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## **CORPORATE ISSUES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**20 APRIL 2009**

Present - Councillors Shaw (Chairman), Hollick (Vice-Chairman), Allen, Cottam, Mrs. Brierley (as substitute for Councillor P. Brierley), Hayes, Iqbal, Mistry, J. Silvester, Spencer and J. Walsh.

Also in attendance

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. Harriss - Chief Executive; Mr. S.M. Arnfield - Director of Corporate Resources and Deputy Chief Executive; Mr. A. Eastwood - Director, Chief Executive's Department; Ms. C. Hyams - Assistant Director, Human Resources and Organisation Development; Ms. L. Risdale - Assistant Director, Human Resources and Organisation Development.

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Morris, Executive Member for Strategy and External Relationships, Mrs Thomas, Executive Members for Corporate Resources and Councillors Ayub, P. Brierley and Hornby

Councillor Shaw in the Chair

### **62 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.

*Attached Reports:*

[Minutes](#)

### **63 DECISION MONITORING ITEM**

The Director, 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 report be noted.

*Attached Reports:*

[Decision Monitoring item](#)

## **64 ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME**

The Director, Chief Executive's Department 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.

That the report be noted.

*Attached Reports:*

[Annual Work Programme](#)

## **65 MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

The following questions were submitted by Councillor R. Allen in accordance with Standing Order 36. The answers were provided by the Director of the Chief Executive's Department.

Q 1. Councillor Allen indicated that he had difficulty reconciling the quoted figure for overall spend of £1,469,472. He could not relate this to the total costs of the department or to the cost of the publications listed at the back of the report considered under item 74 of these minutes which totalled only £435,000. Perhaps Marketing and Communications should operate a trading account so that the true costs could be seen and the rechargeable income from their internal customer departments?

A The total cost of £1,469,472 included spend on consultation (section 2.3) of the report as per minute 74 and Bolton Scene as well as all other communications and marketing work. This typically included websites, DVDs, electronic communications, media buying, advertising campaigns, as well as printed items, some of which could be defined as 'Publications'. A trading account was operated where all the spends were broken down in section 2.4, however the Council did not categorise 'publications' under a specific code. Spend

was categorised by division and consequently department, and by project name for example Carers Strategy, Recycling and Place Survey.

The Section at the back of the report to which Cllr Allen refers was a list which had been compiled by looking through the trading account, line by line and highlighting what was believed to constitute the major 'publications' produced by the authority. Therefore ensuring that included were all those which had been highlighted by members.

Publications might come out of a wider campaign, for example, a guide for carers to accessing services, as part of a broader multi-media campaign which included the press, outdoor and radio, or could be stand-alone, for example Bob and Focus on Farnworth. For this reason, it was not possible to extract a report from the trading account of a list of all publications as definitive entries. Hence the list at the back of the report attempted to summarise all key printed documents or publications, based on the record of work held on the trading account management system.

Q 2. Were the budgets for publicity material held by Communications and Marketing or by individual departments? If the budgets were held by departments how were the costs recharged?

A The budgets (with the exception of Bolton Scene) were held by departments. When a job was briefed into the Communications and Marketing Team, the trading account management system (Accura), generated a quote for the work, based on requirements which the department signed off. The quote was based on the most competitive/appropriate supplier for the job, again discussed with departments. The work was then commissioned and on completion, the department was recharged through the normal Council internal recharge process. The Communications and Marketing team paid the supplier. This was all managed centrally through the Communications and Marketing team, it was possible to track spend as outlined in the report.

Q 3. The latest cost of the Scene was shown as £230,179. If this was distributed 12 times a year to 100,000 households then the cost per copy was only 20 pence. This seemed remarkably low especially if it included all the overheads and distribution. A breakdown of the costs were needed.

A Scene was produced 11 times per year and was distributed to 122,000 households. The cost breakdown for 2008/9 was as follows:

Design and print : £98,287 Distribution: £124,368 Other

(including Audio Scene, cost of annual consultation and miscellaneous photography) £7,524.

In 2008/9, external income (from partners) of £69,241 was brought in. Council departments advertised to a total of £63,675. Subtracting the external income only from the total cost of Scene above, gave a net cost of £160,938, which equated to 12 pence per household per issue.

The cost efficiency of Scene had been maximised through a robust tendering process, reduction in the cost of paper stock and a proactive drive to encourage partners to use Scene as an advertising vehicle, hence bringing in real income.

Q 4. What was included in the costs shown for departments and for the individual publications? For example, would the costs of such things as design, materials, salaries, salary on costs, distribution, postage, website development, billing costs, running costs, management and support overheads amongst others be included?

