

CORPORATE ISSUES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING, 6TH DECEMBER, 2010

Present – Councillors R. Allen (Chairman), P. Brierley (Vice-Chairman) P. Allen (as deputy for Councillor Mrs. Fairclough), Ashcroft, Ayub, Chadwick, Cottam, Hayes, McKeon, Mistry, Pickup, Radlett, A. N. Spencer and J. Walsh.

Also in attendance

Councillor Morris	- Executive Member for Strategy and External Relationships
Councillor Mrs Thomas	- Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Health
Councillor Kay	- Executive Member for Human Resources, Organisational Development and Diversity
Mr. M. Veigas	- Assistant Director Environmental Services and Committee Chief Officer Support
Mr. I.D. Mulholland	- Principal Scrutiny Officer
Mr. A. Eastwood	- Director of Chief Executive's Department
Ms. S. Johnson	- Deputy Director of Corporate Resources
Mr. A. Donaldson	- Assistant Director Policy, Performance and Partnerships
Ms. K. Johnston	- Consultation and Research Manager
Ms. S. Griffiths	- Principal Performance and Improvement Officer

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs. Fairclough.

Councillor R. Allen in the Chair.

20. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 11th October, 2010 were submitted.

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

21. 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.

Resolved – That the position be noted.

22. WORK PROGRAMME

The Director of the Chief Executive's Department submitted a report which set out details of the previously agreed Committee Work Programme for the 2010/11 Municipal Year.

Resolved – That the updated work programme be noted.

23. CONSULTATION PROCESSES

Mr. Andrew Donaldson, Assistant Director, Policy, Performance and Partnerships gave a presentation explaining how the Council undertook consultation and engagement and how this influenced Council priorities and services.

The Committee was also reminded that prior to the meeting a document had been circulated citing examples of consultation in Bolton, and also a document relating to the recent preparation of a Strategic Equality Impact Assessment.

Mr. Donaldson went on to explain that consultation operated at a number of levels, referred to examples of community engagement, the mechanisms for service user engagement, the current context of savings and efficiencies and matters

around the shaping of future consultation and engagement.

Members in their deliberations referred to:-

- matters around engagement with local residents at Area Forum meetings;
- the various ways residents in each ward could engage with the Council;
- matters around adequate consultation, particularly in relation to planning issues; and
- issues around letting the public know the results of consultation undertaken.
The Committee was informed that the Council did provide details of consultation outcomes either directly to participants, via the website and Scene which included a 'You said and we did' feature every other month.
- matters around the percentage of the electorate in Bolton who visited the One Stop Shop facility.

Resolved – (i) That Mr. Donaldson be thanked for his presentation.

(ii) That Members of this Committee be circulated with details of the number of the electorate in Bolton who visited the One Stop Shop facility.

24. SPENDING PRIORITIES AND SAVINGS APPROACH

The Leader of the Council presented a report that set out the Council's overall thinking behind the delivery of savings in terms of its spending priorities and approach.

Members were reminded of the challenging financial environment which would have an impact on the delivery of the Council's objectives and priorities and the Leader had outlined

his thinking around the Council's approach to making savings at the Council's meeting on 20th October, 2010. The report set out proposals to formally agree the Council's approach to spending priorities and approach to savings and it was stressed that it was important to mitigate as much as possible the impact of the savings required on local people and services.

The proposed spending priorities were as follows:-

- (a) The Council's two major priorities of "Economic Prosperity" and "Narrowing the Gap" remained in place and any savings should aim to minimise the impact on these priorities.
- (b) The Council would always meet its statutory responsibilities including safeguarding vulnerable children and vulnerable adults, meeting health and safety requirements etc.
- (c) Any savings option would be considered against the Council's wider strategies such as anti-poverty and minimise the impact on its most vulnerable citizens.
- (d) The Council would aim to maintain local political priorities where possible.
- (e) The Council would listen to the views of local people and other stakeholders in making decisions on savings.
- (f) In evaluating the above priorities the Council recognised the requirement to set a legal and balanced budget and the need to be pragmatic and practical in terms of delivering savings in the timescales available.

The proposed savings approach was as follows:-

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The first aim would be to make savings through efficiencies, (eg reduced management costs, integrated working, revised structures, improved processes, procurement, deleting non essential spend, shared services, new ways of delivering services etc).

- The need to identify efficiencies would apply to all services across the Council and even priority services must all seek to identify as many efficiency savings as possible. For 2011/12 the savings identified through efficiencies represented between a half and two thirds of the total savings.
- When looking at savings the Council would firstly seek to review in-house services to see if the necessary efficiency savings could be delivered in this way before looking at wider options.
- After considering efficiencies, savings would need to be found through lowering standards in services. Many of the services provided by the Council were rated as being excellent but because of the financial constraints the Council may have to accept good or satisfactory services in the future.

Members in their discussions referred to:-

- the need to set an annual legal budget;
- matters around the final settlement for local government envisaged on 9th December, 2010;
- matters around the chance for all parties to engage in the budget discussions at Policy Development Group meetings;
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issues concerning measurement of people's aspirations and narrowing the gap success.

With regard to narrowing the gap, it was indicated that healthy life evidence was showing improvements but the matter of measuring raising aspirations was more difficult to measure fully.

Resolved - That the approach to spending priorities and the delivery of savings as set out in the report be noted.

25. 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) The Executive held on 1st and 22nd November, 2010.
- (b) Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Health held on 26th October and 30th November, 2010.
- (c) Joint meetings of the Executive Members for Strategy and External Relationships and Housing, Neighbourhood and Regulation held on 4th October and 11th October, 2010.
- (d) The Executive Member for Strategy and External Relationships held on 27th October and 24th November, 2010.
- (e) The Executive Member for Human Resources and Diversity held on 27th October and 24th November, 2010.
- (f) Corporate Resources Policy Development Group held on 8th November, 2010.

(g)

Budget Policy Development Group held 8th and 15th November, 2010.

- (h) NHS White Paper Policy Development Group held on 27th October, 2010

Resolved – That the minutes of the various meetings be noted.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 p.m. and ended at 6.37p.m.)