MINUTES of the meeting of the **COUNCIL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held at 10.00 am on 14 November 2012 at Ashcombe Suite, County Hall, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 2DN.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Wednesday, 5 December 2012.

Members:

* Mr Mel Few (Chairman)
* Mr David Harmer (Vice-Chairman)
* Mr Mark Brett-Warburton
* Mr Stephen Cooksey
* Mr Steve Cosser
* Mrs Clare Curran
* Mr Eber A Kington
* Dr Zully Grant-Duff
* Mrs Sally Ann B Marks
* Mr Steve Renshaw
* Mr Nick Skellett CBE
* Mr Chris Townsend
* Mrs Denise Turner-Stewart
* Mr Richard Walsh
* Mrs Hazel Watson

Ex-officio Members:

Mrs Lavinia Sealy, Chairman of the County Council
Mr David Munro, Vice Chairman of the County Council

Present:

Mr Peter Martin, Deputy Leader

* = present

129/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

There were no apologies or substitutions.

130/12 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 18 OCTOBER 2012 [Item 2]

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

131/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were no declarations of interests.

132/12 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

There were no questions or petitions.

133/12 RESPONSES FROM THE CABINET TO ISSUES REFERRED BY THE SELECT COMMITTEE [Item 5]

No referrals were made to Cabinet at the last meeting so there were no responses.

134/12 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 6]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses: None.

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. Members discussed the change of Chairman for the Countryside Management Task Group. The change was as result of the Leader's request that Task Groups were not chaired by Select Committee Chairman. The change in the reporting timeline was agreed with the portfolio holder due to an increase in the number of witnesses.

2. Members were informed that the Engagement with High Need Areas in Surrey Task Group would be deferred until after May 2013. This was in order that the work could be completed thoroughly following the 2013 election.

3. The Committee discussed the work of the Localism Task Group. The recommendations had been accepted by Cabinet but implementation was pending the outcomes of the Community Partnerships Public Value Review. Members recognised that there was a synergy between the two areas of work, and that there was now a necessity to set down a timescale for implementation of the recommendations.

Recommendations:

a) That the Cabinet provide a statement as to the current status and proposed timetable for implementing the recommendations of the Communities Select Committee's Localism Task Group.

   Action by: Bryan Searle

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

The Committee will review its work programme at its meeting on 5 December 2012

135/12 RECOMMENDATION TRACKER [Item 7]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses: None.

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The following response was received from Trevor Pugh (Strategic Director for Environment and Infrastructure) in reference to COSC 110: "Thank you for this feedback. We are intending to use the vacant business support posts to provide additional support to the teams based at the Godstone and Bagshot Depots. This has been highlighted by Members and our Area Managers as a particular issue. I do not anticipate that doing this will cause difficulties for our engineers generally. With regard to the suggestion for an RIE for Local Schemes we are running an extensive improvement programme for Local Schemes, involving a Local Committee Chairs Task Group. Both these issues are being monitored and scrutinised carefully by the Environment and Transport Select Committee."

2. Referring to COSC 104 on the Recommendations Tracker Members queried whether there was a definitive list of where Superfast Broadband would not be available. An update report was due to come to Committee on 5 December 2012.

3. In reference to COSC 112 it was noted that there was an item concerning dental checks for Looked After Children was scheduled for the meeting of the Children & Families Select Committee on 19 December 2012.

Recommendations:

None

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

None.

136/12 TASK GROUP SCOPING DOCUMENT [Item 8]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses:

None.

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Task Group Scoping Report for the AIS Business Process Review was shared with the Committee. Members discussed a number of alterations to the document, concerning the Members Reference Group's change in scope. The title AIS Business Process Review was not sufficient as it did not reflect that the Members Reference Group was looking at the business processes that AIS had set out to handle. The Members Reference Group had so far recommended a Rapid Improvement Event to look at the process of inputting data. The Group

would set out to identify weaknesses within current business process and then recommend solutions.

2. The Committee endorsed the scoping document for the AIS Business Process Review, pending the recommended changes.

Recommendations:

a) That the title of the Scoping Document for AIS Business Process review is altered to "Adult Services Business Process Review" in order to accurately reflect the Task Group's scope, and that the question that the Members reference group is aiming to answer be altered to the following: "do Adult Services Business Processes meet the needs of the directorate?"

Action by: Leah O'Donovan

Actions/Further Information to be provided:

None

Committee Next Steps:

The Committee will review the progress of the Task Group as part of its monthly monitoring process.

137/12 COMPLETED AUDIT REPORTS [Item 9]

Declarations of interest:

None.

