

MINUTES of the meeting of the **COUNCIL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held at 11.00 am on 11 September 2014 at Ashcombe Suite, County Hall, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 2DN.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Thursday, 2 October 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

Ex-officio Members:

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

Present:

* = present

63/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Denise Saliagopoulos.

64/14 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING [Item 2]

The minutes were agreed as accurate records of the meetings.

65/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were no declarations of interest.

66/14 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

No questions or petitions were received.

67/14 IMPROVING STAFF MORALE AND WELL-BEING [Item 5]

Witnesses: Denise Le Gal, Cabinet Member for Business Services
Karen Archer-Burton, Organisational Development & Skills Lead

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee stressed that it was important that the outcomes of the staff workshops were communicated to staff and that the issues raised by staff were followed up .
2. It was noted that a 'Better place to Work' project was underway to talk to 10,000 members of staff across the County by the end of September 2014. The issues raised in the discussions held so far aligned with the findings of the Committee's own workshops, although the Committee noted that the full data would not be available until the end of October 2014. It was agreed that HR should present a report to the Committee in November 2014 which draws together the outcomes of the two pieces of work and identifies the actions which will be put in place to address them.
3. Particular issues of concern raised in the Committee's staff workshops related to IT and work pressures. It was agreed that the Head of IMT would be invited to the next meeting to give an update on the changes to IT, and the review in November would provide information regarding the processes for dealing with staff issues such as work pressures. The Committee also noted that a programme would be launched in October 2014 to ensure support for whole teams, and a Head of Workforce post was to be introduced which would target all issues raised by staff.

Recommendations:

- That the Head of IMT be invited to attend the meeting of the Committee in October 2014 to provide an update on the Council's IT upgrade programme.
- That the outcomes from the Council's current Better Place to Work consultation and the Committee's own staff workshop discussions be combined in a joint report by HR.
- That the HR report on the key issues raised by staff, and the actions planned to address them, be presented to the Committee at its meeting in November 2014.
- That the Vice-Chairman write to the staff who attended the Committee's staff workshops to update them on the outcomes from the discussion, making specific reference to the concerns raised about work pressures.
- That the forthcoming staff survey be used to seek views about the effectiveness of different methods of sharing information with staff.

68/14 DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION WITHIN SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL [Item 6]

Witnesses: Lucie Glenday, Chief Digital Officer

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chief Digital Officer introduced the report and informed the Committee that the concept of the project was to look at ways that technology could be used as a platform to improve the Council's own direct service delivery and to enable partners to deliver certain services on our behalf. Effective customer engagement was key, as the strategy needed to be bought into by stakeholders and adhere to the principles of matrix management.
2. The intention was to produce a one-page set of principles for the project rather than a long policy document. The principles were still being determined, and the complexity of the project meant that new principles would emerge as the project developed. The principles agreed to date would be shared with the Committee. It was noted that staff were currently supportive as new systems would make jobs more effective, it was noted however that some resistance in the future was expected due to perceived negativity to change and the fact that the project was driving cost efficiencies and would therefore impact on jobs. The Chief Digital Officer was working with the Head of HR and Organisational Development to ensure that this would be fully mitigated against.
3. The Committee asked how key themes would be prioritised and noted that interoperability should be the primary focus to ensure opportunities for savings. The opportunities for deriving customer value would come from this, and information on usage was currently being collated.
4. Concern was raised about the increased opportunities for breaches of data security where shared systems were used. It was noted that overall security would be the responsibility of IMT, and that compliance would be the responsibility of services.

Further information to be provided:

The principles to date to be shared with the Committee.

Recommendations:

- That the Committee receive a further progress report on the digital transformation project in six months' time.

69/14 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT [Item 7]

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 annex to these Minutes.

2. The Committee noted that although the risks of the Better Care Funding would not affect this year's budget, this would potentially have an effect in the 2015/2016 financial year. The position in relation to the Better Care Fund was unlikely to be known before May 2015, and a secondary plan would need to be developed to ensure sustainability across all directorates.
3. It was noted that overall the Council's unit costs for service delivery had shown a reduction compared to the previous year.

70/14 SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT [Item 8]

Witnesses: Helen Rankin, Scrutiny Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee discussed the reference in the report to the creation of the Children and Education Select Committee, and comment was made that some Members had expressed the view that the remit of the merged Committee was too large. The Chairman of the Children & Education Committee reported on the process that had taken place to develop the work programme for the coming year and the new ways of working which were being introduced to ensure that the key issues were given proper consideration. Reconsideration of the decision to create a merged Children and Education Select Committee was requested but, following a vote, this was not supported.
2. It was expressed by the Committee that all Select Committees need to be prioritised by officers and support for the scrutiny process needed to be given by senior officers. It was agreed that the words 'better supported by senior officers' should be added to 'The Challenge Ahead' section on page 12 of the report.

Resolved: That the report, as amended, be distributed to all Members, internal officers (via the S:Net) and stakeholders.

71/14 SCHOOL GOVERNANCE TASK GROUP SCOPING DOCUMENT [Item 9]

Witnesses: Zully Grant-Duff, Chairman of Children and Education Select Committee

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee agreed the implementation of a School Governance Task Group.

72/14 RECOMMENDATION TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 10]

The Committee noted the recommendations tracker. A forward work programme would be developed based on the outcomes from the Members workshop which took place before the Committee.

73/14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 11]

The date of the next Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be at 10.30am on Thursday 2 October.

Meeting ended at: 12.55 pm

Chairman