

## **SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE**

10<sup>th</sup> October 2012

Scrutiny Co-ordination

Committee Members Present: Councillor Mrs Abbott  
Councillor Mrs Bigham (Chair)  
Councillor Blundell  
Councillor Howells  
Councillor Lakha  
Councillor M. Mutton  
Councillor Skipper (Deputy Chair)  
Councillor Welsh

Employees Present: G. Holmes (Chief Executive's Directorate)  
H. Peacocke (Customer & Workforce Services Directorate)  
M. Salmon (Customer & Workforce Services Directorate)  
A. West (Chief Executive's Directorate)  
A. Williams (City Services & Development Directorate)

Apologies: Councillor Mrs Fletcher  
Councillor Foster

### **Public Business**

#### **35. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.

#### **36. Minutes**

- (a) The Minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2012 were signed as a true record.
- (b) Further to Minute 30/12 headed 'Outside Bodies Task and Finish Group', the Committee noted that a report would be submitted to Cabinet Member (Policy Leadership and Governance) on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2012.

#### **37. Exclusion of Press and Public**

**RESOLVED** that, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the item of business referred to in Minutes 41 and 43 below, headed 'Heatline – Outcome of Procurement, Project Update and Cross Cutting Impact' on the grounds that this item involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part I of Schedule 12A of that Act.

### **38. Implications of New Transparency Regulations for Scrutiny**

The Committee received a briefing from the Governance Services Manager that outlined the implications for Scrutiny of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

The New Transparency Regulations no longer required the Council to publish a statutory Forward Plan; instead it would publish a Notice of Key Decisions and Private Reports. Information circulated at the meeting, provided details of the process for dealing with: key decisions; issues where it was not practical to give 28 clear days' notice of the intention to make a key decision; items of special urgency with less than 5 clear working days' notice; and private reports.

The Regulations retained the previous rights of Scrutiny Board Members to access reports, with a requirement to provide any documents requested. The regulations introduced a deadline, as soon as was practicable and in any case no later than 10 clear days after receipt of the request. (The Council generally provides these documents as soon as they were requested.)

The Committee viewed examples of notices published by the Council in respect of urgent Key Decisions and Private Reports and also the Notice of Key Decisions for the meeting of Cabinet on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2012. They were also provided with the contact details of officers who could assist Members regarding meetings and Access to Information Regulations 2012.

Members requested that they be provided with information on whether Cabinet could decide to go into private session during the course of a meeting, having not given any prior notice and who would respond to/make decisions on representations made by members of the public that items proposed to be decided in private should be decided in public.

**RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee noted the implications of new transparency regulations for Scrutiny and requested that they be kept informed of developments on this issue.**

### **39. Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme 2012/2013**

The Committee noted the Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2012/13.

### **40. Outstanding Issues**

Outstanding issues were included in the Work Programme.

### **41. Heatline – Outcome of Procurement, Project Update and Cross Cutting Impact**

The Committee received a Briefing Note of the Resources & New Projects Manager (Heatline Project Manager), City Services and Development Directorate, that provided an overview of the economic, social and environmental benefits of the Heatline Project and sought to identify any cross cutting areas that the Project may impact on and ensure the right linkages were put in place to maximise the wider benefits of the Scheme.

A private report detailing confidential financial aspects of this matter was also submitted to this meeting (Minute 43 below refers).

Jane Green a representative of Friends of the Earth, attended the meeting and outlined her concerns regarding the Scheme, the details of which she had e-mailed to Members of the Committee prior to the meeting. At the meeting she made particular reference to the risk to the Council for future repairs, maintenance and refit of the plant and carbon or incinerator taxes.

On 31 July 2012, the Council agreed a contract with Cofely to deliver a district heating network, initially supplying Council buildings, with a secured price that delivered financial savings for the Authority and a zero carbon source of heat for 25 years. The Cathedral's Chapter had agreed to become a customer to Heatline, however, on 5 July 2012, Coventry University withdrew from the project, citing it did not meet their legal, commercial and technical criteria. The University had indicated that whilst they were not in a position to continue with the project at that time, they may join the scheme as a customer at a later date.

In mid-September 2012 Cofely submitted the first of two planning applications for the Scheme, for a thermal substation and works compound on Whitefriars Lane. A second application for two thermal stores and works compound within Grove Street car park was due to be submitted at the beginning of November 2012, given the size and structure of the thermal stores, it was anticipated that this planning application would be considered by the Planning Committee in January 2013. The report set out a summary timetable for the construction and operation of the initial phase of the Scheme and indicated that a report detailing the outcome of the procurement, the programme of works and the pipe route would be submitted to Cabinet on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2012 and Council on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2012.

The Council's shareholding in Coventry and Solihull Waste Disposal Company would benefit as Heatline would enable the plant to get closer to achieving a 'Renewable' status, which in time could mean cost avoidance in terms of capital investment and potential taxes.

The Committee questioned officers and discussed the following aspects of the Scheme:

- Commercial and economic viability
- Liaison with the Council's Highways Section to agree a programme of works to minimise disruption to the public and providing adequate notice of works.
- Waste Strategy and Heatline links
- Efficiency of the water towers
- Proposed future links to domestic properties
- Resilience - back-up provision through Whitefriars Sub-station and thermal stores
- Employment for both the construction stage and for the longer term operational phase of the Scheme
- Reduced carbon production
- Public Realm – unaffected by Scheme
- Recycling – unaffected by Scheme. On-going work to encourage recycling

The committee requested that officers provide all Members of the Council with regular communication as the Scheme progresses.

**RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee noted the progress that had been made in delivering the Heatline Project.**

**42. Any Other Items of Public Business.**

There were no other items of public business.

**Private Business**

**43. Heatline – Outcome of Procurement, Project Update and Cross Cutting Impact**

Further to Minute 41 above, the Committee received a report of the Director of City Services and Development, which detailed confidential financial information in respect of the outcome of the procurement process in relation to Coventry's District Heating Scheme, Heatline.

**44. Any Other Items of Private Business.**

There were no other items of private business.

(Meeting closed at: 11.50 a.m.)