A The cost included everything that the department or an external client was charged for.

In the case of Council departments, this covered the cost of any contracted suppliers, for example, design, production and materials, media buying, distribution and postage, data inputting/analysis, web development and hosting. Contracted suppliers could be external or from within the council for example Print and Publishing Services, the Design Team and the Sign Shop. Council departments who commissioned work through the Communications & Marketing team did not pay for officer time. When the Communications & Marketing team was set up as a shared service, salary budgets were transferred from the departments where officers were located at the time.

External clients were charged for all the above, plus officer time, as if they were commissioning an independent agency to complete the work for them. The average hourly rate of £50 (£35 discounted) was very market competitive and hence the Communications and Marketing team was able to bring in work from, for example, the PCT and across AGMA to support department and Council budgets for example the recent AGMA survey of the Commensura service was delivered by the Communications and Marketing Consultation Team.

Q 5. A number of the publications listed were for the Albert Halls. How were the cost of these items recharged to the Albert Halls trading account?

A As in question 2, the Communications and Marketing

team worked with staff in the Albert Halls to develop the brief and the Communications and Marketing team then obtained the most competitive quote, which the Albert Halls approved. They were recharged through the normal internal recharging system as their budget was managed under the Adult and Community Services Department.

Q 6. Did Communications & Marketing contract with departments to produce publicity material and were departments allowed to obtain external competitive quotations for publicity materials?

A The Communications and Marketing team worked with a variety of suppliers to obtain the most competitive quotes on behalf of the Authority. Price competitiveness was obviously a priority, but in addition the Council also factored in experience, readiness to deliver and quality standards. The department approved any costs before the work was commissioned. The process was managed through the Communications and Marketing team, as if departments commissioned directly (as was the case before the Communications and Marketing shared service was established), it became very difficult to accurately track spend. All commissions were accounted for through Accura and the Communications and Marketing team were able to accurately report back to Members and to Departmental Management Teams, their department spends by project.

This process of reporting back spend to Departmental Management Teams had enabled departments to better understand, track and manage the work their staff were commissioning, and hence put in place management processes to approve spend. This did not happen before the Communications & Marketing team were able to quantify total spends across departments.

Resolved - That the questions and answers now submitted be noted.

## **66 MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE**

Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 2nd March and the extract of the minutes of the meeting held on 30th March, 2009 were submitted.

Resolved - That the decisions of the Executive be noted.

*Attached Reports:*

[Executive and Executive Member Meetings](#)  
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#### **67 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 24th February and 31st March, 2009 were submitted.

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

#### **68 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 25th February and 1st April, 2009 were submitted.

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

#### **69 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 25th February and 1st April, 2009 were submitted.

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

#### **70 MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES AND DIVERSITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

The minutes of the meeting of the Human Resources and Diversity Policy Development Group held on 4th February, 2009 were submitted.

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings be noted.

*Attached Reports:*

[Policy Development Group Meetings](#)

[Policy Development Group Meetings](#)

## **71 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATE ISSUES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

The minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Issues Policy Development Group held on 20th February, 2009 were submitted.

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings be noted.

## **72 APPRENTICE POST UPDATE**

The Director of the Chief Executive's Department submitted a report on the progress of the Council's performance regarding the Apprentice Scheme.

By the way of background information, the report explained that in January 2008 it was established that Bolton Council had 37 apprenticeship positions in place. During the year 2008/9, 22 new positions had been established. A further 13 apprenticeship posts were yet to be confirmed. Furthermore, the Council's Employment and Skills Strategy was agreed at The Executive on 2nd February 2009, formalising the Council's approach and priorities this area.

The Committee was advised that the following actions had been undertaken and were making a considerable impact on apprenticeships in Bolton:-

- New apprenticeship opportunities had been identified by each department. Appendix 1 to the report set out details for existing apprenticeships, new opportunities and the newly established apprenticeships;
- The recruitment process had been amended to be user friendly for young people. Changes included simplified versions of job descriptions, person specifications and application forms and a less intimidating interview process;
- A new salary grade had been created specifically for apprentices which reflected developmental progression;
- External funding had been used to support the targeting of ten apprenticeships to vulnerable young people from Bolton's priority groups of Looked After Children and those Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs); and
- An improved approach to the co-ordination and

recruitment of apprentices had been implemented. This allowed for apprenticeship numbers and quality to be monitored and improved.

The report went on to explain that a number of significant developments had been achieved which had resulted in a high quality apprenticeship scheme. The aim of Bolton's scheme was to offer the best possible experience for apprentices by providing an enhanced wrap-around package of support.

