

FINANCE, ASSETS & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 27th June, 2024
Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

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Present:	Councillor Amy Bryan (Chair)		
Councillors:	Holland J Tagg	Stubbs Lewis	Lawley
Apologies:	Councillor(s) Parker, P Waring, Bettley-Smith and Brockie		
Substitutes:	Councillor David Grocott (In place of Councillor Wendy Brockie) Councillor Joan Whieldon Mayor - Councillor Barry Panter		
Officers:	Sarah Wilkes Simon McEneny Andrew Bird Georgina Evans-Stadward	Service Director - Finance / S151 Officer Interim Chief Executive Service Director - Sustainable Environment Service Director - Strategy, People and Performance	
Also in attendance:	Councillor Andrew Fear Councillor Stephen Sweeney	Portfolio Holder - Strategic Planning Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder - Finance, Town Centres and Growth	

1. **APOLOGIES**

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

3. **MINUTES OF A PREVIOUS MEETING**

Resolved: That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 14th March 2024 be agreed as true and accurate record.

4. **FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER FOUR 2023/24**

The Deputy Leader / Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth introduced the Finance and Performance Report for Quarter 4 of 2023-24.

Cllr Stubbs asked if there were any major changes in the figures compared to those submitted at the last meeting of the committee.

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– There had been no changes at all since previously submitted.

The Deputy Leader / Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth then went through the performance indicators showing in red.

About Staff Turnover

The Service Director for Strategy, People and Performance commented that the staff survey showed that people were overall happy working for the Council. People leaving were mostly doing so to retire or following dismissal. A more in depth break down could be provided in the future if needed.

Cllr Grocott asked how positions were filled in following staff retirement.

– It all depended on the role. The responsible service director would submit a process suggestion to the Corporate Leadership Team including potential changes to both the service structure and skillset required. Headcount was not lost but could be used in a different way.

Cllr Stubbs asked about the reasons for dismissals and resignations.

– There was a range of reasons why people would be dismissed of which disciplinary ones or ill health but no redundancy. Exit interviews and staff appraisals were carried out and data was being gathered on why people were leaving voluntarily. Further insights would be provided at a later date.

Cllr Lawley asked how long people being dismissed had been working for the Council and if training and recruitment processes had to be reviewed.

– Those considerations would happen every time and dependent on the situation. The decisions were never taken lightly and investigations would be carried out.

Cllr Whieldon commented that the Council staff was a caring community and that dismissals were for the benefit of both the borough and the person.

Cllr Stubbs said this sort of information needed to be shared with the committee as denoting of an internal failure and that the problem was to do with the recruitment rather than the employee.

– Some statistics could be provided being mindful that precise information would put confidentiality at risk given the small set of data.

About the Average Days Lost to Sickness Absences

This was in amber and progress was being made with sickness absences consistently going down.

Cllr Stubbs commented that it was still an ongoing issue and some reporting may be of use for further scrutinizing.

About Dry Recycling Household Collections

Cllr Lewis commented that the target had not been met and wondered if this wouldn't have a counterproductive effect with staffing.

The Service Director for Sustainable Environment clarified that the trend was relating to dry recycling and excluding food and garden waste. This indicator had now been changed and would include the complete package of recycling going forward.

About dry recycling the figures were going down at a national level for various reasons: the packaging was getting lighter to save on transport costs, newspaper and magazines were slowly disappearing moving on to their online versions.

Cllr Panther asked if there were still staffing issues as collections were missed in places.

– There had been a sickness absence spike which was being resolved.

Resolved: That the contents of the report and appendices be noted, and members continue to monitor and challenge the Council's service and financial performance for this period.

[Watch the debate here](#)

5. TOWN DEAL AND FUTURE HIGH STREET FUND UPDATE

The Deputy Leader / Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth introduced the update report on the delivery of the Town Deal and Future High Street Funds projects.

The Interim Chief Executive presented the report.

Cllr Stubbs asked when the last update on the Town Deal was received and expressed his disappointment that nothing had been done since.

– The last update was provided at the last meeting in March. All the activity had been happening behind the scenes with a resolution being reached and insurances now in place. Physical people and equipment should start to be seen on site around the autumn with planning permissions coming through shortly.

Cllr Holland wished to share the opposite view that progress was being made and that the organisation was being as effective as it could although not everything was visible.

Cllr Whieldon compared the projects to icebergs that would all of a sudden emerge and congratulated everybody for their hard work.

Resolved: That the report on the delivery of the Town Deal and Future High Street Funds projects be noted.

[Watch the debate here](#)

6. WORK PROGRAMME

Cllr Stubbs requested that one of the items on the agenda for the 18th September's meeting be to formulate terms of reference for an employment scrutiny report. Cllr Holland confirmed that a report on staff turnover as raised in the discussion about the Performance Report would be desirable.

Resolved: That the work programme be noted.

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7. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions received from members of the public.

8. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved: That the next meeting be held on 18th September 2024.

**Councillor Amy Bryan
Chair**

Meeting concluded at 7.44 pm