

Minutes of Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

**Thursday, 2 February 2023 at 6.00 pm
at Council Chamber - Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

Present: Councillor Moore (Chair)
Councillors Anandou, Fenton (Vice-Chair), Simms,
Trumpeter, H Bhullar and Hinchliff.

In attendance: Kate Ashley (Strategic Lead - Service Improvement), Sarah Sprung (Senior Lead Officer – Service Improvement), Victoria Lee (Head of Human Resources), Debbie Sant (Assistant HR Business Partner), Anthony Lloyd (Democratic Services Officer), Surjit Tour (Director of Legal Services, Monitoring Officer), Suky Suthi-Nagra (Democratic Services Manager) and Ant Lloyd (Democratic Services Officer).

179/23 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors E M Giles and Taylor.

180/23 Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

There were no declarations of interest made.

181/23 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2023 be approved as a correct record.



182/23

Additional Items of Business

There were no additional items of business to consider as a matter of urgency.

183/23

Resident Engagement

Following a recent report to the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board on 6 December 2022, a progress update was provided detailing the proposed actions and direction of travel for organisational culture, values and behaviours.

It was reported that the Leadership Team received feedback from culture listening sessions in November 2022; this meeting considered the initial proposals from the external partner for new aspirational behaviours that could be applied to all staff members. At this meeting, it was agreed that the development of a behaviour framework called the “One Team Framework” would be the best approach and would form an integral part of the Council’s workforce strategy.

The purpose of the approach was to establish the desired culture, values and behaviours into everyday practice across the organisation by articulating what those values were. Separate behavioural indications would be created for staff identified as “everyone” or “managers/leaders”. A culture working group had been created to drive the work with regular feedback provided to the Leadership Team. The creation and implementation of “Culture Champions”, regular staff panel sessions as well as a staff survey in October 2022 also assisted in establishing the framework. Trade Unions were also consulted and would be subject to a separate consultation process around the review of employee appraisals.

Using feedback via the external partner and following further consultation with stakeholders, the following behaviours were proposed:-

- **We are one team** - united and working together with the shared purpose of achieving great results.
- **We care** – about providing the best possible public service. (This was to be reworded to “**We are customer focused**”)

- **We are inclusive** – treating each other with respect and knowing our diversity is our strength.
- **We are ambitious** – striving for excellence, always looking to get better and making sure everyone can take pride in our borough.
- **We are accountable** – delivering what we say we will.

The next steps in the process were highlighted to the board. The finalisation of the One Team Framework would take place, which would then enable officers to seek endorsement from Cabinet in March 2023. A plan would be developed to help promote and communicate the values and behaviours which would then embed the framework into HR practices, appraisals, employee inductions and management development programmes.

Following questions from members, the following points were made:-

- The Chief Executive Officer would encourage the use and implementation of the framework.
- All staff briefings, team talks, posters and screen savers would ensure that conversations around the framework continue to help embed the new values.
- HR practices would be introduced to help promote the framework.
- Results from the next staff survey, as a result of the implementation of the framework, would hopefully be encouraging.
- LGA recommendations had been taken on board and reviewed and benchmarking against other authorities had taken place.
- It was confirmed that a similar system could be introduced for Councillors.

Members thanked officers for their work and requested an update on progress made in embedding the new culture and values within the organisation.

Officers highlighted that regular engagement and communication with residents was a cornerstone of the Council's role and was a key driver of producing better local outcomes. Improved engagement with residents' forms part of the recommendations that emerged from Sandwell MBC's recent inspections. The intelligence gathered from these surveys was a critical element of an effective performance management framework.

The Council did not have a co-ordinated process in carrying out public consultation however, after considerations by Leadership Team, proposals were approved for a corporate approach to consultation and engagement, ensuring a consistency in approach to activity across the Council and maximising opportunities to share collective intelligence.

The agreed framework would see an annual residents' wellbeing and perception survey followed by several focus groups. Additionally, an annual residents' budget consultation by a single follow up group would also take place. Citizenspace, a platform that offered the ability to consult consistently and visibly, would also be utilised. The use of Citizenspace would enable a fully holistic view of all activity across the borough, especially with the mapping/spatial capabilities of the software. The risk of duplication would be lowered due to frequent quality checks and monitoring by Scrutiny.

Sample sizes would be representative of the borough at both ward and town level which would assist the Council in making the right decisions.

The next steps were discussed with the following highlights:-

- A further 2-year contract would undergo procurement to carry out the resident's survey.
- A contract would be awarded to Citizenspace for use of the survey software.
- A corporate standard for consultation and engagement would be developed
- Funding for the initiatives would be included into the Budget.

After requests from members, it was agreed that a demonstration of the software would be presented to elected members in order to better understand its abilities.

185/23 Cabinet Forward Plan

After consideration by members of the Board, no items within the forward plan were considered for pre-decision scrutiny.

186/23 Budget & Corporate Scrutiny Management Board Work Programme

The work programme for the year 2022/23 was noted.

Meeting ended at 7.25 pm

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