

At a meeting of the MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on THURSDAY, 16TH JUNE, 2011 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Tate in the Chair

Councillors Anderson, G. Miller, Mordey, Oliver, Rolph, Stewart, Walker, S. Watson, Wilson and Wood.

Welcome

The Chairman welcomed Councillors Anderson, Wilson and Wood as new Members to the Committee and extended his congratulations to Councillor Heron a former Member of the Committee on his appointment as Chairman of the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority.

Apologies for Absence

All Members of the Committee being present, there were no apologies for absence.

Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Committee held on 14th April, 2011

(i) Performance Report Quarter 3 (April – December 2010)

Councillor Rolph highlighted that responses to the enquiries made by herself and Councillor M. Forbes relating to the condition of roads and footways and in respect of the Council's policy on access to sports facilities from Street Scene and Highways colleagues and other colleagues in the City Services Directorate respectively, had not been forthcoming.

Mr. Nigel Cummings, Scrutiny Officer was asked to chase up this information for the Members concerned.

(ii) Request to Attend Seminar – Centre for Public Scrutiny's 9th Annual Conference and Exhibition

The Chairman reported that the event had been attended by Councillors Miller and Walker and not Councillors Miller and Mordey as originally proposed. It had become more appropriate for Councillor Walker to attend as a representative of the North East Health Scrutiny Joint Committee which had been nominated to receive the Joint Working Award and the overall Impact

Award for its major project reviewing the health inequalities suffered by ex-service people and their families.

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 14th April, 2011 (copy circulated), be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest (Including Whipping Declarations)

Item 6 – Annual Health and Safety Report

Councillor Rolph declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the report as one of the health and safety review decisions was a decision made when she had been a Member of the Cabinet.

Councillor Mordey declared a personal interest as a Member of the Port Board.

Annual Work Programme 2011-12

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) for Members to determine the Annual Work Programme for the Scrutiny Committee for 2011-12.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Following due consideration it was:-

2. RESOLVED that:-
 - (a) the draft Annual Work Programme for 2011-12 be approved; and
 - (b)
 - (i) the topics 'After Comprehensive Area Assessment' and 'the Corporate Outcomes Framework' be combined and a policy review be undertaken by the Committee, the Scrutiny Officer to scope the review and submit the approach to the next meeting;
 - (ii) the Committee examine the issues contained in the Public Services Reform White Paper, once published, looking at the implications for the Council, key stakeholders and local Committee and that this be included in the programme for later in the year at the appropriate time; and
 - (iii) the Communication of Council Services be included in the Committee's work programme; a briefing to be made by Officers in the Communications Team to the Committee on how the public and local communities find out about the services that the Council offers and how it communicates information around the services provided.

Combined Service Improvement and Financial Planning Process

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) apprising the Scrutiny Committee of progress in respect of the 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 Combined Service Improvement and Financial Planning Processes (formerly the Strategic Planning Process) and outlining initial proposals in respect of the 2012/2013 process.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Ray Leonard, Head of Organisational Strategy and Intelligence, briefed the Committee on the report.

3. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

Annual Health and Safety Report

The Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development submitted a report (copy circulated) providing a summary health and safety report to review the management of health and safety at work within the Council.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. John Rawling, Deputy Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development, briefed the Committee on the report.

Councillor Anderson referred to the incidents which had occurred in Environmental Services. She advised that no grass cutting, an important and valued service by the public, had taken place in her Ward at this time due to injuries sustained by grass cutting personnel whilst cutting grass on an incline. A full health and safety review had taken place and staff had been retrained as a result.

Councillor Anderson enquired how long grass cutting had been suspended whilst a review was undertaken.

Mr. Rawling confirmed grass cutting was suspended as a result of an incident which had occurred whilst grass cutting on a slope last year and undertook to ensure Councillor Anderson was provided with the detail requested.

Members of the Committee noted that the Diving Accident at Sunderland Aquatic Centre which had occurred in October 2010 had resulted in diving activities being suspended from this time and that this was still the position in June 2011.

Mr. Rawling explained that remedial actions remained under negotiation with the contractor.

Members of the Committee expressed concern at the length of time that the diving platforms remained out of use given that the Aquatic Centre was meant to be used as a training facility for the Olympic Games in 2012. The consensus was that the remedial works needed to be identified and undertaken at the earliest opportunity so that the facility could be re-opened.

Full consideration having been given to the report; it was:-

4. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the content of the report be noted; and
- (ii) a further report be submitted on the transformation and management of Health and Safety in the Streetscene Service.

Forward Plan – Key Decisions for the Period 1st June, 2011 – 30th September, 2011

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) providing Members with an opportunity to consider those items in the Executive's Forward Plan for the period 1st June, 2011 to 30th September, 2011 which relate to the Management Scrutiny Committee.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

A copy of the latest Forward Plan covering the period 1st July, 2011 to 31st October, 2011 published on 14th June, 2011 was tabled at the meeting.

5. RESOLVED that the Executive's Forward Plan for the above period be received and noted.

(Signed) R.D. TATE,
Chairman.