

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

16th September 2009

- Members Present: - Councillor Andrews (substitute for Councillor Arrowsmith)
Councillor Charley
Councillor Clifford
Councillor Crookes (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Duggins
Councillor Mutton
Councillor Ridge (Chair)
- Employees Present: - M. Coult (Finance and Legal Services Directorate)
J. Parry (Assistant Chief Executive)
M. Salmon (Customer and Workforce Services Directorate)
C. Steele (Chief Executive's Directorate)
- Apologies: Councillor Arrowsmith
Councillor Maton

Public Business

45. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

46. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd September, 2009, were agreed as a true record.

47. Consideration of Call-ins – Stage 1

There were no call-ins.

48. Charging Policy

The Committee considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and Legal Services, that was also to be considered by Cabinet at their meeting on 22nd September 2009, detailing the new Charging Policy that would impact on the fees and charges levied for all services across the City Council. A copy of the Policy was attached to the report.

With the medium term financial pressures facing the Council, there would be significant challenges to meet in order to deliver a balanced revenue programme over the coming years. Setting the appropriate level for fees and charges was an important element in balancing the Council's revenue budget.

The former Value for Money Partnership Board commissioned a review of income generation opportunities, a number of which had been taken into account in the 2009-10 budget setting process, and also decided that it would be appropriate to establish a Charging Policy, against which the setting of all fees and charges should be measured in the future.

A corporate policy and approach to charging was vital to ensure that the Council maximised opportunities for increasing income from fees and charges, in a way which also took into account that income generation could support wider Council objectives. A policy with clear, consistent principles that would underpin all activity relating to fees and charges and provide a framework for all Council services to follow, would ensure that fees and charges were both set, and reviewed, in a consistent and timely manner across the organisation.

Work would need to be done, which would not prevent progress towards quick implementation of the policy, to improve baseline information for some fees and charges, for example ensuring that the full cost of service delivery, including overheads, were understood to enable the application of the full cost recovery principle.

Consultation would take place on any increases in specific fees and charges in accordance with normal practice as proposals were put forward.

The Corporate Management Team was exercising governance over charging arrangements. A working group of the Team would, within the next six months, be reviewing all Council fees and charges and the way in which the concessions policy should be applied to ensure the Policy was being followed.

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee considered and supported the proposal to establish a Charging Policy and requested that they be kept informed of progress on this issue.

RESOLVED that the Charging Policy be supported and the Committee be kept informed of progress on this issue and that these comments be conveyed to Cabinet.

49. Outstanding Issues

There were no outstanding issues.

50. Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme 2009/2010

The Committee considered and noted their Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2009/10. They decided that they would consider the 2010/2011 Pre-Budget Report at a future meeting of the Committee within the consultation period that would end on 16th November 2009.

51. Meeting Evaluation

In evaluating the meeting, the Committee were satisfied with the quality of the briefings and information they had received. The comments offered by members would be used to ensure the continued efficiency and effectiveness of future meetings.

52. Any Other Public Business

There were no other items of public business.