

MINUTES

FINANCE AND RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

6 MARCH 2018

Present:

Members:

Councillors: Howard
Herbert Chapman
(Chair)
Douris (Vice-
Chairman)
Silwal
Taylor
Adeleke
McLean

Officers:	M Brookes	Solicitor to the Council
	M Rawdon	Group Manager – People and Performance
	R Smyth	Assistant Director – Performance and Projects
	B Trueman	Group Manager – Technology and Digital Transformation
	S Turner	Directorate Support Lead Officer (minutes)

Also Attendance:

Councillor Harden

The meeting began at 7.30 pm

33 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held of 06 February 2018 were agreed by the Members present and signed by the Chairman.

34 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr Armytage, Cllr E Collins, Cllr G Elliott, Cllr Fethney and Cllr Tindall.

35 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

36 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None.

37 **CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO CALL-IN**

None.

38 **ACTION POINTS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Chairman mentioned that the action point relating to D Skinner regarding confirming that Housing intended to fill the vacancies in the Housing Cleaning Service and Supporting People remained outstanding. Cllr Douris raised concerns that this was still ongoing and requested a date by which it would be completed. It was agreed that this needed to be finalised before the next meeting. MB will ensure it is reflected in the minutes and a response is sent.

Action: MB

The Chairman confirmed that J Doyle included the most up to date information regarding Member Development in the Q3 report which will be discussed today.

39 **FINANCE & RESOURCES - Q3 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Finance and Resources Q3 report was not available due to illness and other reasons, which is why there are no Finance Officers or the Portfolio Holder in attendance. The Chairman advised that the report would be circulated and any comments or questions can be emailed to the relevant Officer.

40 **LEGAL GOVERNANCE & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES - Q3 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

M Brookes presented the Q3 reports for Legal Governance and Democratic Services.

Cllr Silwal asked if future projects should be included. MB advised this would be reported in the next quarter information.

Cllr McLean requested that formal thanks for J Doyle and his team were recorded for the recent poll undertaken at Kings Langley.

Cllr Douris was interested in the Mount Prison election and would like to know the result of the percentage of prisoners that voted. MB said he would confirm.

Action: MB

The Chairman was pleased with the 100% of Stage 2 complaints completed within target and queried if there was a need to review the targets. R Smyth explained that the targets had been set the previous year and since then we have reduced the amount of time to respond.

Cllr Douris mentioned that it was good that last year there had been 21 Stage 2 complaints but only 1 this year. R Smyth advised that the policy had been changed and the complainant needed to show clear evidence for the case to be escalated.

Cllr Adeleke questioned the settlement of one employment tribunal and how it had affected staff management. M Brookes said that he had defended the case on behalf of the Council and management had taken on board the comments and will act differently going forward. Cllr Adeleke asked if it would be advisable for Members to have further information. M Brookes highlighted that the case had been settled without any blame. It was felt prudent to settle due to the costs involved in going to court.

The Chairman asked Members to note the report. All agreed. M Brookes left the meeting [19:50pm].

41 **PERFORMANCE, PEOPLE & INNOVATION - Q3 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

R Smyth went through the 3rd Quarter report for Performance, People and Innovation, apologising that the report contained the 2nd Quarter detail and that he had circulated the correct information.

Cllr McLean enquired if the CSU telephone system has the capability to identify vulnerable residents and put them to the top of the queue. R Smyth advised our systems could not do this at present and it would be a challenge to identify individuals to phone numbers. Cllr Harden mentioned the residents portal and it might be possible once this is introduced. Cllr McLean requested that it be considered in the future.

Cllr Taylor asked if a record is kept on sickness absence at Cupid Green and also the air quality in The Forum. M Rawdon confirmed that Cupid Green was included at Sickness Scrutiny, that we do not treat people differently, but look at a range of indicators e.g. sickness over the last 5 years or the job that they do. The HSE had done some work and the results have shown that there was an increase in sickness of an extra 2 days per FTE.

M Rawdon said that air pollution was being considered as part of the staff engagement group and it will be escalated to CMT. There has also been a hygiene campaign. R Smyth advised CMT had looked at air pollution and temperatures and the B Hosier and Interserve are doing some work on that. MR advised that sickness was broadly similar in The Forum as it was in The Civic. R Smyth confirmed it would be kept under observation.

