

Cherwell District Council

Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board

Minutes of a meeting of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 20 July 2010 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor Nicholas Mawer (Chairman)
Councillor David Hughes (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Alyas Ahmed
Councillor Rick Atkinson
Councillor Maurice Billington
Councillor Tim Emptage
Councillor Neil Prestidge
Councillor Patricia Tompson
Councillor Douglas Webb
Councillor Martin Weir

Substitute Members: Councillor Mrs Diana Edwards (In place of Councillor Carol Steward)

Apologies for absence: Councillor Margaret Cullip
Councillor Carol Steward

Officers: Karen Curtin, Head of Finance
Viv Hichens, Corporate Strategic Procurement Manager
Natasha Clark, Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

10 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

11 Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

12 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 June were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendments:

Minute 5: Disabled Facilities Grant ~ Briefing

Resolution 1: That Councillors Steward, Billington and Cullip be nominated to meet with Housing Services staff to consider aspects of Cherwell District Council's Disabled Facilities Grant Policy.

Minute 8: Draft Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2010/11

Resolution 3: That Councillors Steward, Weir, Ahmed and Emptage be nominated to participate in the fees and charges policy review group.

13 Report on the Council's Contract Management Procedures, Policies and Strategies

The Board considered a report of the Head of Finance which explained the current contract management procedures in place across the Council, presented the Council's contracts register which included all contracts with a value greater than £10k and proposed four upcoming tenders from which the Board could choose to focus upon over the coming year.

The Head of Finance explained that the Corporate Procurement Team was formed in 2008. A key role of the Team is to work in co-operation with departments to ensure value for money procurement practice is being exercised by departments and support them as necessary to promote best practice in line with Corporate Procurement Procedure Rules.

With regard to contract management, the Head of Finance explained that procedures vary depending upon the needs of the service and by whom the contract has been set up. The Board was advised that as part of the Corporate Procurement Strategy Action Plan 2010/11 the Procurement and Assured Services Teams would be clarifying the contract management role for the Council and the resources required for effective monitoring with a view to centralising the contract management function.

The Head of Finance gave an overview of the Contracts Register which aims to list all contracts with a lifetime value of £10k or more and advised the Board that the Register was available on the Council's website. In response to Members' questions, the Strategic Procurement Manager explained that there were measures in place within Finance to ensure people use the suppliers with whom there are formal contracts. Members asked questions on a number of particular contracts, to which answers were duly provided.

The Head of Finance highlighted four contracts that were coming up for tender that the Board may wish to focus on as part of their work programme: Bodicote Old House Refurbishment; Buildings Maintenance; Supply of Tyres for Vehicle Fleet; and, Landscape Maintenance. The Board considered each contract and agreed that they would focus on Old Bodicote House Refurbishment in autumn 2010 and Landscape Maintenance in 2011. They would not focus on Buildings Maintenance or Supply of Tyres for Vehicle Fleet.

The Board noted that the options appraisal and sourcing and pre-tender steps of the procurement cycle for the Old Bodicote House Refurbishment had already been completed. However, they felt that focussing on this contract would provide a valuable learning experience for Members and they could still contribute to the process. The Head of Finance and the Strategic

Procurement Manager agreed to circulate a background briefing paper on the process to date to the Board.

The Board agreed that they would like to be involved in the entire procurement cycle for the Landscape Maintenance contract and noted that the options appraisal was due to begin in December 2010.

Resolved

- (1) That the current contract management procedures be noted.
- (2) That the Board focus on the Old Bodicote House Refurbishment and Landscape Maintenance tenders in 2010/11.

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Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2010/11

The Board considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services which presented the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2010/11. Members noted the Board's elements of the work programme.

Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board Meeting, 7 September 2010

The Board noted the following agenda items for the 7 September meeting.

Partnership Scrutiny: Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership

The Board noted that the Chairman of the Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership, the Cherwell Local Police (LPA) Commander and the Head of Safer Communities, Urban and Rural Services would attend the Boards September meeting to brief Members of the Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership. This would also be an opportunity for the Board to consider an approach to a scrutiny review of the Partnership.

Budget Scrutiny 2011/12

The Head of Finance explained that the Executive and Corporate Management Team had held an awayday at which they had considered various scenarios for the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy based on achieving different levels of savings. An analysis was underway of statutory and discretionary services to consider potential areas for cuts in light of the assumption that Government will cut grants to Local Authorities.

The Head of Finance noted that Members of the Board had raised the cost of the Council employing consultants as a potential topic for budget scrutiny and advised the Board that the Executive had also suggested a number of areas that the Board may like to consider as part of their budget scrutiny 2011/12:

- Training
- Fees and charges
- Webcasting
- Capital programme

The Board discussed the suggestions and agreed that they would need to decide where their scrutiny process could add value to each area. Members

requested that the Head of Finance bring more detailed proposals for the scrutiny of the 2011/12 Budget to the Board's September meeting.

Finance Scrutiny Working Group Update

The Chairman reported that the Finance Scrutiny Working Group had met on 12 July 2010 and considered the latest financial indicators, the 2009/10 year end revenue and capital outturn and the end of project appraisal for the sports centre modernisation project. The Group had no issues to raise.

Performance Scrutiny Working Group Update

The Chairman reported that the Group had postponed its June meeting as Members wished to consider the draft Development Control and Major Developments Value for Money review. The Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer advised the Group that this had been delayed, however it would be ready for the Group to consider at its September meeting. Members of the Group agreed that they would not rearrange the June meeting and would consider all outstanding items at the September meeting.

Resolved

- (1) That the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board element of the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2010/11 be noted.
- (2) That the agenda items for the 7 June meeting of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board be noted.
- (3) That the Head of Finance be invited to bring more detailed proposals for the scrutiny of the 2011/12 Budget to the Board's September meeting.
- (4) That the updates from the Finance Scrutiny Working Group and Performance Scrutiny Working Group be noted.

The meeting ended at 8.15 pm

Chairman:

Date: