

FINANCE, RESOURCES AND PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 15th June, 2015

Present:-	Councillor Mike Stubbs – in the Chair
Councillors	Hambleton, Huckfield, Loades, Pickup, Sweeney, Wallace, Waring, Wilkes and Williams
Officers	Chief Executive Democratic Services Manager Audit Manager Business Improvement Manager (Performance and Procurement)

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from the Executive Director, Resources and Support Services.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 21st January 2015 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

4. **CONSTITUTION REVIEW WORKING GROUP**

The Democratic Services Manager provided a brief overview of the Constitution Review Working Group and advised Members that if they wished for any areas to be explored in more detail to bring them to the attention of the Group. The next meeting had been arranged for Tuesday 14th July 2015.

The Members that previously sat on the Group were Councillors Mrs Braithwaite, Holland, Jones and Wallace.

The Chair suggested that all Group Leaders are asked to re-elect a Member from their party.

RESOLVED:-

That the Democratic Services Manager invites all Group Leaders to advertise the re-election of Members to the Working Group.

5. **FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT QUARTER 4 (MARCH) 2015**

Quarter Four Financial Position 2014/2015

The Committee received the quarter four financial position 2014/2015 and were advised it would be presented to the Audit and Risk Committee on Monday 6th July 2015.

Quarter Four Performance Review 2014/2015

The Committee received the Performance Management report to the end of Quarter 4 (March 2015). Five targets were off target.

Ref 1.7 The amount of residual waste per household

The forecasted annual target had not been met with a result of 426.8kgs for 2014/2015 which was an improvement of 430.23kgs for 2013/2014. The indicator was off target given the stretched target for 2014/2015 of 415kgs which equated to a quarterly target of 103.75 kgs.

Ref 1.8 Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting

The target was 55%, the result was 44.12%. This was partly due to the changes in household waste classification.

A Member asked what was the percentage impact on the target of the changes to reclassification of the definition of waste?

The Business Improvement Manager (Performance and Procurement) to provide the information.

Ref 2.6 Percentage of minor planning applications determined within time and Ref 2.7 Percentage of other planning applications determined within time

Ref 2.6 the target was 85%, the result was 70.6%.

Ref 2.7 the target was 92.5% which was above the national average, the result was 82%.

There had been reallocations of workloads, where appropriate, and the setting of revised timescales. In retrospect the targets had been set quite high.

It was asked if the “determined within time” period included the time taken for verification or did it commence after the verification took place?

The Business Improvement Manager (Performance and Procurement) to provide the information.

Ref 3.6 Number of people accessing leisure and recreational facilities

The target was 184,920, the result was 170,524. The shortfall of attendances could be attributed to the 50% closure of the gym and full closure of the

activity in the first quarter due to the replacement of the gym floor and the closure of the training pool.

Kidsgrove Sports Centre. The shortfall of attendances could be attributed to a number of pool closures.

Resolved:-

That the Business Improvement Manager (Performance and Procurement) to provide Members with the following information:-

- (a) What was the percentage impact on the target of the changes to reclassification of the definition of waste?
- (b) If the “determined within time” period included the time taken for verification or did it commence after the verification took place?

6. REVIEW OF CHANGES TO THE COMMITTEE ARRANGEMENTS

The Committee received the report on changes to committee arrangements submitted by the Chief Executive.

A review had been undertaken by a Local Government Association peer review team of the democratic decision-making structures of the Council. The Peer Review report made recommendations for a number of Committees to be merged, combined or disbanded. The specific recommendations were as follows:-

- i. Merge the Audit and Risk and Standards Committees
- ii. Disband the Staffing Committee
- iii. Disband the Joint Parking Committee
- iv. Disband the Member Development Committee
- v. To create the Constitution Working Group as a Committee of the Council and to title it the Constitution Review Committee

The comparative data highlighted that the number of Committees and Committee positions were very large when compared with similar District and Borough Councils benchmarked by the team. Interviews took place with a number of Members and Officers of the Borough Council.

There were two caveats; to retain the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee and, whilst the amalgamation of the Licensing and Public Protection had merit, some eminent legal authorities maintained that Parliament’s intention under the Licensing Act 2003 was to create a standalone Licensing Committee. This being the case it was prudent for the Council to retain the separate entities of a Licensing Committee and a Public Protection Committee but that identical nominations be made to the two Committees and that meetings be scheduled so that they ran sequentially on the same occasion.

It was proposed to accept the principle of Peer Review recommendation and to bring together the operation of two existing Committees but to retain the two legally distinct Committee roles.

It was asked that this Committee recommend to Council immediate transfer of power and duties of the Staffing Committee.

The Chair refused as it would disadvantage the Staffing Committee against the other Committees.

Members were concerned that the report had not been discussed and recommended that the report is presented to each Committee to seek Members views. Once collated a further report be submitted to Finance, Resources and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee then to Council.

Resolved:-

That the report is presented to each Committee to seek Members views with a further report being submitted back to this Committee then to Council.

7. **WORK PLAN**

Resolved:-

The Chair advised Members to start analysing other areas that fell under the remit of the Committee. Partnerships: Newcastle Partnership Strategic Board, Transformation Programme and Co-operative Council were requested as well as Information Technology Department, which fell under Risk Champion, and Human Resources.

8. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

9. **URGENT BUSINESS**

Budget Scrutiny Café

Resolved:-

(a) That the Budget Scrutiny Café continued but to be renamed Budget Review.

(b) Alternate working of the Budget Review to be discussed at the next meeting.

10. **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 3rd September 2015, 7.00pm in Committee Room 1.

COUNCILLOR MIKE STUBBS
Chair