



POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE YSTRAD MYNACH
ON TUESDAY, 3RD MARCH 2009 AT 5.15 PM**

PRESENT:

Councillor J Taylor - Chairman
Councillor M E Sargent - Vice Chairman

Councillors

H.A. Andrews, A. Blackman, D.G. Carter, J.B. Criddle, D.T. Davies K. Etheridge, J E. Fussell,
L. Hughes, S. Jenkins, G. Jones K. Lloyd, D.V. Poole, K.V. Reynolds, A.S. Williams,
J.M. Wilson

Also present:

Councillors C. P. Mann (Finance, Resources and Sustainability), and A.J. Pritchard (Human Resources and Constitutional Affairs)

Together with:

N. Barnett (Director of Corporate Services), G. Hardacre (Head of People Management and Development), P. Evans (Head of Information, Communications, Technology and Property Services), N. Scammell (Head of Corporate Finance), J. Jones (Scrutiny Coordinator), L. Lucas (Head of Procurement), D. Perkins (Head of Legal Services) and G. George (Committee Services Manager)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L. Binding. D. Bolter and V. Jenkins.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the beginning or during the meeting.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 20th January 2009 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THIS COMMITTEE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CALL-IN PROCEDURE

No matters had been referred to this committee in accordance with the call in procedure

4. REPORT BY CABINET MEMBERS

Councillor A.J. Pritchard Cabinet member (Human Resources and Constitutional Affairs) gave an update on Job Evaluation as follows:-

- Trade unions had confirmed that the ballot would take place between 11th – 27th March 2009;
- Over the past month over 4,000 staff had been briefed;
- Council facilities would be made available over the next week for trade unions to meet their members;
- Staff from HR, Payroll and IT had been temporarily housed in Tredomen to co-ordinate payments to staff, helpline for staff enquiries, issuing of revised statements, contracts, etc.

5. CABINET REPORTS

The Cabinet report listed on the agenda (Basic Skills Employers Pledge) had not been called forward for review.

SCRUTINY REPORTS

6. SOUTH EAST WALES SHARED SERVICES PROJECT - HUMAN RESOURCES PAYROLL AND TRAINING SERVICES

Paul Griffiths and Will Maclean from WLGA were present when this item was discussed and gave an oral presentation on shared services and responded to members questions.

The report from officers sought members views on the proposals provided by the South East Wales Regional Partnership Board for the design of shared services for Human Resources (HR), Payroll and Training Services, prior to reporting to Council on 10th March 2009.

The background to the project was contained in previous reports to Cabinet and the Policy and Resources Scrutiny committee. In November 2007, the Connecting South East Wales Board (CSEW) Board commissioned the Steering Group to provide a design and full business case for the proposal to establish a shared service. The Steering Group appointed a Design Team of local authority professionals and appointed Orion Partners to work in support of the Design Team. The full business case concluded that to deliver a shared service there were three options to consider and each of these was detailed in the report.

The business case tested the three proposed implementation options identified benefits of the proposed; new arrangements and risks of the proposed model along with financial implications.

Members were invited to consider the details contained in this report as part of the consultation process prior to a report to Council on 10 March 2009. Following a full discussion, the committee agreed to refer the item to council with no recommendation.

7. CONSULTANCY COSTS 2006/2007 AND 2007/2008

Members considered a report requested on work undertaken by consultants following articles that had appeared in the press where spending on consultants by local authorities was reported.

The report provided an overview of spend in 2006/07 and 2007/08, that indicated the main

suppliers used and the type of work undertaken by service area.

Members noted the report.

8. MEMBERS REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON DISMISSALS

Members considered the further information requested by following a question tabled to Council on 27 January 2009. At that meeting it was stated that a comprehensive report was being prepared and will be submitted to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

The information quoted by the press did not tell the full picture in that over the two year period, 107 of the 169 dismissals were for reason of ill health retirements, that whilst technically were dismissals, were not provided for comparison by other local authorities. It was also noted that in this period there were less than a dozen appeals and none of these cases were successful at tribunal.

The committee noted the letter sent to Mr Chris Franks, AM, National Assembly for Wales in response to the Freedom of Information request submitted by him It provided details in full of the information requested.

Members noted the information provided in this report.

9. GRANTS ALLOCATION 2009/10

At the request of the member who sought this information this item was deferred to the next meeting.

10. DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF APPLICATIONS

The undermentioned applications for rate relief have been determined by the Head of Corporate Finance under delegated powers:-

- Youth Activities Project Ltd
- Samye Foundation Wales
- The National Youth Advocacy Services
- Trecenydd Community Centre Management Committee

Members noted the decisions taken under delegated powers and that future reports on applications for discretionary rate relief would be reported to this committee for information only.

11. BUDGET MONITORING 2008/09 – CORPORATE SERVICES AND MISCELLANEOUS FINANCE

Members considered the report relating to the budget for 2008/2009 for Corporate Services Directorate including Miscellaneous Finance. The report projected the anticipated final outturn for these services based upon expenditure and income trends for the first seven months of the year. The report highlighted any significant variances from the original estimates and tables showing the variances for each of the services were included as appendices.

Members noted the contents of the report.

12. BUDGET MONITORING 2008/09 – PERFORMANCE & POLICY

Members considered the report relating to the budget for 2008/09 for Performance & Policy Services Division. The report projected an anticipated final outturn for these services based upon expenditure and income trends for the first nine months of the year. The report highlighted variances from the original estimates and tables showing the variances for each of the services were included as appendices.

Members noted the contents of the report.

13. INFORMATION ITEMS

Members noted the following information items:-

- Local Service Board - minutes of meeting held on 20th January 2009;
- Corporate Health and Safety - minutes of meeting held on 5th January 2009;
- Void Property Information Report – update;
- Door to Door Rent Collection;
- Anonymous Correspondence;
- Treasury Management & Capital Financing Prudential Indicators Monitoring report – 3rd Quarter 2008/09.

14. REQUESTS FOR AN ITEM TO BE INCLUDED ON THE NEXT AVAILABLE AGENDA

A member requested a detailed report on use of Capita Consultants.

The meeting closed at 7.20pm.

Approved as a correct record, and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 21st April 2009, they were signed by the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN