

MINUTES

FINANCE & RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

03 SEPTEMBER 2013

Present:

Adeleke	Elliot
Ayling	N Hollinghurst
B Chapman (Chairman)	Marshall
Clark	Taylor
Collins	Townsend (Vice – Chairman)
Doole	W Wyatt - Lowe

Also in attendance: Councillor Tiley - Portfolio Holder for Finance & Resources
Councillor Harden - Portfolio Holder for Residents & Regulatory Services

Officers:

Steve Baker	Assistant Director – Chief Executive’s Unit
Shane Flynn	Assistant Director – Performance & Projects
Paul Sutton	Group Manager – Financial Services
Linda Dargue	Insurance & Risk Manager
Jim Doyle	Group Manager – Democratic Services
Mark Brookes	Group Manager – Legal Governance
Louise Collins	Member Support Officer (Minutes)

The meeting started at 7.30pm.

OS/141/13 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 04 June 2013 were agreed by the Members present and signed by the Chairman.

An amendment was made to the minutes of the last meeting and agreed by all Members to record that Councillor N Hollinghurst was absent from the meeting and not present.

OS/142/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Organ.

OS/143/13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

Chairman:

OS/144/13 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

OS/145/13 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO CALL-IN

None

OS/146/13 QUARTER 1 RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT 2013/14

L Dargue introduced the Quarter 1 Risk Management Report 2013/14 and referred to the ongoing dealings with High Barnes and mentioned that they are still awaiting approval from the auditors as this has been delayed. The officer offered her apologies on the delay of the report.

L Dargue offered to take questions from Members.

Key points of discussion

Councillor Doole highlighted to the officer that information security was still not on the register and asked what was being done to ensure that this was being included for future reference.

L Dargue replied that the recent delay in the review was due to a delayed audit report, the content of which was to be considered as part of the review. She believed that there had been no impact on the risk register as a result of the delay.

Councillor Doole mentioned that a 2 year cycle was far too long as situations changed - like information security risks and the register should be under more frequent review.

L Dargue replied that it had been 2 years since the strategic Risk Register had been reviewed and said that she agreed with Councillor Doole's comment that it should be reviewed more frequently.

L Dargue pointed out that moving forward she could see no reason for there to be any issues and that there had been no impact on the risk register as a result of the delay.

P Sutton pointed out that the internal auditors had been appointed to carry out the reports which have now been received. However they will need to digest the information before it goes live.

Councillor W Wyatt – Lowe referred to page 55, M2 and pointed out that the terminology on this part of the risk register needed to be amended to be more clear and concise.

Councillor W Wyatt – Lowe also made reference to page 57, R2 and asked the officer if we know of what other issues that are affecting other authorities.

L Dargue said that she would look at the terminology used.

Councillor Adeleke made reference to pages 50-57 and asked if the ownership would change once Sally Marshall becomes Chief Executive.

Chairman:

'L Dargue said that once the new Chief Exec and Director of Finance were in post then the strategic risks would need to be reallocated accordingly. The Strategic Risk Register is to be reviewed and amended to update both the risks and relevant risk owners.

Councillor Marshall referred to page 56 R2 and the Localism Act and asked if this has even been reported to any of the other Overview & Scrutiny Committee's before and if so which ones.

Councillor Harden arrived at 7.45pm.

S Baker replied that the Community & Localism Corporate Working Group was satisfied that the Council had done all that was required of them under the Localism Act. The reforms introduced by the Act affected nearly every Council service and that the various Overview and Scrutiny Committees would have received reports from the various services affected by the Act. For example, the Housing and Community OSC would have received reports about what the Housing Department had done in response to the Act. S Baker confirmed that he would include a summary report for all Members with regards to the Localism Act.

Councillor Marshall asked the officer if this was something that could be looked at with the Health OSC Committee.

S Baker said that a report will be going to the Health OSC on 04 September for them to look at.

Councillor Marshall said that it would be useful if all of the OSC Committee's had access to this report.

S Baker said that he will look into this for all Members.

Actions:

- S Baker to include a summary report for all Members on all OSC Committee's on the Localism Act.

Outcome:

That the content of the report is noted and recommended to Cabinet for approval together with any associated comments.

OS/147/13 QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE & OPERATIONAL RISK REPORT 2013/14 - LEGAL GOVERNANCE AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

S Baker introduced the Quarter 1 Performance & Operational Risk Register Report and notified Members that from Quarter 2 more services would be included. For example Human Resources, Communications & Partnerships which was previously managed by J Milsom will now be looked at under his remit.

He pointed out that there had been no changes to the risk register scores. S Baker made reference to the licensing report which was requested from Members at the last

Finance & Resources meeting and said that the purpose was to set out the key functions of the service to Members. He said that he felt that this had now been met.

