Deputy Chief Executive
Mr. A. Eastwood	- Director of Legal and Democratic Services
Ms. C. Hyams	- Assistant Director, Human Resources and Organisation Development
Ms. L. Ridsdale	- Assistant Director, Human Resources and Organisation Development
Mr. M. Dixon	- Principal Fairness Officer

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Allen, P. Brierley and Mistry.

Councillor Shaw in the Chair.

49. ITEM OF URGENT BUSINESS

The Chairman reported that the Director of Legal and Democratic Services had requested that an urgent item entitled, Land at Holland Nurseries, Darwen Road, Bromley Cross, Bolton, which was not specified on the agenda for this meeting, be placed before the Committee as a matter of urgency due to the need to resolve the issue within a reasonable timescale in order to assist the applicant.

Resolved – That the item be considered as a matter of urgency.

50. LAND AT HOLLAND NURSERIES, DARWEN ROAD, BROMLEY CROSS, BOLTON

(Councillors Critchley, Hayes and Hornby declared personal interests in the following matter having been party to the decision to grant Planning Permission).

Members were advised that the decisions taken by the Executive at a meeting held on 2nd February, 2009, with regard to Land at Holland Nurseries, Darwen Road, had been called in by Councillors Mrs. Brierley, P. Brierley, Critchley, Hall, J. Walsh and A. Wilkinson in accordance with Part 4 of the Constitution – The Council's Rules and Procedures: Section E, Scrutiny Rules, Paragraph 17.

A copy of the relevant confidential report had been circulated to Members.

The Committee was also apprised of the decisions that had been taken by the Executive.

Members were reminded of the options open to the Committee in determining this matter, viz:-

- a) To note the decisions of the Executive;
- b) To refer the matter back to the Executive, with or without comment; or

- c) To refer the decision to Council, with or without comment, with a motion in the name of the Chair or a nominee of the Committee.

Resolved –That the matter be referred to the next meeting of Council with a motion in the name of Councillor Critchley, as follows:-

That the Council be urged to make a recommendation to the Executive that the restrictive covenants contained in the Birtenshaw Agreement be enforced in this instance.

51. MEMBERS' BUSINESS

A question was submitted by Councillor Julia Silvester in accordance with Standing Order 36.

- Q. How much did it cost to issue a printed version of “Bob”? Also, what was the rationale behind this as the information was already available on staff e-mailings, lead stories on the intranet, in, “Scene”, as press releases and internal briefings.

The following response was provided by the Director of Legal and Democratic Services:-

“Bob”, was created as part of a wider internal communications strategy which sets out the commitment to reaching and engaging with all staff at all levels on a regular basis.

It was originally produced six times a year but had been reduced to five editions to reduce costs.

“Bob”, was primarily available on the intranet, with printed copies only sent to frontline and non-computer based staff.

On average, 1,800 copies were printed per issue through Print and Publishing at a cost of around £1,300, which equated to 72p per printed copy. In essence, it therefore

costs £3.60 per year for each member of the noncomputer based/frontline staff to receive their copy of “Bob”, plus approximately £2.76 per year per staff member for postage.

Around 1,000 copies were sent to individual home addresses, with the rest sent to named contacts for circulation to non-computer based staff. The print run was constantly reviewed to ensure all staff were reached and costs kept to a minimum.

Several methods of communicating with staff were used internally, most of which were electronic – hence the need to ensure printed copies reached those staff who were unable to access online communications.

“Bob”, aimed to help staff understand the Council’s wider objectives and how their role fitted into the bigger picture.

Also, it could not be assumed that all staff were Bolton residents and therefore might not see, “Scene” – “Bob” sat alongside Scene as a more specific staff communication.

The staff survey was conducted through, “Bob” – results of which showed the percentage of staff satisfied with communications to be significantly higher than the national averages.

Members in their deliberations referred to those individuals who did not have access to computers and the role of Print and Publishing Services in its production.

Resolved – That the question and response be noted.

52. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8th December, 2008 were submitted.

