

ORGANISATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 2 FEBRUARY 2021

Present:

Councillor Angelique Foster (Chair) (in the Chair)
Councillor Maureen Potts (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Joseph Birkin
Councillor John Funnell
Councillor Pat Kerry
Councillor Philip Wright

Councillor Patricia Bone
Councillor Maggie Jones
Councillor Heather Liggett

Also Present:

S Veerman	Overview & Scrutiny Manager
S Gordon	HR & OD Manager
N Kwasa	Senior Governance Officer
A Bond	Governance Officer
L Hickin	Director of Corporate Resources & Head of Paid Service
K O’Gorman	Projects and Development Manager
Councillor A Dale	Leader of the Council

OSC/ Apologies for Absence

40/2

0-21 There were no apologies for absence.

OSC/ Declarations of Interest

41/2

0-21 There were no declarations of interest.

OSC/ Scrutiny Review

42/2

0-21 The HR & OD Manager introduced the report on agile working. She noted that the proposed policy was similar to existing policies but was designed to be a fit for purpose, not one size fits all framework to replace the existing multiple policies. She highlighted that approaches to agile working would vary across the Council dependant on service needs, for example for those who operate non-standard office based working arrangements.

The Committee discussed the report in depth, including how the definition of agile working differs from that of flexible working, and the importance for both managers and employees to find a balance which meets service needs and creates happy, engaged and motivated employees. The Committee questioned the HR & OD Manager on specific issues including how situations would be managed in which there were disagreements and the employee was not satisfied with their working situation; how the policy works in relation to insurance and safe working environments when employees are working from home, as well as maintaining links between managers and teams, and how vacant job roles would be advertised in relation to agile working.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

OSC/ Transformation Programme Update

43/2

0-21

The Director of Corporate Resources and Head of Paid Service presented the report and highlighted the updates and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the following transformation streams; service transformation, transforming finances, digital organisation, organisational transformation and environmental transformation.

The Chair and Committee thanked the staff for the work they have done in transforming the Council which has been pushed forward very quickly due to the impacts of the pandemic. The Committee had a wide ranging discussion on the report, including issues around savings targets and headline projects to deliver these. The Director of Corporate Resources and Head of Paid Service confirmed that the Council has sought expert advice from consultants and specialists when necessary to inform the programmes. The Committee agreed that there should be a focus on how agile working and transformation will fit together.

RESOLVED - That the update be noted.

OSC/ Scrutiny Review

44/2

0-21

The Leader, Councillor Alex Dale, presented an update on his vision for the Council post-COVID, related to home-working and support available for employees and managers. He noted that his vision included a modern, agile work force with well supported staff, delivering high performing value for money services to residents and the impact on the environment and local economy. He noted the importance of finding a balance between home working and providing front-facing services and office-based working, to find the best of both worlds between a virtual and a physical working environment. The Committee discussed the issue in depth.

RESOLVED – That the update from the Leader be noted.

OSC/ Scrutiny Review - Home Working Survey

45/2

0-21

The Projects and Development Manager introduced the survey which was carried out in June 2020 across the strategic alliance to look at four things:

1. To assess how many people worked from home/remotely prior to COVID-19 lockdown, how often and to gauge the perception of working from home.
2. To review how staff have been coping with working from home during COVID-19 lockdown and to highlight issues, concerns and successes.
3. To gauge interest in future remote working, potential issues, benefits, savings, requirements, areas for improvements and ideas for successful implementation of remote working.
4. To calculate the potential environmental benefits to working remotely on a large scale.

The Committee discussed the survey in depth, with particular consideration to the need for hybrid working arrangements and the balance across different service areas, as well as the need for clarity on the drivers behind a move to remote working. The Officer highlighted that the approach and the success to homeworking would be determined by the driver(s) behind it. She stated that the approach to home working so far has been reactive due to the pandemic but that going forward the organisation would need to decide the drivers (for example this could include freeing up office space, flexibility for staff, wellbeing or climate change) for this approach to work long term and that how these are communicated to stakeholders was important to build support.

RESOLVED - That the update be noted.

OSC/ 46/2 0-21 **Forward Plan of Executive Decisions - 15 December 2020 to 15 January 2021**

RESOLVED – That the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions – 15 December 2020 to 15 January 2021 be noted.

OSC/ 47/2 0-21 **Work Programme**

The Overview & Scrutiny Manager highlighted that the Committee would be triangulating review evidence at the next meeting but that there were also slots available to discuss other items if Members wished to submit anything to her. The Chair commented that it may be helpful to come back to the Home Working Survey and put together some comments on the results.

RESOLVED – That the Committee note the Forward Work Programme.

OSC/ 48/2 0-21 **Additional Urgent Items**

There were no additional urgent items.

OSC/ 49/2 0-21 **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on 2nd March 2021.