This package of support included:

- An intranet and internet Gateway site that provided information and guidance;
- A suite of training and development that was over and above the development that formed part of the apprenticeship framework i.e. Corporate Induction, Customer Care Standards, Valuing Diversity, European Computer Driving Licence;
- A trained, work based mentor. The mentor supported the apprentice's acclimatisation to the work place;
- A bi-monthly apprentice forum that offered peer support and development of generic work related skills; and
- Advice and guidance on topics such as healthy living and managing their finances.

With regard to the future strategy, Members were advised that an Employment and Skills Strategy had been agreed at the Executive on 2nd February 2009 which articulated the approach to Apprenticeships, Work Placements and Skills. Within the strategy the leadership role as an employer was clearly defined. The strategy also included targets for skills levels and work placements.

The strategy also contained three year plans for apprenticeships, work placements and skills development. These three year plans were attached at appendix 4 to the report.

Members in their deliberations discussed:-

- the further promotion of apprenticeships in general and the fact that even more could be done; - meetings arranged within the Skills Board in the town to promote apprentices; and - the fact that Bolton at Home had currently about sixty apprentices. They also operated a recognition and rewards scheme and also tried to involve relevant Partners in the Borough.

Resolved - That the Executive Member for Human Resources and Diversity be recommended to explore the development of a recognition and rewards scheme for all apprenticeships across the Council.

*Attached Reports:*



### **73 MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS - FUNDING STREAMS AND PRODUCED PUBLICATIONS**

The Director of the Chief Executive's Department submitted a report which updated Members on the work of the Communications and Marketing Agency and spend on its Services across the organisation.

The report set out the overall spend by the Council on the following areas:

- Marketing and communication (included design, print, photography, media, video and audio).
- Consultation and research (primary i.e. not the re-analysis of existing data but rather the seeking of public opinion for example citizen's panel, general residents and black and minority ethnic residents surveys and any work, including statutory required by departments).

Members were advised of the following particular points of note.

1 The first financial year of operation of the Marketing and Communications Agency was 2006/7 (in bold in the table below). Spend on the above categories, through the Agency was now measured using the Accura System, which linked with the Council's Oracle System.

2 Prior to this, specific spend on the above categories was not commissioned through one department and thus not measured in one place. Other areas of spend across the Council for example department-led events, public and highways notices, commissioning of any print and recruitment advertising were also potentially coded against 'communications and marketing' budget codes.

Members were advised that the Bolton News (BN) discount arrangement was an historic Agreement whereby they passed on a discount to Bolton Council, based on a minimum advertising spend (including recruitment) of £500,000 per year. This could not be continued once advertising efficiencies were made and Council advertising spend levels with the BN diminished.

Whilst advertising spend with the BN across the Council was now significantly more efficient, Bolton Scene did not attempt to directly compete with the BN. External advertisers were approached on the basis of working in partnership with the Council and having a key strategic or operational role in delivering the themes of Bolton's Community Strategy. Also, Bolton Scene did not seek advertising from other businesses. However, in light of the challenges facing the local and regional media sectors, the Office of Fair Trading was conducting a

review into the potential impact local government newspapers and other media were having on advertising sales across local and regional media.

The report went on to indicate that the latest Bolton Scene Survey, conducted in July 2008, highlighted the following key findings from respondents:

- 87% viewed Scene as a useful source of Council information (nearest rival BN at 68%);
- 55% of respondents read all or most (only 3% did not read at all);
- 27% said they would like to read online but only 11% said that Scene should only be available online;
- 66% enjoyed receiving the paper on a monthly basis;
- 76% thought it was a cost-effective way of getting council information they needed / 8% thought it's a waste of money;
- Regular features: 75% thought councillor page was useful; and
- 95% trusted Scene as a news source compared to 93% local newspaper and 88% internet.

In conclusion, Members were advised that the total spend on consultation, which included statutory projects like the Place Survey, and other service and priority-driven surveys including school meals was £130,000. This figure included £15,000 external income from commissioners including the PCT.

Departmental spend breakdowns were also set out in the report.

Members in their deliberations referred to:-

- an actual Profit and Loss Statement would show the whole cost of the Communications and Marketing operation;
- certain statutory advertisements still needed to be published in a newspaper other than a Council circulation.

Resolved - That the Executive Member for Corporate Resources be asked to agree to further consider in detail the financial arrangements for produced publications in Communications and Marketing. (The meeting started at 6.00 pm and finished at 6.40 pm).

*Attached Reports:*

[Marketing and Communications - Funding Streams and Produced Publications](#)