

**MINUTES**  
**FINANCE & RESOURCES**  
**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**07 OCTOBER 2015**

**Present:**

Cllr Ashbourn	Cllr Douris (Vice Chair)
Cllr Barnes	Cllr Fethney
Cllr Birnie	Cllr Mills
Cllr Cllr B Chapman (Chairman)	Cllr Silwal
Cllr Clark	Cllr Taylor
Cllr E Collins	Cllr Tindall

**Also Present:**

Councillor Harden – Portfolio Holder for Residents and Corporate Services  
Councillor Marshall – Portfolio Holder for Environment, Sustainability and Regulatory Services

**Officers:**

D Skinner	Assistant Director (Finance & Resources)
C Lynch	Community Partnerships Team Leader
P O'Day	Environmental Health Officer
M Rawdon	Group Manager – People
C Troy	Group Manager – Regulatory Services
L Collins	Member Support Officer (Minutes)

**OS/203/15 MINUTES**

Councillor Douris raised an amendment to the minutes of the last meeting. At the last meeting he asked a question about the possibility of the Council looking at the opportunity to employ care leavers from the children looked after.

The minutes of the Finance & Resources OSC meeting held on 16 June 2015 were confirmed by the Members present and signed by the Chairman.

**OS/204/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Elliot and Imarni.

**OS/205/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**OS/206/15 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None.

**OS/207/15 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO A CALL – IN**

None.

**OS/208/15 ACTION POINTS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

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

**OS/209/15 QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE AND OPERATIONAL RISK REGISTER REPORTS – FINANCE AND RESOURCES**

D Skinner presented the Quarter 1 Performance and Operational Risk Register report which had been deferred from the last Finance and Resources meeting. The main point which was brought to Members attention was FIN11 in terms of performance and the red area. The main reason for this is a one off incentive to existing lease holders and inflation not panning out as expected but officers are anticipating that this will catch up as they go through the year.

Questions:

Councillor Tindall referred to page 6, CP01 and asked if there was any hard to let properties which are not identified in the figures.

Councillor Tindall referred to CP02 and asked if there were any particular people which are constantly in arrears with their rent.

D Skinner said that in reference to the hard to let properties, there are some that are more desirable than others but there isn't a residual hard to let property which they are unable to rent. He mentioned that at present there are some arrears going through the process which are being chased up.

Councillor Ashbourn referred to page 6, CP02 and pointed out that the target has come down from 9.5% to 9%. He asked if this was part of a systematic lowering of the target or if there was a specific reason behind this.

D Skinner confirmed that it reflects the difficult environment we are in in terms of the current economy. The target was amended to reflect this.

Councillor Birnie asked for clarification on the acronym FM services.

Councillor Douris confirmed that FM Services stood for Facilities Management Services.

Outcome:

Members noted the report.

## OS/210/15 ALCOHOL POLICY

Councillor Marshall, Portfolio Holder for Environmental, Sustainability and Regulatory Services introduced the Alcohol Policy report and said that it supplements the existing Alcohol, Substance misuse policy. The previous Alcohol, Substance misuse policy was last looked at in 2012 and relates to where such substances affect the employee's behaviour or work and could constitute gross misconduct. The policy makes it clear that if the misuse affects what the employee is doing in their work or behaviour, then it can be undertaken by the conduct and capability procedures.

The policy has the support of the Union Representatives at Dacorum Borough Council and it enables initial testing by officers that have the expertise to administer the test. If the test proved positive, then it would be further tested by an outside organisation.

Councillor Silwal arrived at 7.45pm

### Questions:

Councillor Ashbourn asked if there was an intention to have a 0% intolerance policy in place in the workplace.

P O'Day - Environmental Health Officer mentioned that there had been major discussions at the Health and Safety Committee and CMT. The officer confirmed that drugs has been put to one side as they felt that it would be easier to deal with alcohol first as people can be breath tested. Once that has been embedded they will look at substance abuse.

C Troy - Group Manager for Regulatory Services, reiterated that there had been some discussions around the 0% tolerance policy however decided to look at this at a much later stage.

Councillor Ashbourn referred to the random testing and asked what the frequency of the testing would be.

C Troy replied that it possibly would be a one off testing potentially twice a year however they will need to look at how that will be implemented. The idea of this particular proposal was to get in principle the idea of random testing.

