

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 JANUARY 2008

Present: Councillors P Connolly (Chairman); K Hitchen (Deputy Chairman); Mrs Y R T Clarkson; Mrs E Eastwood; J Kane; R Salkeld and P Whalley.

Also Present: Councillor R Pitt.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs W Metherell and M McVeigh.

Officers: T Capper, Democratic Services Manager; N White, Scrutiny Support Officer; H Mitchell, Head of Policy and Performance and C Willoughby, Members Services Technical Support Officer.

G Ayling, Interim Head of Finance and Business Development for Agenda Item 8 Executive Decisions (Decision 11).

Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 20 December 2007 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

MGT 57/07 Arrangement of Agenda

Due to the Head of Finance and Business Development being present for the Executive Decision relating to the Draft Budget it was agreed that Item 8, Executive Decision 11 be taken as the first item on the Agenda.

MGT 58/07 Executive Decision Number 11 - Draft General Fund Revenue and Council Tax 2008/09 and 3 Year Reserve Strategy

Consideration was given to Executive Decision 11 made on 15 January 2008 regarding the Draft General Fund Revenue and Council Tax 2008/09 and 3 Year Reserve Strategy.

The Interim Head of Finance and Business Development provided an overview of the current Budgetary position as detailed in the report to the Executive.

It was noted that at present Copeland's share of Council tax would need to increase by 2.0% to meet the Council's budgetary requirements.

RESOLVED – that the Executive Decision Number 11 Draft General Fund Revenue and Council Tax 2008/09 and 3 Year Reserve Strategy - 15 January 2008 be noted.

MGT 59/07 Training and Self Evaluation

Consideration was given to a report detailing key findings and actions for Overview and Scrutiny following joint training sessions between the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and the Executive and Corporate Team. A special meeting of all four Overview and Scrutiny Committees had also taken place to consider the Scrutiny Self Evaluation Framework. A proposed action plan that was appended to the report detailed a number of actions and ideas which could help to develop the process for Overview and Scrutiny in Copeland.

The Committee agreed with the proposals in the action plan and that it should be forwarded on to the Executive for its approval.

RESOLVED – that the Executive be recommended to consider the proposed changes contained in the Overview and Scrutiny action plan and confirm which should be pursued.

MGT 60/07 Dignity at Work and Compassionate Leave

The findings of the Task and Finish Group that had been established to look into the Council's Dignity at Work and Compassionate Leave Policies were considered.

The Committee agreed with the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group. It was noted that they would be submitted to the Council's Personnel Panel and then to the Executive for approval.

RESOLVED – that Personnel Panel be recommended to approve for submission to the Executive that: -

(A) in respect of the Council's Dignity at Work Policy:

1. the Dignity at Work Policy be renamed the Respect at Work policy;
2. the importance of Dignity at Work needs to be communicated effectively to all employees, managers and members across the Council;
3. training be introduced on Dignity at Work across the Council for all managers and members and periodically refreshed;
4. regular assessment and monitoring of the number of informal and formal complaints under the Council's Dignity at Work policy be regularly reported to the Executive;
5. Human Resources undertake an audit within the next twelve months to:

(a) establish how the introduction of a range of Work Life Balance policies would support the Council's future service priorities and help to promote the Council as an employer of choice, and

(b) explore the feasibility of using "informal" advisers to allow staff to air concerns informally and confidentially;

6. Corporate Team highlight the Council's successes more effectively through the Team Brief process and encourages Head of Departments to use that process to highlight successes within their own teams; and
7. new members of staff receive a formal induction programme that includes a section on Human Resources policies and the importance of Work Life Balance within three months of beginning work at the Council.

(B) in respect of the Council's Compassionate Leave Policy:

1. the new draft Bereavement Leave and Family Illness policies be supported subject to the addition of Grandparents and Grandchildren within the definition of "close family member" in the Bereavement Leave Policy;
2. Human Resources ensure that Trade Union involvement at an early stage and consultation with employees and the Personnel Panel is standard practice in developing the Council's Human Resource policies; and
3. The Compassionate Leave Policy be renamed the Special Leave policy and all the policies within this area be included in one document in a similar manner to the South Lakeland Special Leave Document.

MGT 61/07 ICT Sub Group

RESOLVED – that the notes of the ICT Sub Group held on 17 December 2007 be received and noted.

MGT 62/07 Executive Decisions

Consideration was given to the Decisions from the Executive made on 15 January 2008.

During consideration of this item members stressed the importance of continuing the work to achieve the Quality Coast Awards and suggested that the Working Group could have a representative from the Mid and South Copeland Partnerships.

RESOLVED – that the decisions from the Executive meeting on 15 January 2008 be noted.

MGT 63/07 Forward Plan

The Committee considered the Forward Plan of Key Decisions - January to April 2008.

RESOLVED – that the Forward Plan of Key Decisions - January to April 2008 be noted.

MGT 64/07 Work Plan

The Committee considered the Work Plans of all the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

During consideration of this item Members asked for an update on the West Cumbria Strategic Partnership, with dates of the next meetings and copies of minutes if available.

It was noted that the Staff Recruitment and Retention Policies Task and Finish Group had not yet been established and it was recommended that the Task and Finish Group be made up of the same Members as the Dignity at Work Task and Finish Group for continuity.

Members requested that the Business Development Manager be asked to attend a future meeting to discuss The Council's Property Asset Management Plan and proposals to change Council Policy.

RESOLVED – that

- a) the Work Plans be noted;
- b) an update on the West Cumbria Strategic Partnership, with dates of meetings and minutes if available be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee;
- c) a Staff Recruitment and Retention Policies Task and Finish Group be established consisting of the same Members as the Dignity at Work Task and Finish Group with terms of reference prepared and submitted by the Scrutiny Officer;
- d) the Head of Business Development be asked to attend a future meeting to discuss the Council's Property Asset Management Plan and any proposed changes to Policy.
- e) the Head of Policy and Performance be asked to attend a future meeting to update the Committee on Gershon efficiencies

The meeting closed at 11.35am

Chairman