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

53. MONITORING OF DECISIONS

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report which provided details of the progress of decisions taken at previous meetings of this Committee.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

54. ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report which provided Members with suitable criteria to aid in the selection of topics for scrutiny and outlined the Committee's work programme.

Members' views and comments were sought in relation to any further items and issues that they wanted included on the Committee's work programme.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

55. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE

Extracts of the minutes of the meetings of the Executive held on 8th and 16th December, 2008 and 12th January, 2009 were submitted.

Resolved – That the decisions of the Executive be noted.

56. MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CORPORATE RESOURCES

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Member for Corporate Resources held on 20th January, 2009 were submitted.

Resolved – That the decisions of the Executive Member be noted.

57. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR STRATEGY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Member for Strategy and External Relationships held on 21st January, 2009 were submitted.

Further to Minute 52, Bolton Racial Equality Council (BREC), Members enquired as to the reasons behind the proposed change of name from Bolton Racial Equality Council, to Bolton Equalities Council.

The Principal Fairness Officer explained that the BREC Executive Committee had been exploring the need to aid reasons for restructuring the organisation for some time now. The need to restructure was brought about by changes nationally that had an immediate impact on the core funding.

The Principal Fairness Officer also circulated a note which more fully explained this process.

Resolved – That the decisions of the Executive Member be noted.

58. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HUMAN RESOURCES AND DIVERSITY

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Member for Human Resources and Diversity held on 21st January, 2009 were submitted.

Resolved – That the decisions of the Executive Member be noted.

59. LICENSING FEES AND CHARGES UPDATE

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services explained that a detailed piece of work had been undertaken by the Licensing Section to attribute time spent and costs on each of the service areas making up the licensing function. This had enabled an

analysis to determine spend against income and whether in fact, certain aspects of a licensing function were covering their costs in respect of fees and charges.

A detailed report had intended to be brought to this Scrutiny Committee as requested. However, as Members were aware, the intention was to bring licensing into the new Regulatory Unit with effect from the 1st April, 2009. This would clearly have an impact on the outcome of this piece of work and it was thought preferable to bring a report in totality relating to the new Regulatory Service than deal with parts in isolation.

Resolved – That the position be noted.

60. EMPLOYMENT MONITORING

The Assistant Chief Executive submitted a report which summarised the results of the Council's employment monitoring for 2007/2008 and to show the contribution individual departments made to the overall results.

The Committee was informed that the results of the Council's employment monitoring were published in detail in three separate reports, which were attached as appendices to this report:-

- Staff Audit Report;
- Recruitment Report; and
- Exit, Grievance and Disability Report.

The report explained that the Authority aspired to a workforce which generally reflected the local population and outlined the following two main drivers for this:-

- that the needs of Bolton's diverse local population was improved by having a diverse workforce which generally reflected that population; and
- in order to ensure that the Authorities recruitment processes were fair.

The report summarised the main findings and recommendations from all three previous reports and presented them as a coherent picture.

Members in their deliberations discussed the increase in numbers of staff from 15,002 in 2007 to 15, 294 in 2008.

Resolved – That the position be noted

61. WORKFORCE PLANNING

The Assistant Director, Human Resources and Organisational Development explained that the purpose of Workforce Planning was to ensure that the Council had the skills and capacity for today and tomorrow. It was also important to understand what the key drivers were in terms of service changes and then look at what type of workforce the Council needed.

In respect of Children's Services, and Adult Social care there were statutory responsibilities to workforce plan and these were delivered on a partnership basis.

Members were advised that the Workforce Plan, was updated annually. This had devlivered a number of improvements ranging from better management of information, building on what worked, and the involvement of Departmental Management Teams in the process to input about changing service and workforce requirements.

Key aspects of the plan for this year had prioritised issues around an ageing workforce, getting more young people into trainee and apprenticeship positions, further actions on employing more disabled people, enabling access to opportunities via work placements and managing the impact of the pay and grading review.

Members in their discussions referred to the issue of succession planning.

The Assistant Director explained the various methodologies used to aid in Succession Planning throughout the Council and the balance between succession planning and enabling access to opportunities for the Council's communities and equalities

targets.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

(The meeting started at 6.00 p.m. and finished at 6.40 p.m.)