Councillor Ashbourn asked if there are any targets put in place from when the internal officers and external officers take the take from the individual.

P O'Day said that internal staff would be on standby to be at site within the hour and external staff to be at site within 2 hours.

Councillor Barnes referred to an employee being drunk at work and what the procedure would be.

C Troy confirmed that the manager would need to rely on the current policy in place which has no objective testing at present and would need to be referred to HR for further consultation.

Councillor Barnes asked what disciplinary action would be taken if an employee was considered to have drink on them whilst at work.

M Rawdon added that if the Manager felt that the individual was unfit to work they would send them home. It would then be the Managers right to commence disciplinary action against that individual. The Policy suggested it will take that element of judgement away from the Manager and give them an objective view on the situation.

Councillor Barnes asked if this policy would apply to all Council staff.

P O'Day explained to Members that the policy would apply to all Council staff, not just the safety critical staff.

Councillor Tindall said that it was encouraging to hear that this policy would be applied to all staff within the Council as well as Senior Management.

The Chair referred to page 21 1.3 and voiced his concerns on the objective testing regime. He suggested that it may be better to target a specific area such as Cupid Green where there is a danger to the public.

P O'Day explained that if once specific area of employees such as Cupid Green staff were targeted it would go against the policy which they are proposing and looking at the Council across the board.

Councillor Birnie said that he applauded the request coming from Cupid Green for the testing.

Councillor Harden arrived at 7.50pm

Councillor Douris said that he was interested to hear that the initial request for testing came from the Cupid Green Team and said that he agreed with the suggestion that the testing should reflect all staff across the Council and not just target one particular area.

Councillor Taylor said that it was important to have the random testing in place as it acts as a deterrent and he applauded the policy proposed by the officers.

Councillor E Collins made a comment that women have less tolerance to alcohol than men and suggested that this may need to be looked at within the policy.

Councillor Barnes asked what action would be taken against an individual once it has been processed to HR.

M Rawdon explained that it would depend on a number of factors such as; the severity of the alcohol test failings, the individual's role, previous alcohol issues and the individual's mitigation.

Councillor Douris asked if the officers had completed an impact equalities impact assessment, if not suggested that they do so.

C Troy explained that an impact equalities assessment had not been completed as of yet due as they were unsure if the proposal would be accepted or not.

The Portfolio Holder thanked Members for all of their comments and suggestions.

Outcome:

Members noted the report.

### **OS/211/15 VOLUNTARY SECTOR FUNDING – CHANGES TO GRANT ARRANGEMENTS**

Councillor Harden, Portfolio Holder for Residents and Corporate Services reported that this was a review for Strategic Partners for a number of years designed to update Members on the role of converting Strategic Partners into Commissioning agents.

M Rawdon, Group Manager – People, summarised the report;

- 10 Strategic Partners at present – grant funded through the Strategic Partner programme. They have been receiving grant funding from Dacorum Borough Council to deliver services for us.
- The Council agreed that they would stop the grant funding in 2016/17 financial year and that an outcome based commissioning model would be adopted.
- The commissioning approach will assess the needs of the people of Dacorum through statistical analysis and consultation to develop service outcomes that link closely to what the Council's vision and priorities.

C Lynch, Community Partnerships Team Leader summarised recent events;

- The Council are using an outcome based commissioning model, which is in line with the Cabinet office good practice which goes through a process of analyse, plan, do and review process.
- At present the team has looked at statistical evidence base and consulted with current service users and existing staff members that work front line and at a strategic level.
- There have been CMT and Cabinet Member led workshops that look at shaping the outcomes for the new services.
- In the past they have funded 10 organisations however we are proposing to change this to commission 7 services.
- The proposal in place would hope to offer a 3 year contract with an option to extend pending the performance of the contract.

### **Questions**

Councillor Taylor congratulated the officer on the report given to Members but highlighted that some of the figures did not add up on the "Value for money" section on page 25 of the report.

C Lynch confirmed that the overall figures do add up but that a sentence outlining that £60k of funding relating to the Housing and Revenue account had been left out of the paragraph in question, this had been identified during statutory comments for

the Cabinet report and has since been amended. The figures have been checked and are correct.

