

MINUTE

A & B

Scrutiny Committee
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick
Wednesday 7 February 2007 at 2.15pm

Present:

J P Nicolson	R G Feather
F B Grains	I J Hawkins
T W Stove	

Apologies

L G Groat	F A Robertson
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In attendance (Officers):

J R Smith, Head of Organisational Development
P Peterson, Performance Management Co-ordinator
L Adamson, Committee Officer

Circular

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

Minute

The minute of meeting held on 3 November 2006, was confirmed.

Min. Ref.	Subject	Action/I nfo
01/07	<p><u>Scrutiny Committee Update</u></p> <p>The Committee considered a report by the Head of Organisational Development (Appendix 1).</p> <p>Mr J P Nicolson said he had expected more Member involvement, in particular by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee, during the interview and feedback process of the gender balance investigations.</p> <p>Mr Nicolson suggested that the functions of the Council's Committees should be reviewed. To ensure Members are kept informed of progress within each service area, delegated authority decisions should be reported at Committee meetings and there is a need for relationships and rapport between Members and officers to be strengthened. He noted with concern that recently there had been no items from Social Care or Housing on the Services Committee agendas.</p> <p>Mrs I J Hawkins said she was aware that various groups were meeting and decisions were being made that were never reported to the</p>	

	<p>Council.</p> <p>The Head of Organisational Development advised that a report would be presented to Council tomorrow on the findings from the Committee Structure Review Member/Officer Working Group and this would provide an opportunity for debate on reviewing the structures of the Committees. The performance review meetings were proving to be working well and a good opportunity for Members to meet with officers. The Head of Organisational Development suggested that the performance review meetings could be held more frequently, however there was a need to balance participation time for Members and officers. He also suggested that the regular Capital Programme update reports could include the information on progress with individual projects.</p> <p>(Mrs F B Grains left the meeting).</p> <p>The Committee agreed that it would be beneficial for the information from the performance reviews to be reported to Committees, however due to the volume of papers it would not be practical to circulate the papers with the agenda. The Head of Organisational Development said that a balance would need to be found, and suggested that the information could be available on the internet. Mrs Hawkins suggested that a brief update from the performance reviews, together with the update on projects, should be reported at Committee meetings.</p> <p>The Committee agreed that it could be beneficial for a lessons learned report to be prepared on the LPA/SIC dispute, as this could avoid similar situations arising in the future.</p> <p>Regarding the Housing Voids investigation, Mr Stove advised of progress from the improvements proposed by the Housing Management Team and Hjaltland Housing Association, set out in Section 5.3 of the report, and said that these proposals should improve the length of time it takes to let Council houses.</p> <p>Mrs Hawkins commented that the informal meeting between Scrutiny Committee Members and Planning service staff had been very helpful. The Committee agreed that the main difficulty was with recruitment and that the situation should be monitored, and if necessary, reviewed at a future date.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to note the recent activity by the Scrutiny Committee and endorsed the findings from the two completed investigations.</p>	
02/07	<p><u>2005-06 Statutory Performance Indicators – Comparative Analysis</u></p> <p>The Committee considered a report by the Head of Organisational Development (Appendix 2).</p>	

	<p>The Performance Management Co-ordinator advised that the report had previously been presented to Executive Committee where it had been agreed that the Scrutiny Committee should look in depth at any areas of concern. The Performance Management Co-ordinator summarised some of the findings from the comparative analysis with the Council's performances in relation to Orkney and the Western Isles and advised that it was necessary to monitor both the good and poor performance indicators, however there were no major areas of concern.</p> <p>Mr T W Stove referred to the indicator regarding the percentage of traffic light repairs completed within 48 hours, and the statement that the poor performance had largely been resolved. However, Mr Stove reported that the traffic lights at Sound and at the Esplanade were frequently not working. The Head of Organisational Development undertook to contact the Roads Service for an update on traffic light repairs.</p> <p>The Committee discussed some of the areas that indicated a poorer performance and agreed that further work was required to observe and improve the performances.</p>	
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03/07	<p><u>Good Practise – Reporting Performance to Service Users</u></p> <p>The Committee considered a report by the Performance Management Co-ordinator (Appendix 3).</p> <p>The Performance Management Co-ordinator summarised the main terms of the report and Members noted the SIC's Public Performance Reporting Framework and the examples of good practice reporting, attached as appendices to the report.</p> <p>Mrs I J Hawkins agreed that it was important to target information to particular service users. She said the performance reporting calendar had been a good idea, and suggested that further calendars should include the changes in the moon cycles.</p> <p>Mr T W Stove referred to previous discussions on commencing Service Recognition Awards. It was suggested that a Council award could be submitted into the CoSLA award scheme, as this should gain more recognition at a local level.</p> <p>The Committee approved the format of the Public Performance Reporting Framework and the initiative of reporting performance to service users.</p>	
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04/07	<p><u>Audit Scotland follow-up Report on Best Value and Community Planning in the Shetland Islands Council</u></p> <p>Mr J P Nicolson advised that the local response to Audit Scotland's progress report on Best Value had been positive and contained good</p>	
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	<p>advice, however he noted the area of concern relating to the lack of clear strategic plans. He referred to the numerous strategy documents that had been included in the best value process and stated that further work is needed to identify the capital requirements together with the revenue consequences of any capital projects.</p> <p>Following discussion, the Head of Organisational Development advised that a report would be prepared for the Council meeting in March, and forward activities would have to be delivered by the next Council to meet the observations of the Auditors.</p>	
<p>The meeting concluded at 3.10pm</p>		
<hr/> <p>J P Nicolson Chairperson</p>		