



## **POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON MONDAY, 29TH NOVEMBER 2010 AT 5.00 P.M.**

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PRESENT:

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

Councillors:

L. Binding, Mrs A. Blackman, D. Bolter, J.B. Criddle, D.T. Davies, L. Hughes, Mrs V. Jenkins,  
G. Jones, D.V. Poole, D. Rees, K.V. Reynolds, A.S. Williams

Also Present:

Cabinet Members: Councillors C. Hobbs, C.P. Mann and A.J. Pritchard

Together with:

N. Barnett (Deputy Chief Executive), P.S. Evans (Head of Information, Communications, Technology and Property Services), G. Hardacre (Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development), D. Perkins (Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer), N. Scammell (Head of Corporate Finance), R. Mathews (Communications Manager), J. Jones (Scrutiny and Members' Services Manager), R. Thomas (Committee Services Officer)

#### **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor H.A. Andrews

#### **1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

#### **REPORTS OF OFFICERS**

Consideration was given to the following reports.

#### **2. PROPOSAL TO MEET MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN FOR COMMUNICATIONS, MARKETING AND EVENTS SERVICE**

The report sought Members' recommendation to Cabinet on proposals to achieve £200,000 savings within the Communications, Marketing and Events service.

The report provided further information to Members following the meeting of the Policy and

Resources Committee on 29th November 2010 in which Members deferred consideration on the proposals to cut Corporate Services budgets in line with the medium-term financial plan, pending receipt of the alternative structure, as suggested by staff, and additional information regarding vacancies and indicative job evaluation grades.

Members sought clarification from officers on the number and practices in relation to the length of time vacancies are held open. Officers acknowledged a post was held open for longer than wanted, but advised due to the specialised nature of the position and the Authority's current policy on recruitment, it had been difficult to find a suitable replacement. Other positions had been absorbed and/or amalgamated.

A Member raised concern regarding the difference in the number of remaining posts detailed in options 1 and 2, and the level of savings to be made versus the number of staff to be moved to the redeployment pool. Members were advised officers had considered savings/costs that would also meet the demands of the business.

A question was raised about the nature of the consultation process and the outcomes of this. Officers assured Members that consultation was taken very seriously but that managers were employed to make judgements and offer recommendations. As a result, three options had been brought before the Scrutiny Committee to consider.

A Member proposed an amendment to the report that option 1 should be recommended to Cabinet for approval. In light of option 2 being the officers' recommendation a further proposal was made that option 2 within the report be recommended to Cabinet for approval. Both were seconded.

In accordance with Rule of Procedure 15.4 (1) a request was made for a recorded vote.

In light of the two proposals, and the rejection of option 3 at previous meetings of the Scrutiny Committee, the Chairman asked Members to indicate their preference for either option 1 or option 2, when registering their vote.

#### **FOR OPTION 1**

Councillors Mrs A. Blackman, D.T. Davies, G. Jones, D.V. Poole, D. Rees, K.V. Reynolds, A.S. Williams (7)

#### **FOR OPTION 2**

Councillors L. Binding, D. Bolter, J.B. Criddle, L. Hughes, Mrs V. Jenkins, Mrs M.E. Sargent, J. Taylor (7)

There began an equal number of votes and in accordance with Rule of Procedure 15.2 the Chairman had the casting vote. With a vote of 7 for option 1 and 8 for option 2, the Scrutiny Committee recommended to Cabinet that, for the reasons contained therein:-

- (i) Option 2 be implemented;
- (ii) the council make every effort to ensure those who are not included in the new structure are given training and opportunities to re-skill whilst in the redeployment pool; and
- (iii) the new structure be implemented by 1st April 2011.

### **3. WORKFORCE INFORMATION REPORT – QUARTER 2**

The report provided Members with an update on the Workforce Information Report now being produced quarterly, which contains the updated sickness data requested at the last meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development introduced the report and highlighted the headline issues. In particular, reference was made to the improving downward trend of the number of days lost through sickness. It was confirmed the introduction of new Managing Sickness Absence Procedures and the Authority's support systems were having positive effects.

Officers highlighted the high number of employees that were aged 50+, and the low numbers aged between 16 and 21. Concerns were raised of the potential for CCBC to lose its experienced staff and of the difficulty in recruiting youngsters into the organisation. Due to the current freeze on external recruitment, it was unlikely that these concerns will be addressed.

Members discussed the report and commented on the positive outcomes detailed within. Officers responded to general questions, in particular in regard to the support mechanisms available for staff on long-term sick leave and the number of staff employed within the Authority, permanently and on a fixed term basis. A Member asked for a definitive headcount and was advised a report will be brought back to the Scrutiny Committee to clarify this.

A Member asked if there was, or will be, a succession policy in order to encourage youngsters to commence employment with the Authority. Officers confirmed vacancies are filled internally first with external recruitment only taking place to ensure an appropriate skills match, as necessary. There was no existing succession policy and officers highlighted the need for caution due to age discrimination laws. Clarification would therefore be sought from Legal Services prior to consideration of such a policy.

The officer was thanked for his comprehensive report and Members asked that he prepare a summary sheet when it is next presented to the Scrutiny Committee.

The meeting closed at 6.00 p.m.

Approved as a correct record, and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 25th January 2011, they were signed by the Chairman.

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CHAIRMAN