N Hollinghurst referred to the scrap metal dealers and the legislations surrounding this. He asked the officer if this would be reflected in any of the risk registers for the Council or if it would have an impact on their workload.

M Brookes said that there would be a report going to Cabinet. He added that there would be limited grounds to refuse a licence on scrap metal. He mentioned that there would be some impact on the enforcement team however the workload would be reviewed on a regular basis.

The Chairman asked if there was a limit on the number of taxis allowed throughout the borough.

M Brookes replied that a restriction can be enforced on the number of taxis in the borough although if this would need to be justified. He mentioned that the proportion of taxis across the borough was sufficient.

The Chair asked if this issue could be looked at separately with regards to the number of taxis in the town centre and the implications of double parking and concerns for pedestrian's safety.

M Brookes said that there is a review ongoing with the bus interchange at present so he will inform Members once he has had an update on this.

Councillor Adeleke made reference to page 5 and asked about the alcohol license procedure and what our policy was at the weekends.

M Brookes confirmed that they are currently carrying out test purchases and are actively working in the Bovington area and said that he will update Members in due course on their findings.

Councillor Doole made reference to page 7 and the Overview & Scrutiny Review and asked if Members could be provided with the recommendations that were decided at the Chairs meeting and what ideas came to light.

J Doyle pointed out that Democratic Services had been very critical of the conclusions reached at the review and said that many of them had been reduced significantly. J Doyle informed Members that the minutes of the OSC Chair meeting were available for all Members if they wished to see them.

Councillor Marshall asked if it would be likely that the same Consultant would be employed again for future OSC Reviews and at what cost did the Consultant come at.

J Doyle confirmed that they would not be employing the same Consultant for any further OSC Review work. He did point out to Members that there were some good elements in the report, however they have made a note of the negative comments and have taken them on board. J Doyle said that he would update Members on the cost for employing the Consultant for the recent OSC Review work.

Councillor Marshall asked when the latest staffing survey had gone out to all members of staff within the Council.

S Flynn said that the latest staffing survey will be produced and available for all staff as from Oct 2013.

Councillor Marshall asked the officer if it would be possible to have the results of the staffing survey made available to Members in time for the Finance & Resources meeting taking place in March 2014 and if this item could be added to the work programme.

S Flynn said that he would update all Members in due course on the findings on the staff survey results.

Key points of discussion

Actions:

- M Brookes to provide Members with an update on the bus interchange.
- M Brookes to update Members on the alcohol licensing procedures at weekends.
- J Doyle/ M Anderson to provide Members with a copy of the improvement plan from the Chair's OSC meeting.
- J Doyle/M Anderson to provide Members with the recent cost for employing the OSC Consultant.
- S Flynn to update all Members on the results from the staff survey in Oct 2013 and to have them readily available for Members at the Finance and Resources meeting taking place on 04/03/2014.
- L Collins to add this item the staff results item onto the work programme for March 2014.

Outcome:

That Members note the report.

OS/148/13 QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE & OPERATIONAL RISK REPORT 2013/14 – PERFORMANCE & PROJECTS

S Flynn introduced the Quarter 1 Performance & Operational Risk Report and outlined the key elements within the report. He informed Members that he would provide an update on the Performance & Projects side of things in due course as this will be launched in autumn. He also pointed out that there would be a new structure set out in the admin department of which he will report to Members in the next quarterly report.

Key points of discussion

Councillor Doole referred to page 31 STCO_R08 and the lack of Capital or Revenue funding. He was pleased to note that legacy systems were being dealt with but was concerned that a new system, Entropy, has been bought 'outside of Corporate ICT'. Why is this approach which is recognised here as poor practice continuing?

S Flynn noted that service departments are responsible for their systems. Entropy is a stand-alone managed system which has provider support. It does not form part of the Council's ICT architecture therefore. Nonetheless, an agreed approach to system

Chairman:

procurement is needed and this will form part of the ICT strategy that the new Group Manager, Ben Trueman, is currently drafting.

Councillor Adeleke made reference to page 22, point 2.5 and the Northgate Contract and asked why the contract had been left open ended.

S Flynn – while there is an overall timetable to reach 70% of calls answered within 20 seconds by the date of the first anniversary of the contract, there are interim stages and Northgate will have to meet agreed targets at each stage – these are in October 2013 and February, April and July 2014.

Councillor Adeleke referred to page 22, 2.7 and the sickness absence levels and asked the officer if he could provide an explanation on whether there was a difference in the sickness levels now that homeworking has been introduced in the Council.

S Flynn said that they should start to see a decrease in the sickness absence levels however he did not have the figure to hand to provide to Members. He said that he would be happy to provide an update on the latest figures.

Actions:

- S Flynn to give an update in the next quarterly report on the structure change within the admin department.
- S Flynn to provide an update to all Members on the Project & Performance side of things.
- S Flynn to provide an update on sickness absence levels to all Members.

