

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources
held at 10.00 am on Thursday, 22 March 2018

Present:

Members: Councillor J Mutton (Cabinet Member)

Councillor K Taylor (Shadow Cabinet Member)

Employees (by Directorate):

Place S Bennett, P Jennings, R Parkes

D Ashmore, B Barrett, J Gregg

People

Public Business

69. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

70. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 February, 2018 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

71. Policy Contingency Funding Requests - Coventry Law Centre and Coventry Pride 2018

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) which sought approval for two separate requests for funding from the Policy Contingency budget, which is set aside to cover any ad hoc one off requests for funding that are deemed to be in line with the Council's policy priorities. The Policy Contingency budget was reduced to £75,000 as part of the 2017/18 budget setting process.

The Coventry Law Centre are concerned that the level of support they currently offer could become unsustainable due to the increased demand for their services which have been compounded by welfare reforms, the rising number of sanctions and previous reductions to their grant funding. To help manage these pressures, Coventry Law Centre have asked for funding to recruit an additional full time expert benefits advisor for an initial period of 12 months at a total cost of £34,535.

Coventry Pride is an organisation that runs an annual lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans pride event and a series of other events that promote equality and diversity for the public benefit. The report recommends providing a £5,000 contribution to Coventry Pride 2018.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources:-

(1) Approves one-off grant funding of £34,535 to be paid to Coventry Law Centre for an additional benefits adviser to supplement their existing grant.

(2) Approves on-off grant funding of £5,000 to support the Coventry Pride 2018 event.

72. Agency Workers and Interim Managers - Performance Management Report Q3 (1 October to 31 December, 2017)

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) which provided performance information on the use of agency workers procured for the Quarter 3 period from 1 October to 31 December, 2017 and interim manager and other agency workers spends for the same period.

Further to Minute 56/17, the Cabinet Member had requested that information be provided on how departments intended to reduce agency staff costs in Directorates and information regarding the agency spend in relation to the Performing Arts Service and this additional information was provided within the report.

The total Directorate expenditure on agency workers up to and including Quarter 3 2017/18 for spends with the Master Vendor supplier was detailed in an appendix to the report. The justification for new orders placed by Directorates for agency workers and equalities data for workers supplied through the Pertemps contract were contained in further appendices.

A table in the report provided comparative expenditure in Quarter 2 and Quarter 3 2017/18 and indicated an increase in total spend from £989,406 in Quarter 2 to £1,056,222 in Quarter 3. A breakdown of spend within each Directorate was also provided.

The report detailed expenditure outside of the Pertemps contract in the following areas:-

People:- Childrens Services
 Education
 Customer Services
 Adults

Place:- Professional Services Contract

The report also detailed work undertaken on alternative solutions to agency staff, such as banks of casual workers and the recruitment to specialist roles.

At the request of the Cabinet Member, John Gregg, Director of Children's Services attended the meeting and provided the Cabinet Member with information in relation to work being done to reduce agency spend in that area.

The Cabinet Member outlined his continuing concern regarding the amount of money being spent on agency staff and confirmed his commitment to reducing the level of spend in this area.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Finance and Strategic Resources:-

- (1) Notes the agency/interim spend for Quarter 3**
- (2) Notes the work done on providing in-house solutions as an alternative to agency and interim workers.**
- (3) Requests that officers submit a report to the next Cabinet Member meeting providing assurances that the process of filling vacancies, where appropriate, is undertaken at the earliest opportunity to ensure continuity of posts.**
- (4) That all engagement of agency staff be approved by senior management and that all future quarterly reports on agency workers include details of the number of agency staff engaged and the reasons for that engagement.**

73. Outstanding Issues

There were no outstanding issues.

74. Any Other Items of Urgent Public Business

There were no items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 11.00 am)