Councillor Taylor made reference to the 10 Strategic Partners and mentioned that he was linked heavily to the Community Action Dacorum Group, and said that the funding represented a small 8% of their annual turnover. He outlined that CAD distribute funding to other organisations and asked the officer if the Council are looking at distributing income in future by one nominated party.

C Lynch replied that at present there is an agreement in place with 10 Strategic Partners. The funds are allocated to each Strategic Partner separately and they all go through a reporting process incorporating mid - term and end of year report.

Councillor Taylor made reference to the grouping of services and how this would work in practice. He asked the officer to confirm if this was still in the confidential stages.

C Lynch mentioned that a 10% reduction be implemented upon the steer from Cabinet and CMT. The Community Partnerships team were asked to go back and look at some of the evidence in terms of groupings for services. One of the proposals that came forward was having one service for Voluntary Sector support, this is a common approach across Hertfordshire and Nationally. The details of how the groupings would work is essentially down to the charities but further advice and guidance will be provided from the Council . Meetings were held with each of the Strategic Partners over the last 2-3 weeks so all of the partners had a face to face meeting which identified the correct proposals for grouping for the phased approach and for distributing of finances.

The officer confirmed that they are in the consultation phase which will be open until the 6<sup>th</sup> November where there will be an opportunity for all existing providers to feed more information back during that process.

Councillor Tindall said that he supported the move to the Commissioning regime. He referred to page 29 & 30 6.3 preventing relationship breakdown and commented that there was no mention of domestic abuse. He added that one of the possibilities would be to catch domestic abuse in its early stages and asked the officer if this could be included within the report.

R Tindall asked if the Dacorum Domestic Abuse Forum could continue to be supported.

Councillor Tindall also requested that the paragraph “we feel safe in our homes and community” on page 29, 6.6 be removed as it suggested that it referred to people who have responded to incidents of burglary or anti - social behaviour.

Councillor Harden agreed with Councillor Tindall’s statement regarding domestic violence and added that he is very passionate about victims of domestic violence. His main concern was if the Council were getting value for money for the £4000 they were allocated. He suggested that the £4000 and the additional £4000 should be given to the victims and supporting the victims.

Councillor Ashbourn referred to paragraph 6.6 on page 29. He said that he supported Councillor Tindall's view in removing or modifying the statement "we feel safe in our homes and community".

Councillor Ashbourn made reference to Druglink and their less than ideal reputation and wondered how the Council looks at the screening process for their service.

C Lynch added that Druglink had been funded by the Council for a number of years at approximately £63000. She mentioned that there had been some performance issues in the past however there are plans in place for improvement. Meetings have been set up on a quarterly basis to help monitor their performance which to date has shown improvement and are working very closely in partnership with the County providers CRI spectrum. They have also been aware the CQC accreditation for the Oxygen pathway, which is the rehabilitation unit previous named Nascent house which was closed in 2014.

Councillor Ashbourn asked as part of the tender process if any other applicants were considered.

C Lynch mentioned that although Druglink and Dens were the previous recipients of the grant, what they are proposing is that those grants will be pooled together to fund the newly proposed service "Living Stable Lives", anyone can tender for the new service that the Council will be going out to tender for.

M Rawdon explained that the reason behind the quarterly meetings with Druglink arose because there were some problems that came to their attention. They stopped the annual grant payment and now release it on a quarterly basis to safeguard the Council's funds.

The Chair referred to page 28 item 3 and 4, the proposed finances and the proposed length of contracts. He asked if the officer could provide some clarification regarding these areas. The Chair asked if the contract length would be 10% for the 3 year period or if it would be 10% for the first year and then look at the second and third year separately.

M Rawdon confirmed to Members that the 10% would be for the whole 3 years.

The Chair thanked the officers for their reports and the inclusion of the glossary of acronyms within the report.

#### Outcome:

Members provided feedback to the project team on the proposals. These will be included in the October Cabinet report.

#### **OS/212/15 WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16**

An amendment was made to the work programme to remove the item "CIL" and add on the "Car Parking Policy".

Members were also reminded that the next meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2015 would be scheduled to start at 8pm rather than the usual time of 7.30pm due to their being a Highways meeting taking place before the Finance and Resources OSC meeting.

All Members agreed with the above changes.

The meeting ended at 8.40pm