

**MINUTES** of the meeting of the **COUNCIL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held at 9.30 am on 4 June 2014 at Park House, Randalls Road, Leatherhead, KT22 0AH.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Monday, 16 June 2014.

**Members:**

- \* Mr Nick Skellett CBE (Chairman)
- \* Mr Eber A Kington (Vice-Chairman)  
Mr Mark Brett-Warburton  
Mr Bill Chapman
- \* Mr Stephen Cooksey  
Mr Bob Gardner
- \* Dr Zully Grant-Duff
- \* Mr David Harmer
- \* Mr David Ivison
- \* Mrs Denise Saliagopoulos
- \* Mr Chris Townsend
- \* Mr Richard Walsh
- \* Mrs Hazel Watson
- \* Mr Keith Witham  
Mrs Victoria Young

**Ex-officio Members:**

Mr David Munro, Chairman of the County Council  
Mrs Sally Ann B Marks, Vice Chairman of the County Council

**Substitutes**

- \* Mr Denis Fuller
- \* Mr Colin Kemp

**In Attendance**

- \* Denise LeGal, Cabinet Member for Business Services

\* = present

**40/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]**

Apologies were received from Mark Brett-Warburton, Bob Gardner and Bill Chapman.

Denis Fuller substituted for Mark Brett-Warburton and Colin Kemp substituted for Bob Gardner.

**41/13 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: [Item 2]**

These were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

**42/13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]**

There were no declarations of interests.

**43/13 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]**

There were no questions or petitions.

**44/13 RESPONSES FROM THE CABINET TO ISSUES REFERRED BY THE SELECT COMMITTEE [Item 5]**

**Declarations of interest:** None

**Witnesses:** None.

**Key points raised during the discussion:**

The Committee noted the response from the Cabinet Member for Business Services.

**Recommendations:** None

**Actions/further information to be provided:** None.

**Committee next steps:** None.

**45/13 RECOMMENDATION TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 6]**

**Declarations of interest:** None

**Witnesses:** None.

**Key points raised during the discussion:**

- 1 The Chairman reported that a response had been received from John Stebbings, Chief Property Officer, in relation to recommendation COSC 37, indicating that Property Services was continuing to support the Schools Service 'as and when appropriate to deliver the chosen service outcome desired for this project.'
- 2 The Committee did not feel that this response was sufficiently detailed, and requested that further clarification be sought about the timeline for delivery of the programme to ensure all infant schools were in a position to provide free school meals by 1 September 2014.
- 3 It was also requested that an update be provided on whether the Leader had received a response from the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in relation to his letter about simplifying the Universal Credit application process and exploring options for common assessment arrangements (COSC 30).
- 4 The Committee considered and endorsed the proposed Health Scrutiny Committee Task Group on Access to General Practice in Surrey. It was requested that the Task Group look into whether the recently-developed

toolkit for comparing GP practices could be made available to the public.

**Recommendation:**

That further clarification be sought about the timeline for delivery of the programme to ensure all infant schools were in a position to provide free school meals by 1 September 2014.

Action by: Bryan Searle

**Resolved:**

That the scoping document for the Task Group on Access to General Practice in Surrey be approved.

**Actions/further information to be provided:**

Details of any response to the Leader from the Secretary of State in relation to recommendation COSC 30 to be circulated.

**Committee next steps:** None.

**46/13 YEAR END FINANCIAL BUDGET OUTTURN 2013/14 [Item 7]**

**Declarations of interest:** None

**Witnesses:**

Kevin Kilburn, Deputy Chief Finance Officer

**Key points raised during the discussion:**

- 1 A report from the Committee's Performance & Finance Sub-Group was tabled at the meeting. A copy of this report is included as an attachment to these Minutes.
- 2 It was reported that the out-turn was largely as expected when the provisional figures were reported to the previous meeting, although there had been an increased under-spend of £800,000 as a result of the timing of costs related to the winter flooding. The £6M shortfall in the achievement of efficiencies for the year was in line with the projection which had been reported since September 2013.
- 3 It was noted that the Council had made a provision of £700,000 to cover the risk of potential costs of claims relating to closed landfill sites, in line with the advice of auditors.
- 4 Details were requested about the size of the bid made to the Department of Transport pothole fund, referred to in the last paragraph of page 48 of the report.
- 5 The Committee was concerned about the £3.6M staffing budget under-spend due to recruitment delays in Adult Social Care, and it was noted that this was largely due to competition for staff with the London Boroughs. This issue was being looked at by the Adult Social Care Select Committee, and the Committee requested details about specific initiatives undertaken by the Service to address the problem.

- 6 The Committee noted that further details about the virement for the Children's Services Contact Centre re-alignment referred to in paragraph 4 of Annex 2 would be circulated to the Committee.
- 7 Details of the six Council priorities for which performance was rated red, as highlighted in the report of the Sub-Group, were noted. The Committee agreed the following **recommendations**:
- (a) That the Adult Social Care and Environment & Transport Select Committees scrutinise performance against the three priorities in each of their Directorates for which performance was rated as red at year-end 2013/14.
- (b) That the following process be adopted for scrutiny of year-end performance results:
- Each Select Committee to scrutinise year-end performance information for the priorities within their remit annually at their May/June meeting, with services providing written explanation of the reasons for any priority rated as red.
  - That the outcomes of the scrutiny be reported to the Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee annually at its meeting in July.

Action by: Scrutiny Officers

- 8 The Chairman reported that he had called-in the recent Cabinet decision relating to Grant Criteria and Funding Opportunities Guide, and Members would be canvassed about possible dates for the call-in meeting.

**Actions/further information to be provided:**

Further details about the virement for the Children's Services Contact Centre re-alignment referred to in paragraph 4 of Annex 2 to be circulated to the Committee.

Action by: Kevin Kilburn

Details to be provided about the bid made to the Department of Transport pothole fund.

Action by: Kevin Kilburn

Details to be provided about specific initiatives undertaken by the Adult Social Care Service to address the issue of significant vacancies in reablement and front-line teams.

Action by: Ken Akers

**Committee next steps:** None.

**47/13 REWARD STRATEGY REVIEW 2014 - 2018 [Item 8]**

**Declarations of interest:** None

**Witnesses:**

Denise Le Gal, Cabinet Member for Business Services  
Carmel Millar, Head of HR & Organisational Development  
Matthew Baker, Deputy Head of HR & Organisational Development

**Key points raised during the discussion:**

- 1 The Head of HR & Organisational Development introduced the report and explained that the review of the current reward structure was taking place because the Council's existing system did not provide the flexibility required to meet the changes the organisation was facing as a result of new methods of service delivery. The views of Members and other interested parties were being sought during June and July 2014 (including an informal workshop with the Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its next meeting), and these would help inform proposals for a new reward strategy which would be shared later in the year.
- 2 Although automatic pay increments for staff not at the top of their grade had been suspended for the previous four years, those staff had received a small one-off payment each year instead. Organisations which had retained automatic progression for contractual reasons had been required to make more redundancies to reduce staffing costs, and Surrey's approach had been seen to be beneficial to employee relations. Morale had also been maintained through the Council's investment in training and staff benefits.
- 3 Staff numbers had returned to the 2010/2011 levels as a result of the Council taking on responsibility for Public Health; responsibility for delivery of services on behalf of East Sussex County Council; development of the apprenticeship scheme; and a move to employing permanent rather than agency staff, at reduced cost to the Council.
- 4 It was noted that the data pack circulated to Members did not provide historic data about trends in staff costs or benchmarking data for staff above level S8, and it was agreed that this information would be circulated to Members of the Committee.
- 5 The reasons for the Council paying below the national average for some posts and higher for others were related to various issues, including local pay rates in the private sector and decisions about staff structures. For example, although pay for care workers was below the national average for councils, it was higher than pay for similar roles in the private sector locally. Median salaries for finance staff were higher than for other comparable councils but, due to the smaller size of the team, the overall costs were lower.

**Actions/further information to be provided:**

Historic data about trends in staff costs and benchmarking data for staff above level S8 to be circulated to Members of the Committee.

Action by: Carmel Millar

**Committee next steps:**

An informal workshop for the Committee to input to the development of the pay and reward strategy will be held on Wednesday 2 July 2014.

**48/13 DIGITAL STRATEGY UPDATE [Item 9]**

**Declarations of interest:** None

**Witnesses:**

Denise Le Gal, Cabinet Member for Business Services  
Lucie Glenday, Chief Digital Officer

**Key points raised during the discussion:**

- 1 The Chief Digital Officer provided an oral update on the progress of the Digital Strategy. An Advisory Board consisting of 12 volunteers with relevant experience had been constituted, and a list of names and biographies would be circulated to the Committee.
- 2 The principles which would inform the strategy were still being developed, as ideas had evolved as discussions with other experts had progressed.
- 3 A training course was being developed by the University of Surrey, with the first one due to be delivered in September 2014. The course would be evaluated after the first tranche to ensure its effectiveness. Opportunities to share the knowledge of the experts on the Advisory Board through lunchtime learning sessions were also being developed. Both types of training would be available to interested Members.
- 4 Options for 'agile delivery' of IT solutions were proposed, where the focus was on identifying the needs of the user and seeing whether a quick prototype IT system would solve the problem.
- 5 The Committee requested that in future a short written update in bullet-point form be provided. Arrangements would also be made for Members of the Committee to visit the 'Think Tank' so that the Chief Digital Officer could explain the latest thinking in the development of the project.

**Actions/further information to be provided:**

A list of names and biographies for the Advisory Board to be circulated to the Committee.

Action by: Lucie Glenday

**Committee next steps:**

Arrangements to be made for Members of the Committee to visit the 'Think Tank' for an explanation of the latest thinking in the development of the Digital Strategy.

**49/13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 10]**

The Committee noted the next meeting of the Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be on 2 July 2014 at 10.30am.

Meeting ended at: 11.05 am

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**Chairman**