
To
Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

10th October, 2007

Subject
Scrutiny Board 1 – Chair's Report

1 Purpose of the Note

To inform the Committee of the work done by the Board during the period June to September 2007.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the information set out in this briefing note.

3 Information/Background

3.1 Cabinet Member Plans - the Board has held a meeting with each of its relevant Cabinet Members to question them about the content of their Plans. These identified some possible additional issues for the Board's work programme (relating to the Community Cohesion and Equality Strategies and to proposals resulting from Value for Money reviews).

This exercise involved two additional meetings of the Board – one of which (on 1st August) was used to plan the lines of questioning for the Cabinet Member.

3.2 Housing Benefits - the Board has continued to monitor the progress on the Improvement Plan. It has also been kept informed of the progress on the implementation of the Academy IT system and on the Debt Recovery Framework.

3.3 Value for Money - the Board intends to monitor the progress of the Council's Value for Money Strategy and to be involved in considering proposals from Value for Money reviews (see item 1 above).

3.4 Sickness absence – this is one of the main areas of the Board's work at the moment. The Board is continuing to help the Cabinet Member (Customer and Workforce Services) to try to reduce the Council's continuing high levels of sickness absence in two ways:-

- By considering the quarterly sickness absence monitoring reports.
- By concentrating on those service areas where absence is particularly high, rather than on whole Directorates. To start this process, it has held a meeting with the Director of City Services to find out what is being done to reduce the high levels of sickness absence in three service areas within his Directorate. It is intended to have similar meetings with other Directors.

3.5 Audit Sub-Group – the Group has had two meetings so far this year, considering reports on the work of the Council's Internal Audit Team and the Corporate Risk Register, together with reports from the Council's External Auditors.

In addition, the Group has continued to develop its role by taking on the monitoring of the Council's capital and revenue programmes.

It is intended to provide more training for the Group during this year.

Councillor Andrew Williams – Chair, Scrutiny Board 1