Cllr Adeleke enquired about staff turnover and how it was comparable with other authorities in the last two years. Cllr Adeleke said that we had been blessed with fantastic staff and asked what the Council were doing to keep them. Cllr Harden said that the people that were leaving have been amazing but also they were ambitious and move on after a few years.

M Rawdon drew attention to all the work that has been going on in order to retain staff since the introduction of the People Strategy. This included a staff recognition

scheme, changes to the appraisal system, a greater emphasis on training and staff benefits like the car salary sacrifice scheme which is open to all staff and staff being able to purchase additional annual leave. We offer a great package which isn't always advertised. We look at exit interviews to see why staff are leaving. There is some concern around salaries but we are looking at other opportunities we can offer, as this would have to be a corporate decision.

Cllr Adeleke thanked M Rawdon and said that the Council is moving in the right direction. Cllr Adeleke mentioned the possibility of creating new job titles, a better position not necessarily better pay. M Rawdon said that we do need to be looking at all the different options and being creative.

Cllr Douris suggested that there was something of a management merry-go round at the moment. There was a lot of movement and he felt that there was more of a work-life balance, which is his personal opinion, but he was concerned about people able to buy additional holiday as they will spend less time delivering.

Cllr Douris stated that Members were not aware and they had not been alerted to the increased vacancy rate in the CSU. R Smyth agreed and advised that we need to make us more attractive. One of the problems is that it typically takes 3 months to train someone so when the new person starts they are not going to be as productive as someone who is fully trained.

Cllr Douris mentioned that Herts have an academy for training staff. R Smyth advised that the CSU staffing was quite stable but there have been some leavers who have applied for other Dacorum roles. Cllr Douris suggested that it might be worthwhile opening an academy. R Smyth said it was something we could think about. M Rawdon highlighted that the service will be reviewed which will include looking at reducing the training time without minimising the quality. R Smyth said he would contact Herts.

Action: R Smyth

Cllr Douris requested more information on the Communications Team, how many media meetings do we have and what is our media score. R Smyth confirmed he would find out and get back to Cllr Douris.

Action: R Smyth

Cllr Douris asked for a report to come to this meeting. M Rawdon said that it would be useful to know what's currently happening. Cllr Douris would like to see a positive representation of DBC that we are a good Council that works well, we are prudent and we deliver, we need to look at how we can get that message across to the wider media market.

The Chairman said we do need to be more proactive, but the Digest had reduced in delivery. Cllr Harden highlighted that a hard copy Digest is sent out two times per year but there is a monthly email update that has positive messages rather than just informing people. The Chairman said this should include things like the Community Champion. R Smyth advised we do run regular campaigns on social media and the Gazette, but there is always more we could do. M Rawdon clarified that we do send the Gazette good news stories but there's nothing we can do if they don't print them.

Cllr Howard queried the numbers in point 2.13 as they didn't add up. R Smyth will confirm numbers.

Action: R Smyth

Cllr Silwal raised concerns over the customer experience and increased costs for the CSU and how the re-design of the service will affect this. R Smyth advised that the re-design will be about business process re-engineering and will take out steps which are not required. Cllr Silwal asked if it would look at poor performance. M Rawdon said that it was about looking at the process rather than individuals. B Trueman added that the re-design might reduce human interactions. R Smyth clarified that the re-design will stop people having to do things they don't have to do.

The Chairman enquired about sickness absence and that the total absence has reduced but 1.5% of staff are responsible for 25% of sickness absence. M Rawdon advised we are taking measures but some people can be off for a year, during that time we will challenge the medical advice, support the individual on a phased return to work, there is regular contact with staff and sickness scrutiny will look at sickness for each individual. The Chairman said that this puts pressure on existing staff.

Cllr Howard would like to understand the reasons for the illness and wondered if it was stress related. M Rawdon said it was an issue as it was for many other organisations. Managers are trained in mental health awareness and we use occupational health, there is also counselling available. Cllr Howard asked if the 1.5% was due to stress. The Chairman said it would be good to see the figures. Cllr Douris agreed that it would be good to understand the reasons but would be concerned if the details meant that it could be attributed to a particular person as this would be inappropriate. Cllr Harden confirmed that the sickness data could be reviewed at the next meeting.

Action: M Rawdon

The Chairman asked Members to note the reports and the recommendations for reports back from Officers. All agreed.

42 WORK PROGRAMME

Cllr Douris asked that the Communications Report be considered in July or September.

The Meeting ended at 8.40 pm