Outcome:

That the Committee notes the contents of the report and the performance of the division for Quarter 1, 2013/14.

OS/149/13 QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE & OPERATIONAL RISK REPORT 2013/14 – FINANCE & RESOURCES

P Sutton introduced the Quarter 1 Performance & Operational Risk Report 2013/14 – Finance & Resources on behalf of J Deane who was unable to attend the meeting and outlined the key elements of the report for Members.

Key points of discussion

Councillor N Hollinghurst referred to the recycling process and the ways in which glass is recycled in Dacorum. He asked if there would be a change to the way in which the glass is collected in the future.

P Sutton said that they are currently in the process of reviewing the recycling service next year and said that he would keep Members up to date with any changes that take place.

N Hollinghurst pointed out to Members that the pricing of recycling glass was volatile at present and suggested that by separating glass would be more beneficial.

The Chair requested that Members be kept up to date on the recycling process.

Councillor W Wyatt – Lowe pointed out to the officer that the headings for page 44/45 were exactly the same and asked if this was correct.

P Sutton apologised to Members for the error and said that there had been a typing error and confirmed that it was just the header that was incorrect and not any other information relating to that page.

Actions:

- P Sutton/J Deane to provide Members with an update on the recycling process.

Outcome:

That the committee notes the content of the report and the performance of Finance & Resources for Quarter 1, 2013/14.

OS/150/13 QUARTER 1 OUTTURN REPORT 2013/14

P Sutton provided Members with an update on the Quarter 1 Outturn Report 2013/14 and outlined the key elements within the report. He pointed out to Members that there had been no major variations in the report.

Key points of discussion

Councillor Ayling referred to page 60,3.1 and the £104k savings projected within the Financial Services and asked if this was just relating to the Government Procurement Card (GPC) or the 5 posts.

P Sutton said that it was relating to both the Government Procurement Card and the two long –term vacancies and three short-term vacancies.

Councillor Townsend thanked the officer for the clarity over the tables illustrated in the report. He made reference to page 63, 7.2 and said that there appeared to be a difference of 2.8 million from the original budget previously forecast. He asked if this was approved by the Audit Committee and if this was something that Council could look at.

P Sutton said that the Audit Committee approved this as part of the Outturn Report. He mentioned that the slippages account will be reviewed in June 2014.

Councillor Tilled agreed with what the officer had just said and pointed out that the Audit Committee does have the responsibility to report any business to Council before the Full Council meeting commences.

Councillor Townsend pointed out to the Committee that there were no real numbers in costs/services. He asked if it would be possible to get a high level summary to keep up to date with any changes that were due to take place.

P Sutton said that he would get back to Members with an update on this.

Councillor Tiley added that they were in the process of bringing the Northgate Contract up to speed. He said that it was vital that we invested and that Members would start to see a saving at the end of the project (4yrs).

Actions:

Chairman:

- P Sutton to update to Members on any changes due to costs/changes of service.

Outcome:

That the Committee note the forecast outturn position.

OS/151/13 SHARED AND OUTSOURCED SERVICES UPDATE – CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE AND GATEWAY CONTRACT (CSCG)

S Flynn introduced the Shared and Outsourced Services Update and outlined some key areas for Members attention. He made reference to page 72,1.1 and the decision to award the contract for the delivery of the Customer Service Centre and Gateway (CSCG) to Northgate Information Solutions UK Ltd (Northgate) as the future CSCG provider, with effect from 1 October 2013 for a term of 4 years. S Flynn said that he would update all Members on any further developments with regards to Contract Manager posts.

Key points of discussion:

Councillor Ayling thanked the officer for all of his and his team's hard work in taking over from J Milsom's post and said that all of the team should be congratulated on their efforts as they have produced their work 10 weeks ahead of schedule.

Councillor Doole made reference to the expenditure surrounding the ICT department and highlighted there was cause for concern over the amount of money being spent.

S Flynn pointed out that there was significant investment brought in from the Northgate Contract. He informed Members that a great deal of changes need to take place, but our resources would not have allowed us to carry them out ourselves. Hence Northgate would be contributing significant capital investment for the Council. Any issues that come to light will need to be actioned as they progress forward and an Operational Board will be meeting monthly to monitor progress, along with a quarterly Governance Board for strategic oversight. The officer said that a lot of the investment would be in the Customer Manager Relationship System and said that the contract costs would not significantly increase from their point of view.

Actions:

- S Flynn to update Members on further contract costs.

Outcome:

That Members note the progress and comment on the Customer Service Centre and Gateway project.

OS/153/13 WORK PROGRAMME 2013/14

Councillor Marshall requested that there be an addition to the Work Programme for the meeting being held on 4th March 2014. She requested that the Committee add on the item "Staff Survey Update". The Committee agreed to add on this item onto the Work Programme.

The meeting ended at 9.15pm

Chairman: