

## MINUTES

### FINANCE AND RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5 November 2014

#### Present:

Adeleke	Doole
Ayling	N Hollinghurst
Clark	Organ
B Chapman (Chairman)	Taylor
Collins	Tindall
	W Wyatt-Lowe

#### Also in attendance:

Councillor Harden (Portfolio Holder, Resident and Regulatory Services)

#### Officers:

Steve Baker	Assistant Director, Chief Executive's Unit (MO)
James Dean	Assistant Director, (Finance and Resources).
Rob Smyth	Assistant Director (Performance & Projects)
Ben Hosier	Group Manager: (Procurement)
Matt Rawdon	Group Manager: (People)
Richard Baker	Group Manager: Financial Services
Heather Overhead	Asst. Team Leader, Strategic Planning & Regeneration
Mark Housden	Commercial Contracts Lead Officer
Jim Doyle	Group Manager, Democratic Services (Minutes)

The meeting started at 7.30pm

#### **OS/227/14 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2014 were confirmed by the members present and then signed by the Chairman.

#### **OS/228/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

1. Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Marshall, Tiley (Portfolio Holder, Finance and Resources), and Townsend
2. Councillor Tindall substituted on behalf of Councillor Townsend.

#### **OS/229/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

#### **OS/230/14 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None

**OS/231/14 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO CALL-IN**

None

**OS/232/14 ACTION POINT FEEDBACK**

The Chairman of the committee went through the action points from the previous meeting and the responses to those points.

- Councillor Doole returned to the issue of a specific measure for how many calls are not answered in the call centre within 20 secs/rings. He is anxious that the records show that we are working toward providing figures on how many calls are not answered within 20 seconds/rings.

M Housden (MH) assured the councillor that the historic data (up until summer this year) is currently available and that he and Northgate are attempting to clarify how the figures since the summer are collected and to what they relate.

Councillor Doole said he appreciated that as a result of the Inform 360, calls are automatically answered but he also wants assurance that the time answering calls going to operators are also being recorded. He expressed disappointment that this data is not being made available despite it being an important element in the contract.

- Councillor Chapman moved on to the issue of Credit Card charges and the fact that DBC does not currently charge for this service. By his calculation a 2.5% charge could cost £67k, part of which it would be reasonable to try to recoup.

MH confirmed that payment charges is one of the matters being examined as part of the channel shift process. Cllr Chapman asked for an examination of this matter to be reported back to a future meeting.

The Assistant Director, Chief Executive's Unit (MO) felt members should be advised that any decision to apply a charge must lay with them.

- Councillor Tindall drew attention to the fact that the staff Stress Survey makes no explicit mention of e-mails and the stress that they may generate. He asked if this issue was considered as part of the survey.

Matt Rawdon (MR) was of the opinion that the survey took the effect of e-mails into account as part of the questionnaire on 'workload'; but could not confirm that there was a question specific to this matter. Councillor Taylor accepted the response and suggested that the issue should be returned to as; in his opinion e-mails can be an identifiable source of stress.

MR informed the committee that it is his intention to see this survey repeated on an annual basis He will provide the committee with an update in 12 months' time when the survey will be run again.

**OS/233/14 QUARTER 2 RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT**

James Dean (JDn), Assistant Director (Finance and Resources) introduced this item which is an update on the Strategic Risk & Opportunity Register considered at the last Cabinet and contains recommended changes to governance arrangements for risk.

The Council's Auditors had suggested that Assistant Directors should in future explain any reasons for reduction in the Inherent Risk Score. The registers are to be regularly

considered by the Cabinet; the Risk Registers will now be a standard item on the Audit Committee agenda; and each Overview & Scrutiny committee will consider them as part of the quarterly report.

Councillor Doole commended the Assistant Director (Finance and Resources) on adopting the new reporting format and looked forward to the other reports coming forward in the same way at future meetings.

Outcome:

That the content of the report be noted.

**OS/234/14 QUARTER 2 FINANCE & RESOURCES PERFORMANCE & RISK REPORT**

The Assistant Director (Finance and Resources) introduced the report and drew attention to the elements of note.

He pointed out that measures F11 and F13 have not been signed off as yet but they will be in the very near future as they are correct.

Councillor W Wyatt-Lowe asked if the forecasts of Council Tax and Business Rates collections for the year are based on the good figure for last year and an assumption that it is likely to be repeated again this year? JDn responded that the figure is based on current collection measures and as no fundamental flaws have been detected then the projection is sound; a half yearly actuals report might have been produced to back up the projection.

Outcome:

That the contents of the report and the performance of Finance and Resources for Quarter 2 2014/15 are noted.

**OS/235/14 QUARTER 2 LEGAL GOVERNANCE, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & PEOPLE PERFORMANCE & RISK REPORT**

Steve Baker (SB), The Assistant Director (Chief Executive's Unit) introduced the report and invited questions.

Councillor W Wyatt-Lowe commended the introduction of the Mental Health First Aiders initiative. He wanted to know if this programme was only internal and for the workforce or is it relevant for those outside the workforce and planned to be rolled-out to the public.

Matt Rawdon (MR), the Group Manager (People) responded that the scheme is mainly directed towards internal staff but that the Group Managers have been on the course and he would expect it to influence the day to day running and approach of their services as it may make them more aware of up to date issues in the community.

Councillor N Hollinghurst added his backing to this initiative.

SB added that Herts County Council public health have arranged courses for front line staff which are aimed at dealing with mental health issues to train them in recognising the signs when dealing with the public. SB to send course details to all members of the committee.

Councillor Tindall suggested that prosecutions taken by the council (Para 23 of the report) should be broken down into categories of offence as the committee should be aware of the numbers, but more importantly the seriousness, severity and frequency of similar offences. SB agreed to have these details relayed to the councillors.

Councillor Adeleke supported this suggestion as he is aware of particularly severe problems in Milton Keynes so it is important we monitor the level and severity of these cases in Dacorum.

Councillor Adeleke then move on to consider the issue of corporate branding and the use and origin of the DBC and 'Look no Further' logos and the guidance on their use being produced.

He next asked for a regular update on the 19 sports sessions that have been proposed to take place over the next year as part of the Get set, Go Dacorum initiative.

Councillor Harden (PH Resident and Regulatory Services) advised the committee that it is intended to produce an annual report on this matter and members would receive regular updates on its progress in the quarterly performance reports.

Councillor Doole requested some more information on the performance report CSU06; 'customers satisfied with service received from the CSU' and was interested to know 'why' the sample was too small to be meaningful this year when we had 400 last year. M Housden agreed to investigate and respond to the members of the committee.

Councillor Chapman disputed the reason given against FO101 percentage of FOI requests satisfied in 20 days. He pointed out that though 'staff on leave during the holiday period' is the reason given, the situation was the same in 2013 but performance dropped this year. He requested that the information be investigated and clarified.

#### Outcome:

That the contents of the report and the performance of Legal Governance, Democratic Services, and People for Quarter 2 2014/15 are noted subject to the councillors comments.

#### Actions:

- Assistant Director to provide members of the committee details of HCC Mental Health courses for front line staff
- Head of Legal to provide the committee with a list of prosecutions broken down into the seriousness, severity and frequency of similar offences
- GM (People) Schedule regular updates on progress of Get set, Go Dacorum. in the quarterly performance reports.
- MH to respond on analysis of data; CSU06 customers satisfied with service received from the CSU
- Assistant Director to clarify information on FO101 FOI responses.

## **OS/236/14 QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE & PROJECTS PERFORMANCE & RISK REPORT**

The Assistant Director (Performance & Projects) gave a short introduction to the report and invited comments.

Councillor Tindall drew attention to the reporting of complaints in para 3 of the report and suggested that they be broken down into category, frequency and severity. RS agreed that we can provide details on severity and perhaps with more work categorise the complaints.

With reference to the comments on ICT03, Councillor W Wyatt-Lowe asked if these instances are one off issues which should not re-occur or are they a systemic problem that requires attention. RS was of the opinion that they are the result of the volume of technical work being done to support the office consolidation and should reduce considerably after the staff moves.

He went on to enquire if we record individual items like problems when staff are working offsite; Councillor laptops not working; etc. He was informed that these instances are recorded and any pattern or systemic issues are identified and dealt with.

Councillor Doole highlighted the number of actions due for delivery during Nov/Dec and requested a status report early in the early new year.