Witnesses:

Sue Lewry-Jones – Chief Internal Auditor

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee was given a summary of the Internal Audit Reports by the Chief Internal Auditor. Reports highlighted for discussion included Special Residential Schools – Teachers' additional payments, Local Safeguarding Children Board, Overtime, Performance Management – Data Quality, and Review of Concessionary Fares.

2. Members requested details of recommendations rated as high priority in reference to the audit on the Review of Concessionary Fares. The Chief Internal Auditor explained that the two recommendations pertained to the following: data quality, and the memorandum of agreement between the Library Service and the Travel and Transport Group. The Chairman of the Environment and Transport Select Committee briefly outlined the report on Concessionary Fares that had been presented at the meeting of Environment & Transport Select Committee on 8 November 2012. A paper was due to go to Cabinet in January 2013 with a further report being presented to the Environment & Transport Select Committee in June 2013.

3. The Committee discussed whether the Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee should also look at high priority recommendations in order to ensure that they were being covered by the relevant Select Committee. It was decided that the report could be altered to show the responsible Select Committee and Cabinet Member for each audit report. The audit reports would also be shared with the relevant Scrutiny Officer within Democratic Services. This would enable an appropriate line of responsibility and governance to be identified without dramatically widening the remit of COSC.

Recommendations:

a) That in order to assist with the monitoring of outcomes from Audit two additional columns be added to the table in paragraph 6 of future reports to show the names of the relevant Select Committees and Cabinet Members for each audit.

Action by: Sue Lewry-Jones

b) That Internal Audit notify the relevant Scrutiny Officer in Democratic Services when audit reports are published.

Action by: Sue Lewry-Jones

Actions/Further Information to be provided:

None.

138/12 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT [Item 10]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses:

Kevin Kilburn, Deputy Chief Finance Officer
Peter Martin, Deputy Leader

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. Members raised concerns around the number of overspends that were being covered by one off payments. The Committee felt that this gave an imprecise view of run-rates and made budget planning difficult for the next year.

2. The Committee discussed the practicality of reviewing the Medium Term Financial Plan in light of additional pressures and a continuing overspend by some areas of the Council. It was expressed that there was a need for directorates to focus on addressing the current rates of overspend through further efficiency savings.

3. There was a discussion about business rates pooling, and the proposed development of a business rates retention system. The Deputy Chief Finance Officer offered to share information briefing Members on this work and its potential impact.

Recommendations:

a) That the Chairman write to David Hodge on behalf of the Committee to request that he seek reassurance from all Cabinet Members that the risks of overspends within their portfolios have been properly assessed, and that appropriate steps have been put in place to address any potential overspends identified.

   Action by: Mel Few

b) That Finance reports on a monthly basis (in a format of month and year to date) all one-off transfers from reserves by individual services to cover budget shortfalls.

   Action by: Kevin Kilburn

Actions/Further Information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

None.

139/12 2012/13 QUARTER TWO BUSINESS REPORT [Item]

Declarations of Interest:

None.

Witnesses:

Ben Unsworth, Senior Performance & Research Manager
Liz Lawrence, Head of Policy & Performance
Matthew Baker, Deputy Head of HR & OD
Carmel Millar, Head of Human Resources & Organisational Development

Key points Raised During the Discussion:

1. Members highlighted that the report indicated that 68% of residents had expressed that they were satisfied with how the Council runs things, and queried what was being done to identify how to address the concerns of the remaining 32%. The Senior Performance & Research Manager outlined that the remainder would not be entirely comprised of dissatisfied residents, as there were a number of possible responses. It was outlined that work was being undertaken to identify what the driving factors were with regards to dissatisfaction amongst residents.

2. The Committee discussed how the Council performed in the Residents' Survey alongside other Local Authorities. The Senior Performance & Research Manager explained that accurate benchmarking is more difficult now that there is not a standardised local government satisfaction survey methodology. Looking at trends in a recent national

survey and taking into account some of the demographic factors that influence satisfaction, Surrey performs well.

3. The Committee questioned the sample size of the survey results. The Senior Performance & Research Manager outlined that 6,600 residents are interviewed each year. This sample size allows the Council to analyse the data at district and borough level, as well as Countywide. Further questions were raised as to the methodology of the Report and whether it would continue for a fixed period or indefinitely. It was outlined by officers that the survey is particularly valuable in its ability to highlight key trends in satisfaction. The Committee asked for information on the costs of undertaking the survey; officers agreed to provide this information.

4. Members raised concerns around the use of the term “promises” in the One County, One Team: People Strategy 2012-2017 annex of the report. It was felt that a number of the promises were not measurable, and so they should be renamed ‘aspirations’ where appropriate. It was also felt that a number of the targets were not consistent with the promise, highlighted amongst these was the promise regarding annual appraisals. Officers expressed that these targets were intended to increase on a yearly basis, in order that the promise could be achieved by 2017.

5. There was a discussion about the purpose of the employee promises, and whether they were intended as a tool for managers or employees. Members expressed that an overall target would appear meaningless to an individual employee who felt that their manager had not fulfilled one of the identified promises. It was expressed that there needed to be greater clarity about the interpretation of the promises and who was taking key responsibility for challenging where these were not being kept.

Recommendations:

a) That consideration be given to revising the terminology used in the current People Strategy, to ensure that all the promises made are clearly defined and measurable.

   Action by: Carmel Millar

b) That, in order to reflect the importance of staff appraisal and personal development within the organisation, the targets for the promises 'everyone will have an effective annual appraisal' and 'everyone will have a development plan linked to their goals and organisational goals' should be 100% from 2013/2014 rather than by 2017 as currently profiled.

   Action by: Carmel Millar

c) That a breakdown of costs involved with production of the Residents Survey be provided to the Committee.

   Action by: Ben Unsworth

Actions/Further Information to be provided:

None

Select Committee Next Steps:

None

140/12 SURREY-I [Item 11]

Declarations of Interest:

None

Witnesses:

Ben Unsworth, Senior Performance & Research Manager
Liz Lawrence, Head of Policy & Performance

Key Points Raised During the Discussion:

1. The Committee received an update on the implementation of Surrey-i. The Senior Performance & Research Manager outlined how Surrey-i had helped in the following three areas: policy design, service delivery and evaluation. As part of the project's development the data and analysis tools have been made open to the public. The Senior Performance & Research Manager expressed that Surrey-i's primary audience was people involved in the design and delivery of public services. It was acknowledged that the site had worked well with a primary audience of officers and service managers; however, more work is being done to make the website as accessible as possible for residents.

2. The Committee queried what specific services and information Surrey-i offered. The Senior Performance & Research Manager outlined that there was significant expertise and analysis involved, for example, in mapping census information onto the Boroughs & Districts. The provision of information through Surrey-i had benefits for users in terms of accessibility and time-saving, compared to an alternative of obtaining the data from a series of separate sources. Members asked whether consideration could be given to charging for the specialist information connected to producing the website and presenting the data. The Committee discussed whether a marketing exercise could be undertaken to identify whether Surrey-i could be developed as a commercial product.

Recommendations:

a) That, in order to optimise the benefits of Surrey-i, a review be undertaken to re-establish the future user market for the service, identify their specific requirements, and ensure that any further development of Surrey-i is primarily tailored towards meeting the needs of the target audience.

   Action by: Ben Unsworth

b) That consideration be given to the viability of covering the costs of Surrey-i through charging for use of the service.

Action by: Ben Unsworth

c) That the Committee receives a further update report on Surrey-i at its meeting on 13 February 2013.

Action by: Ben Unsworth

Actions/Further Information to be provided:

None.

Select Committee Next Steps:

None.

141/12 PROCUREMENT PARTNERSHIP WITH EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL [Item 12]

Declarations of Interest:

None.

Witnesses:

Laura Langstaff, Procurement and Commissioning Manager

Key Points Raised During the Discussion:

1. The Committee received an update on the Procurement Partnership with East Sussex County Council. The Procurement and Commissioning Manager outlined key milestones and gave a brief verbal update on the current work being undertaken to centralise resources.

2. The Committee noted the forecast savings outlined in the report and asked for further details about how this saving was split between the two Local Authorities.

3. The Committee raised the question of why the Partnership had been developed with East Sussex specifically. The Procurement and Commissioning Manager outlined the reasoning behind the decision, stating that there were strong Member and Officer links. It was also felt that the partnership enabled a stronger regional influence.

Recommendations:

a) That further information be provided about the forecast procurement savings and how these will be split between Surrey County Council and East Sussex County Council.

Action by: Andrew Forzani

b) That the lessons learnt from the process of developing the Procurement Partnership are formally recorded in order that they can be used in future instances.

Action by: Andrew Forzani

c) That the Committee receives a further progress report at its meeting on 13 February 2013.

Action by: Andrew Forzani

Actions/Further Information to be provided:

None.

Select Committee Next Steps:

None.

142/12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 13]

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be at 10.00am on Wednesday 5 December 2012.

Meeting ended at: 12.49 pm

Chairman