
OVERVIEW OF EFFICIENCY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Efficiency and Resources Scrutiny Committee has undertaken.

Challenging Performance, Making a Difference

2. We received an informative presentation on the Council's Performance Management Framework which was adopted in 2012 and discussed the role of Members, particularly Scrutiny Members, in challenging performance across service areas. We were advised that each Service Group has agreed a suite of performance measures which incorporate Key Performance Indicators, Performance Indicators and other management information and discussion ensued on the monitoring and challenge process which were already in place and the remedial action taken to address underperformance and improve outcomes for customers where appropriate.
3. We had an interesting discussion around the definition of some of the key performance indicators and their current performance and we agreed that this Scrutiny Committee would do some further work if any areas of concern within its remit were highlighted.

Medium Term Financial Plan Task and Finish Review Group – Departmental Budgets

4. Councillor Johnson met with the Assistant Director to continue with the work he and Councillor Landers were undertaking in relation to the Council's constitutional arrangements in relation to budget management.
5. The work of this Group has challenged the controls and processes in place in relation to budget monitoring by Officers and Members; looked at the two types of budget monitoring in place depending on the service area and the volatility of the budget; controls and processes in place to challenge expenditure and ensure that any spend was appropriate before it was incurred and looked at evidence in relation to one particular area of overspend to substantiate that the processes had been correctly followed.
6. The Group also looked at the role of Scrutiny in scrutinising any particular areas of concern as and when it feels appropriate.

7. It is envisaged that the final report of this Task and Finish Review Group will be submitted to the next ordinary meeting of our Scrutiny Committee on 29th August, 2013.

Management Costs Task and Finish Review Group – Final Report

8. We have considered the final report of the Management Costs Task and Finish Review Group which was established to look at the management structure within the Organisation and to consider, whether, at this point in time, the structure was appropriate and was able to meet and deliver the services of the Council.
9. The Task and Finish Review Group met on two occasions and focussed its work on three specific areas of the Organisation, namely those services under the remit of the Assistant Director, Finance and HR, the Assistant Director, Resources and the Assistant Director, Development and Commissioning as those were the areas where the Group felt the main changes were taking place.
10. In reaching its findings, the Group concluded that it was satisfied with the information and responses it had received and that, in undertaking this work, it had enlightened and assisted them to understand the changes and the departmental savings achieved, particularly in relation to the three areas referred to above. It also concluded that, having regard to the information supplied, it was satisfied with the cost effectiveness of the senior management team and was confident that, at this point in time, the management structure was appropriate and able to meet and deliver the services of the Council in the current financial climate.

Subsidised Services Task and Finish Review Group – Final Report

11. Members may recall that our Scrutiny Committee considered a call in in relation to the future of Stressholme Golf Course earlier this year and, when considering that call in, there were some discussions around the level of subsidy which had previously been paid to Stressholme by the Council and, as a result, it was agreed that as part of our work programme, we would look at the level of subsidy paid to some of the Council's other leisure services. We established a Task and Finish Review Group to undertake this work and, in developing the Terms of Reference, it was suggested that the Dolphin Centre should be the main focus of this work at this time. The Task and Finish Review Group held a meeting on the 7 May 2013 and the Assistant Director, Community, the Assistant Director, Finance and HR and the Head of Leisure and Culture were invited to answer Members' questions.
12. The final report of the Task and Finish Review Group was considered at our meeting held on 13 June 2013, and in making its recommendations, the Group concluded that it was satisfied with the information supplied in relation to the level of subsidy paid to the Dolphin Centre at this time and accepted that, because of the nature of the business, some level of subsidy would always be required to be paid to the Dolphin Centre, but that it would like to see the level continue to reduce over time.

13. This work has now concluded however, we have agreed to re-visit this at a later date if necessary.

Councillor Ian Haszeldine
Chair Efficiency and Resources Scrutiny Committee