### Outcome:

That the report be noted

### Action:

- o Status report on delivery of Nov/Dec actions to be brought to the 6 January meeting of the committee

## **OS/237/14 QUARTER 2 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

R Baker (RB) Group Manager, Financial Services, introduced the report and took the committee through the salient points.

He confirmed for Councillor Doole that the Audit Committee has delegated authority to approve the spending on the Apprentices scheme and EDRMS.

Councillor W Watt-Lowe sought (and was given) an assurance from the officers that Pest Control were not concentrating on paying customers and ignoring our internal sites; in particular Elizabeth House which has experienced a stubborn infestation.

Councillor Tindall referred to the amendment to the funding agreement for Sportspace and sought clarification on who had authorised the amendment. He and the Assistant Director, Chief Executive's Unit agreed the series of events that led to the amendment and the need to review the original funding arrangement, which dates back to 2004, in response to the first tranche of this new payment in 2014. Councillor Harden pointed out that there was at least a year's gap between the decisions and it would not have made sense to attempt to claw back the original grant when a new one had just been agreed; a decision which and Cabinet approved during budget setting that year.

Outcome:

The Committee noted the forecast outturn position.

**OS/238/14 SHARED & OUTSOURCED SERVICES UPDATE – CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE AND GATEWAY CONTRACT (CSCG)**

Mark Housden introduced the report which reflects a continuing period of calm in the relationship between the Council and Northgate. The main activity at present is identifying and plugging gaps between the Revenue and Benefit service with that being provided by Northgate. The partners are moving forward on CRM implementation and next to be included will be Flare.

The other part of report dealt with the activity of the Customer Focus project MR confirmed that a project team was assembled to look at the issues customers were facing when contacting the Council. The first part of the project was the exploratory stage – we spent time in CSU, listened to our customers, investigated complaints, explored good practice and worked closely with our staff/managers. Using the feedback from the above, many recommendations were suggested and endorsed by the project board and Group Managers.

The second stage of the project focussed on implementing these improvements (not all implemented yet). MR highlighted some of ket achievements from the report:

1. **Creation of refreshed electronic service manuals for CSU staff** - information is now current and live for CSU staff
2. **Automated email responses** – All email addresses on website to have a standard automated response, with timescales. To be implemented soon
3. **Additional payment phone lines** – customers were receiving an engaged tone when there were 4 payment phone lines being used. So an additional four were installed.
4. **Introduction of an online Direct Debit payment facility project**
5. **System access** – Environment system opened to CSU staff, so CSU do not have to call back office, over 100 phone calls saved per week to back office
6. **Bin collection days** – Enter postcode to find out collection days. Next week.

Councillor Chapman thanked MH for providing the glossary of terms used in the report.

Outcome:

That progress on the Shared & Outsourced Services Update – Customer Service Centre and Gateway Contract (CSCG) and the committee's comments are noted.

**OS/239/14 GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE COMMUNITY  
INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)**

Heather Overhead (HO), Assistant Team Leader, Strategic Planning & Regeneration introduced the report and confirmed that it is scheduled to go to Cabinet in early in early 2015 with a view to the scheme being introduced in April 2015.

Councillor Tindall noted that the Parish & Town Councils had been consulted on the management and use of the CIL funds and he wanted to know how neighbourhood funding was being arranged for the non-parished areas. He was anxious that the ward councillors should be consulted before funds are divided and allocated.

Councillor N Hollinghurst asked if an estimate of the monies accruing to each Parish Council was available. HO advised that these figure might be estimated based on the housing provision trajectory but it would be a rough estimate.

Councillor Taylor was of the opinion that the implementation of CIL is such a complex matter that guesstimates of this type at this time are useless and we should wait until we have some information on the how the scheme is actually operating before we provide estimates and projections. He agreed to see that this is matter is considered in the preparations for delivery of the scheme being made outside of this meeting.

**Outcome:**

That the Committee notes and comments on the principles and proposals for CIL Governance as set out in the report for feedback to Cabinet.

**OS/240/14 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Shared & Outsourced Services Update – Customer Service Centre and Gateway Contract (CSCG) update is now to be included in the quarterly performance Reports. M Hone and S Flynn's names to be removed from the programme.

The meeting ended at 20.40 pm