

TRANSFORMATION AND RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 28th September, 2011

Present:- Cllr Shenton in the Chair

Councillors A Beech, Y Burke, Snell, Taylor, J Walklate, Waring and I Wilkes

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Cllr Nigel Jones.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th June 2011 were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. CUSTOMER SERVICES PRESENTATION

The Committee received a presentation from the Council's Head of Customer and ICT Services. It was explained that the department now covered areas ranging from complaints and compliments, translation services, the Guildhall, Creditors, the post room and all services connected with ICT.

All customer satisfactory surveys had been very good with complaint resolution satisfaction at 84% and administration of the blue badge scheme at 95%. Improvements had also been made at the Guildhall Hall regarding the payment of Council Tax and Business Rates. A new payment card had been introduced that customers could scan at the self service machines to pay their council tax bills without having to enter any personal banking details. The Creditors Department had also achieved very high satisfaction levels with 90% of customers rating it as excellent or very good with 97% of bills being paid on time. Together these results had contributed to the Service receiving a national award for customer service in May 2011; the service would continue to be evaluated on an annual basis in order to retain this award.

All performance data was uploaded to the Council's website on a monthly basis.

It was explained that plans for the future would include the dissemination of more services into the community and for the community such as the inclusion of CAB and housing advisory services in Kidsgrove and the possibility of taking on some registrar duties including the registration of births and deaths.

Attention had also been focused on improving income where possible and cutting down on any inefficiencies that had been identified such as the use of first class post for emergencies only and the hiring out of Council offices which had already resulted in an income of approximately £24,000 per year.

The Committee discussed the presentation and a query was raised regarding the payment of invoices. It was stated that at present the Council had a local standard to pay a percentage of smaller bills within 10 days, at the moment this was between 60 and 70 percent. The national standard was 30 days. The query was raised as to why not all of the Councils invoices could be paid within 10 days. Officers responded that this would have no beneficial outcome for the Council as it was better to keep the money in the Council's bank accounts gaining interest, balancing projected budgets and protecting the Boroughs council tax payers until the payment was actually due.

The Committee requested that statistics relating to this be brought to the next meeting along with information on other local standards of payments and a list of other organisations who were often late in paying invoices that the Council had generated.

RESOLVED: (a) That the report be received.
(b) That statistics and information regarding the payment of invoices be circulated to members of the committee prior to the next meeting.

5. PROPOSED PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REVIEW PRESENTATION

The Committee received a presentation from the Council's Head of Business Improvement and Partnerships regarding a review of the Council's Performance Management Frameworks.

It was stated that the desired outcome of any such review would be to establish a performance management framework which was systematic, effective and easy to use and understand. The framework would need to ensure that issues such as the economy, health and quality of life were taken into close consideration. Any areas of under performance would need to be highlighted by the framework and it would constitute a tool by which future Council services could be shaped to ensure effective partnership working.

RESOLVED: (a) That the presentation be received.

6. FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT TO END OF QUARTER ONE (JUNE) 2011

The Committee received a report regarding the Financial and Performance Review for the 2011/2 First Quarter.

The report provided Members with a detailed update on how the Council had performed during the first quarter of 2011/12 by presenting performance data set in a financial context.

Due to the postponement of the this meeting, the report had already been agreed by Cabinet at its previous meeting and it was confirmed that more up to date figures would be available for the next meeting.

The Committee queried how much money had been lost in interest following the failure of the Icelandic Bank. Officers stated that £9,000 had been lost at the time of the collapse but figures were not currently available regarding the projected loss of interest and that such statistics would be hard to calculate definitively but some figures had been calculated at the time of the collapse which could be included in a future report.

The Committee also queried whether the Council would still receive a grant for the non increase of Council Tax for the upcoming year. Officers stated that the exact provision of this grant was uncertain for year three and it was thought that there may be an adjustment to the base but this was still to be confirmed.

Concerns were raised regarding CA1 which appeared to assume the increase in users of leisure and recreational facilities in the Borough. The Committee requested that information be brought to the next meeting indicating the procedures that would be adopted should this increase fail to materialise.

The Committee requested that a breakdown of the upturns be included in the next report in 6 months as well as the downturns.

- RESOLVED:**
- (a) That the report be received
 - (b) That details regarding the loss of interest following the collapse of the Icelandic Bank be included in the next report
 - (c) That a breakdown of upturns be included in the next report
 - (d) That information be provided regarding provisions should the increase in the use of leisure facilities not materialise

7. TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMMES UPDATE

The Committee received a report updating it on the Council's Transformation Programme.

There were three change and transformation programmes ongoing within the Council:-

- Transformation Programme (TP)
- The Way We Work Programme (TWWW)
- The Business of the Council (TBC)

The TP included areas such as Customer Relationship Management in which the Council was working closely with the County Council and other partners to improve the it's picture of the people within the Borough and thus manage its facilities better to fit this picture.

Areas under TWWW programme included the introduction of the Modern.gov Committee Management System. This system was now live and being used to publish all agendas and minutes for Committee business.

- RESOLVED:**
- (a) That the Committee note the contents of the report

8. WORK PROGRAMME - DRAFT BRIEFS FOR SCRUTINY

The Committee considered the draft brief for scrutiny regarding the Review of the Performance Management Frameworks.

The content of the brief had already been covered by the earlier presentation.

RESOLVED: (a) That the report be received

9. **THE FORWARD PLAN - TRANSFORMATION AND RESOURCES EXTRACTS FOR THE PERIOD COVERING AUGUST 2011 TO NOVEMBER 2011**

The Committee considered the Forward Plan up until December 2012.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the current forward plan be noted.

10. **URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chair drew attention to the fact that a report regarding Members ICT would be presented to Cabinet at its meeting on 19th October. As this report was of interest to the Committee it was agreed that an additional meeting be provisionally arranged for 18th October. The papers for the cabinet meeting would be sent out on 7th October and it would then be decided whether to continue with the additional meeting depending on the content of the Cabinet report.

Additional meetings of the Committee would also be required on 7th December and 18th January due to changes in the dates of Cabinet meetings.

RESOLVED: (a) That an additional meeting of the Committee be convened for Tuesday 18th October at 7pm

CLLR ELIZABETH SHENTON
Chair