

COMMUNITY FOCUSED & EFFICIENT COUNCIL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Community Focused & Efficient Council Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 9th September, 2010 at 6.00 p.m. in the Civic Offices, Telford, Shropshire

PRESENT: Councillors C.P.R. Mollett (Chairman), D.R. Chaplin, A.D. McClements and W.L. Tomlinson

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. M. Viney and Mr. R. Williams (Co-opted Members)

OFFICERS: Sarah Bass (Organisational Capacity Projects Team Leader) and Stephanie Jones (Scrutiny Officer)

CFEC-1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors L. Lomax and A.A. Meredith

CFEC-2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/PARTY WHIP

None.

CFEC-3 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

No nominations for Vice-Chairman of the Committee had been received and Councillor W.L. Tomlinson proposed that, should the Chairman not be present at a meeting, a Chairman for that meeting be elected.

RESOLVED – that no Vice-Chairman be appointed for the Community Focused & Efficient Council Scrutiny Committee.

CFEC-4 REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMEN'S FORUM

The Chairman reported that the Chairmen's Forum, held on 16th August, 2010, had identified three topics for in-depth reviews including budget formulation, which would be the responsibility of this Scrutiny Committee. In addition, each of the other Scrutiny Committees would scrutinise the relevant aspect of the budget proposals for 2011/12 and report their comments to this Committee as part of the formal consultation process. In addition to this work, each Scrutiny Committee would agree its own work programme within the resources available.

In accordance with the Constitution, each Scrutiny Committee would have a minimum of two formal meetings per year. In recognition of the fact that the Active Lifestyles: Leisure and Culture, Children & Young People, and Community Focused Efficient Council Scrutiny Committees had statutory roles and additional work, the Scrutiny Chairmen had allocated them three additional meetings. The additional work of this Committee included the remit of the previous Value for Money Scrutiny Monitoring Group as the main mechanism by which Cabinet would consult scrutiny on the budget proposals and by which the financial and service performance of the Council would be monitored.

The remaining meetings had been allocated on the basis of two to Scrutiny Committees that had no in-depth Review and one meeting to the Committees with an in-depth Scrutiny Review.

Members identified other issues for this Scrutiny Committee as being communication, partnerships, and the Community Strategy. Roy Williams stressed the need for the other Scrutiny Committee meetings to be synchronised with this Committee in order to allow for an effective input to the budget.

CFEC-5 BACKGROUND PAPERS ON SERVICE REVIEWS

The report of the Lead Corporate Director: Environment & Rural Area/Housing, Regeneration & Prosperity informed the Committee of the programme of service reviews that was currently being undertaken across all service delivery units within the Council. The reviews would look at how services were managed and operated in order to identify ways in which they could be delivered to the community more efficiently and effectively within the resources available. The reviews needed to produce operational (non-staff) savings of 20%, which would be fed into the budget process.

A Service Review Steering Group had been set up to oversee the programme, to monitor the progress of each Head of Service including information on changes in activity and savings, a timetable for which was included in the report, and to ensure a consistent approach across the Council.

Members requested that a report on the Service Review proposals be brought to the Committee at an appropriate time to enable them to make a response before any final decisions were taken and the Organisational Capacity Projects Team Leader agreed to pass this on to the Lead Corporate Director.

RESOLVED – that Members noted the briefing and took account of the service reviews when planning the Committee's work programme.

CFEC-6 2010/11 WORK PROGRAMME

The report of the Scrutiny Manager provided the Committee with information to enable them to plan its Work Programme. Annex A of the report set out the suggestions for items made by the Scrutiny Assembly Workshop and Annex B set out the outstanding items from the Value for Money Scrutiny Monitoring Group and other scrutiny groups under the previous arrangements. As noted in Minute No. CFEC-4, this Scrutiny Committee would be undertaking an in-depth review of the budget formulation in terms of suggestions on savings that could be made.

Councillor W.L. Tomlinson referred to the Quarterly Financial Monitoring reports considered by the Cabinet and requested that the Head of Finance be requested to attend the October meeting of the Committee and to provide Members with the latest monitoring information to make them aware of the base budget figures prior to scrutinising the budget proposals for 2011/12. He further commented that not only should the Committee scrutinise decisions that had already been made but should also have the opportunity to participate in policy formulation.

The Committee agreed that the following action should be taken with regard to the Work Programme suggestions.

Scrutiny Assembly Workshop

Priority	Suggestion	Decision
A	Involvement in development of the budget	Within remit of Committee or to be undertaken as part of an In-depth Review.
A	Scrutiny of budget	Within remit of Committee
A	Expenditure on taxi services in Children & Young People	Not to be added to Work Programme but could be considered as part of an In-depth Review.
A	Public Relations – raising profile of Council and working with partner organisations including Parish & Town Councils	To be added to Work Programme but with a narrower focus on engaging the public during the budget process.
B	Scrutiny of back office efficiencies	Not to be added to the Work Programme but could be considered as part of the In-Depth Review .
C	Service provision by public bodies with an ethnic minority perspective	Not to be added to the Work Programme. Cabinet Member (Cllr S.M. Kelly) and Chairman of the Scrutiny Assembly to respond separately.
C	Expenditure by Council on consultants	Not to be added to Work Programme – Council now required to publish all expenditure over £500.

Outstanding Items from the Forward Plan of the Value For Money Scrutiny Monitoring Group and other scrutiny groups

Topic	Decision
Keeping Elected Members informed	A short report on current progress and means of improving this to be submitted to the Committee to establish whether any further action needed to be taken
Implementation of Locality Working Arrangements	Not to be added to Work Programme
Monitoring of Equalities Impact Assessment	Not to be added to Work Programme. Could be looked at as part of the In-depth Review.
Financial Monitoring – Quarterly, 5 & and 8 monthly	Within remit of Scrutiny Committee
Youth & Community VFM Self-Assessment Action Plan Update	Refer to Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee
VFM Service Reviews	Within remit of Scrutiny Committee
Review of spend on	Relevant Cabinet Member and Head of Service to

safeguarding and progress against savings targets	be invited to make a report to the Scrutiny Committee
Review of Capital Programme	Work Programme item
2011/12 budget consultation/ evidence gathering/conclusion and recommendations	Work Programme item
SEN Overspend	If a significant variation is established by Financial Monitoring report to October meeting, then further action will be considered. If not, refer to Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee
Employee Suggestion Scheme	All significant savings to be reported to Committee
Reduction in use of B&B and associated subsidy costs	Await Financial Monitoring report to October meeting. If spending on track then no further action required
Update on Economic Development savings/One Telford	Update report requested.

Referral from Scrutiny Leadership Board

School Funding Formula	Referred to Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee.
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Topics Raised at the meeting

Single Status	Update report requested from lead Corporate Director
Partnerships	Impact of budget reductions of partner organisations upon the Council's budget and need to engage partners as part of budget process. To be added to Work Programme but scope to be limited to available resources
Budget Consultation Process	Review of methods of consultation

ECFC-7 DATES AND TIMES OF NEXT MEETINGS

It was agreed that the next three meetings of the Scrutiny Committee be held on the following dates at 6.00 p.m.:

- Wednesday, 6th October, 2010
- Wednesday, 3rd November, 2010
- Wednesday, 1st December, 2010

The dates of the meetings in 2011 would be arranged later.

The meeting ended at 7.57 p.m.

Chairman:

Date: