

Feedback from Cabinet 20 March 2012**53 THE WAY AHEAD FOR COUNCIL SERVICES TASK GROUP REPORT**

At the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny on 24 November 2011 a request was made by the Managing Director for a scrutiny review to be undertaken to look at future service delivery options and their effect on democratic accountability and the culture of the Council.

The purpose of review would be to assess cultural and governance issues associated with alternative service delivery options and in particular, outsourcing.

It was agreed that the significance of the topic warranted the participation of all the councillors on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Councillor Watkin) presented a report on the Task Group's findings and conclusions.

Another member of the Task Group (Conservative) added that some good conclusions had been reached despite the short timescale. He endorsed the view that there was no single solution suitable for all services and each had to be considered on a case by case basis.

The Mayor commented on the need for the democratic process to keep pace with changes in service delivery and to ensure that the structures were fit for purpose. Councillors could feel that if services were outsourced they no longer had a role to play. Their input was, however, still important in terms of commissioning and monitoring. She said it was important that the democratic process did not lag behind.

A Cabinet member concluded by emphasising the fact that different solutions were needed at different times and to balance the needs of budgets and quality. It was good to have options and to explore alternatives.

RESOLVED

That the following recommendations of the Task Group be endorsed:

1. That the service delivery toolkit attached as Appendix A to the report be adopted as part of the process of reviewing options for and deciding on service delivery.
2. That there should be greater non-executive scrutiny of outsourced contracts. A politically balanced panel should be established to scrutinise all outsourced services on a regular basis. The panel would be a sub-group of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
3. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee review the performance indicators that are reported to them and decide whether the Committee should receive any further indicators.