

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

29 OCTOBER 2014

PRESENT

Councillor A. Mitchell (Chairman), M. Cordingley (Vice-Chairman), R. Bowker, D. Butt, K. Carter, L. Dagnall, Mrs. P. Dixon, Mrs. L. Evans, J. Holden, Mrs J. Reilly, D. Western and J. Lloyd (ex-Officio)

In attendance

Councillor S. Anstee	Leader of the Council
Councillor R. Chilton	Member of the Health Scrutiny Committee
Councillor M. Hyman	Executive Member for Economic Growth and Planning
Councillor John Reilly	Executive Member for Environment and Operations
Councillor P. Young	Vice-Chairman of the Health Scrutiny Committee

Also Present

I. Duncan	Director of Finance
P. Forrester	Democratic and Performance Services Manager
D. Geary	Senior Business Change Manager
R. Hughes	Democratic Services Officer
J. Le Fevre	Director of Legal and Democratic Services
R. Roe	Director of Growth and Regulatory Services

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Harding and D. Higgins, and from co-opted member of the Scrutiny Committee Mr D. Kitchen.

9. ATTENDANCES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Harding and D. Higgins.

10. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd July 2014 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interests were made by Members.

12. BUDGET SCRUTINY 2015-16

The Committee received a presentation from the Leader of the Council which set out the Executive's Budget Proposals for 2015/16. It was explained that the budget would be delivered in a context of increasing demand on Council services, with Directorates expected to maintain high quality service standards despite further reductions in central funding.

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The Committee were informed that it was progressively more difficult to make savings each year, and that it was necessary to make difficult decisions about service delivery in order to retain quality and reduce costs. The projected deficit between the financial cost of increases in demand for services and the reduction in funding necessitated a 'reshaping' of Council service delivery.

The Leader of the Council responded to a number of questions from the Committee concerning the impact of the business rate growth scheme on the budget, the potential savings from commissioning services from private sector partners, and future changes to Council Tax rates.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee thanked the Leader of the Council for the presentation and set out the proposed process and arrangements for budget scrutiny. Two budget scrutiny working groups were to be held between Scrutiny Members, Executive Members and Corporate Directors before the Committee would return a Budget Scrutiny Report to Executive in January. Members were asked to contact Democratic Services to indicate which sessions they intended to participate in, and to submit questions and issues to the respective Chairs in advance of the sessions.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the content of the report be noted;
- 2) That Scrutiny Members identify which service area review groups they would wish to participate in, and notify the respective Chairmen and officers accordingly;
- 3) That the working groups review the budget proposals for the service areas in which they are interested, identify focused questions and notify the respective Chairmen and officers accordingly; and
- 4) That authority to finalise the Budget Scrutiny Report be delegated to the Democratic & Performance Services Manager in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

13. EXECUTIVE'S RESPONSE TO THE CYCLING REVIEW

The Executive's formal response to the Scrutiny Committee's Cycling Review was submitted to the Committee.

Councillor Rob Chilton addressed the Executive's response to each of the Committee's 10 recommendations, stating that it was a very good response overall but noted that the response to recommendation 7 on cycle parking facilities required more detail on specific areas, and that recommendation 8 could be supported by Members attending events if officers' availability is limited.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Committee receives and notes the Executive's response to the Cycling Review; and
- 2) Councillor Chilton's comments are referred to the Executive.

14. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME - UPDATE

The Democratic & Performance Services Manager gave an update of issues surrounding the Committee's work programme. It was suggested that the Scrutiny Committee's meeting on 10th December might be re-arranged for late January to co-ordinate with the timeframes of the Joint Venture process, which the Committee would be notified of in due course.

Councillor Mike Cordingley notified the Committee that there had been issues concerning arrangements for Home to School Transport, and that he would contact Members of the Committee following the meeting to arrange a delegation to follow-up the Committee's concerns.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

15. REVIEW OF JOINT VENTURE PROGRESS

The Director of Growth and Regulatory Services presented an overview and update of the Joint Venture process for engaging private sector partners to deliver Environmental, Highways, Professional, Technical and Infrastructure services under three 'lots'. It was intended that the procurement process would provide significant savings in service delivery, maintain service standards and protect Council employees' jobs. The key risks to the Joint Venture were identified, which included performance monitoring, the realisation of expected benefits, the transferability of contract arrangements and slip and trip insurance claims, and the strategy for managing each risk was outlined.

16. EXCLUSION RESOLUTION (REMAINING ITEMS)

RESOLVED: That the public be excluded from this meeting during consideration of the remaining item of business because of the likelihood of disclosure of "exempt information" which falls within Paragraph 3 of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

17. REVIEW OF JOINT VENTURE PROGRESS (PART II)

The Committee received a confidential report containing commercially sensitive information relating to the terms of the Joint Venture contracts, the evaluation criteria for reviewing bids and an overview of the shortlisted bids. The Director of Growth and Regulatory Services and the Director of Legal and Democratic Services responded to a number of questions from the Committee concerning the commissioning and evaluation process and the arrangements for monitoring contract performance.

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The Chairman thanked the Director of Growth and Regulatory Services for a valuable introduction to a critical aspect of the process for 'Reshaping Trafford', and noted that the Joint Venture would be revisited by the Committee at the meeting that would now be scheduled for January.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and finished at 8.25 pm