

Corporate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel Monday, 21 March 2016, County Hall Worcester - 2.00 pm

Present:

Minutes

Mr C B Taylor (Chairman), Mr S R Peters (Vice Chairman), Mr S C Cross, Mrs P E Davey, Mr C G Holt, Mr R C Lunn and Mr P A Tuthill

Also attended:

Mr M L Bayliss, Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Transformation and Commissioning

Sander Kristel (Director of Commercial and Change), Jo Charles (Head of Commercial), Keith Beech (Senior Brand Manager), Sharran Grove (Scrutiny Liaison Officer), Jodie Townsend (Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager) and Samantha Morris (Overview and Scrutiny Officer)

Available Papers

The members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated);
- B. World Class Worcestershire Presentation handouts (circulated at the Meeting)
- C. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 January 2016 (previously circulated).

(Copies of documents A and B will be attached to the signed Minutes).

161 Apologies and Welcome

Apologies were received from Maurice Broomfield and Liz Tucker.

162 Declarations of Interest and of any Party Whip

None.

163 Public Participation

None.

164 Confirmation of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 January 2016 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

165 Use of Consultants

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Transformation and Commissioning and the Director of Commercial and Change were invited to the meeting to discuss the County Council's use of consultants.

On 24 February 2016, the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board (OSPB) considered and agreed the Audit and Governance Committee's request to add the Use of Consultants as an item on its Work Programme. The OSPB requested the Panel to examine the Use of Consultants Policy, how it could be enforced and how the Cabinet could be held to account.

At its meeting on 27 June 2014, the Audit and Governance Committee considered the results of an audit of the use of consultants. A further audit was subsequently requested and included in the agreed 2015/16 internal audit plan.

At its meeting on 11 December 2015, the Audit and Governance Committee considered the results of the follow-up internal audit report on the use of consultants. Although the report concluded that the County Council had very good clear documented and detailed processes relating to the engagement and management of consultants, it found a continued non-compliance with that framework by managers across the organisation. There also remained some ambiguity over the Council's definition of consultancy and hence a lack of consistency in interpretation. The Committee agreed to receive a further audit report during 2016/17.

As a result of the Audit Report, the Director of Commercial and Change had implemented a new Procurement Policy and communication programme to ensure that Officers followed the correct process prior to engaging consultants.

The policy had been extended to cover all Professional Services support to ensure that there was no ambiguity on the definition of a consultant.

During the discussion, the following main points were made:

- The revised policy commenced on 21 January 2016 and to 8 March 2016, 42 correctly authorised requests to procure external Professional Services support had been sanctioned compared to 47 correctly authorised requests being received in the whole of 2015. It was however impossible to

- guarantee 100% compliance with the Policy.
- Ambiguity over the definition of a consultant was thought to be a possible reason for the previous officer non-compliance with the Policy.
- Spot checks were now being carried out and any non-compliance with the Policy was followed up and sanctions could be incurred.
- Under the new Policy, any extension to contracts would require separate authorisation.
- It was also important to check that the services being procured weren't available elsewhere in the County Council before obtaining authorisation for the use of a consultant.
- 'Matrix' was the system used to appoint to staff vacancies rather than for the procurement of professional services.
- The Commercial Team were available to give guidance and support staff with the approval process.

The Panel requested the following information:

- the number of applications received for approval (C1A forms) and the number of applications authorised with details of the type of contracts and monetary value and for this information to be sent to the Panel on a quarterly basis.
- details on the applications made via Matrix

166 World Class Worcestershire

The Director of Commercial and Change and the Senior Content & Communications Manager were invited to the meeting to provide an update on progress and plans in relation to publicising World Class Worcestershire.

World Class Worcestershire was supported by Worcestershire County Council, the six district councils, Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership, Visit Worcestershire, businesses, the Cricket Club, Worcester Warriors and people who lived in and loved the county.

A presentation was made to the Panel and copies of the presentation circulated during the Meeting.

The ambition was to raise the profile of Worcestershire locally, nationally and internationally and to:

- Support strategies to attract inward investment and to be a part of the journey for potential investors in Worcestershire

**167 Developing an
Overview and
Scrutiny Work
Programme**

- Promote Worcestershire to potential visitors
- Showcase the county's success stories
- To become a rallying call for those who live, work and share a passion for the county.

When it comes to profile Worcestershire has been described as a best kept secret. But when asked, eight out of ten people who live in the county say that they want Worcestershire to have a more positive brand. They support World Class Worcestershire and its ambitions.

During the discussion, the following main points were made:

- A website was currently being developed and would be launched in April.
- There were plans to improve the 'Worcestershire' sign when entering the County. It was felt that that the signage should be iconic and memorable eg Warwickshire, birthplace of Shakespeare.

The Panel was asked to:

- (a) Consider the programme agreed by OSPB for developing the 2016/17 work programme; and
- (b) Consider suggestions for inclusion in the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2016/17.

Each Overview and Scrutiny Panel was required to have a work programme that detailed the activities that the Panel would be undertaking during the year. Members were reminded that Panel work programmes should be living documents that were able to adapt and change throughout the year to meet the demands and needs that best serve the people of Worcestershire.

At the last meeting of OSPB, it was agreed that the Overview and Scrutiny work programmes for 2016/17 would benefit from greater consultation with various groups and stakeholders. The consultation would hopefully raise the profile of the Overview and Scrutiny function and make the work programmes more relevant to the people of Worcestershire.

OSPB agreed that a consultation exercise would be undertaken that would involve seeking suggestions for inclusion in the work programmes from:

- a) Business Community

- b) Partners and Stakeholders
- c) Non-Executive Members and O&S Panels
- d) Cabinet
- e) Officers of the County Council
- f) The Public

At its April 2016 meeting OSPB would agree a work programme report to be sent for consideration at the Full Council, this report would detail the consultation responses by category listed above as well as the work programme suggestions made by the Budget Scrutiny Process and a list of topics that were included in the 2015/16 work programmes but remain incomplete or have not begun.

Full Council would then be better informed of the issues and topics that Worcestershire business, residents, partners and Members would like Overview and Scrutiny to get involved in.

OSPB agreed that the views of Members be sought via the following groups:

- Overview and Scrutiny Panels
- Non-Executive Members
- Cabinet

It was agreed that Panel Members would forward suggestions to Scrutiny as soon as possible.

The meeting ended at 3.10 pm

Chairman