

MINUTES of the meeting of the **COUNCIL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held at 10.30 am on 6 November 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 Wednesday, 3 December 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

85/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Denise Saliagopoulos sent her apologies.

86/14 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 2 OCTOBER [Item 2]

Members felt that the minutes of Item 9 did not accurately reflect the Committee's dissatisfaction with the late signing of the Manpower Contract, as identified in the Agency Staff Contract Internal Audit Report. An additional line would be included in the minutes to this effect.

The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record, subject to the amendment as outlined above.

87/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

No declarations of interest were received.

88/14 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

No questions or petitions were received.

89/14 RESPONSES FROM THE CABINET TO ISSUES REFERRED BY THE SELECT COMMITTEE [Item 5]

The Committee noted the response from the Leader of the Council.

90/14 RECOMMENDATION TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 6]

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee were informed that the Pay and Reward item originally on the agenda for December would be deferred to the January meeting; this was due to the timing of the People, Performance and Development Committee.
2. The Chairman reported that the 3 December meeting could be used to discuss findings and progress from each Select Committee Performance & Finance sub-group and to look at budget monitoring report for October. This meeting would start at 10.00am.
3. The Chairman explained that he intended to meet with the Chief Executive again regarding Recommendations Tracker reference COSC 49 and would report back to the Committee the outcome of his discussion.
4. It was agreed that an item would be added to the Recommendations Tracker to ensure that officers reported back to the Committee if any of the high priority recommendations identified in the Agency Staffing audit report (discussed at the last meeting) were not achieved by the agreed management action date.

91/14 APPRAISAL COMPLETION UPDATE REPORT FOR 2013/14 [Item 7]

Declarations of Interest:

None

Witnesses:

Carmel Millar, Director of People and Development
Holly Hood, Organisational Development Consultant

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee were informed that good progress was being made to ensure 100% of appraisal completion by March 2015. It was noted that the figure of incomplete appraisals, refers to those which have not

been recorded, as opposed to not taken place. The Portal had been updated to ensure recording appraisals was easier and less time consuming for managers.

2. The Committee noted the current staggered approach to appraisal completion within the Adult Social Care Directorate and Commercial Services area. Members expressed that given the staggered approach; the 100% completion figure would need to be continuously 'rolled over'. It was added that at every level of management, part of a manager's appraisal review should be whether they had completed their team's appraisals. Members queried what sanctions there were on managers who did not complete appraisals with their teams and it was noted that by the end of the financial year it was expected that all managers would have fulfilled their requirement to hold appraisal conversations.
3. It was reported to the Committee that areas where completion figures were low had been identified and this was often remote users and employees who did not log on to a computer regularly. The OD Consultant was working with managers within these areas to identify ways to support them and ensure all appraisals were completed. It was expected that resolving any issues experienced when managers recorded appraisal completion would increase the total number of completed appraisals towards the 100% target. It was noted that individuals could now be identified as not having an appraisal recorded and these reports are sent to Strategic Directors and Heads of Service to follow up. It was noted that the Chief Executive would be sending an email to the entire workforce detailing the importance of completing and recording appraisals.
4. Barriers to the 100% completion rate included where part time staff were unable to attend a meeting outside of normal working hours. Managers were being advised to be flexible and make arrangements such as using the time set aside for a regular supervision session for their appraisal conversation. Adult Social Care and Children, Schools and Families had the lowest rate of appraisal completion and it was noted that job pressures and department related difficulties could be a contributory factor. The Committee were informed appraisals for some part time staff had been re-designed to make them quicker and easier to complete and tailored 'job chats' are used in Commercial Services to ensure we are offering flexibility but also consistency to all staff.
5. It was noted that the Unions were supportive of the 100% appraisal completion rate target and had been engaged with the staff Health Check Process in Adult Social Care and Children's Services teams.
6. The Committee raised concern regarding how quality would still be ensured when the focus had been on increasing the quantity of appraisals. Officers expressed that quality was also being addressed however it was the main priority to ensure appraisals were being carried out across the organisation before continuing the work on a quality improvement plan.

7. The Committee were informed that feedback from the Better Place to Work Programme had shown that some employees had not had an appraisal for a number of years. It was agreed that some responsibility remained with staff to ensure they had an appraisal once a year.
8. An aspect of the appraisal process was 360 feedback; however, it was noted that this was not yet universal. After a discussion around the importance of training for managers, the Committee were informed that beginning in January, 100 managers would start to work in Locality Teams as good practice champions. This would mean managers could learn from each other and best practice could be shared.
9. The Committee suggested to officers that spot checking appraisals on the grounds of quality would be worth considering. The Chairman requested the item come back to Committee in April to discuss the quality of appraisals once the quantity had improved. It was added that achieving less than 100% appraisal completion did not reflect well on the organisation.

Actions/Further Information to be Provided:

None.

Recommendations:

That officers in HR&OD give consideration to spot-checking appraisals on the grounds of quality.

Action by: Director of People & Development

Select Committee Next Steps:

The Committee to receive a further report in April 2015.

92/14 BETTER PLACE TO WORK PROJECT [Item 8]

Declarations of interest:

None.

Witnesses:

Paul Brocklehurst, Head of IMT

Julie Fisher, Strategic Director for Business Services

Janet Ludley, IMT & Customer Communications Manager

Carmel Millar, Director of People & Development

Chris Whitty, Senior Business Support Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman of the Committee thanked officers for the report and noted that the key themes brought out in the Better Place to Work

- discussions broadly matched those identified by the Committee when they met with small groups of staff across the Council
2. The Director of People & Development introduced the report and informed the Committee that the next stage of the Better Place to Work Project was to implement the action plan and follow up on issues raised by staff.
 3. Members praised the refreshing honesty in the report. There was a discussion on the draft communications page in Annex A, where some Members thought that “you said, we did, you can” should be amended to “you said, we did, you should”.
 4. The Committee were informed that when talking to staff any small issues raised were dealt with straight away or as soon as possible afterwards. This had increased confidence among the workforce and encouraged staff to log issues with the assurance that these would be addressed. A frequent issue that was raised during the first phase of the project was that there were too many people trying to locate desk space now that some County offices had been closed. It had been identified that a solution to this issue was managers encouraging staff to work more flexibly; for example staff with a laptop who were not required to be in the office every day. The Committee were informed that a step to support this solution was the roll out of more laptops to staff; this had already been implemented with around 100 laptops per month being provided to staff. Over 7,000 in all.
 5. The Committee recognised an aspect of the project was to strengthen the role of line managers so that more issues could be resolved locally. Information on Snet was available for staff on how to escalate issues but work was underway with IMT to engage remote staff and staff with no access to the intranet. New processes in place meant IMT could educate and encourage staff to use the helpdesk to resolve IT issues faster. It was added that staff across the workforce expressed they were grateful for IMT and HR visiting all Surrey buildings for staff opinions and issues.
 6. Repeating the Better Place to Work Project and the possible frequency of this was discussed, particularly to support staff in remote buildings. Comments from the review included that staff in remote buildings sometimes felt cut off and repeating the project annually or every 2 years would be considered, giving thought to the level of resource this work required. The Committee commended IMT for the achievement of IT upgrades in a short space of time and commended the project for reaching every office within the Council and meeting with approximately 10,000 members of staff. The Senior Business Support Manager and Benefits and Charging Consultancy Team Manager were mentioned as to have carried out the majority of this work.

Actions/Further Information to be Provided:

None

Mark Brett-Warburton and Bob Gardner left the meeting at 12.05pm

Recommendations:

- That officers give consideration to continuing the Better Place to Work Project and report the future programme back to Committee
- That the outcomes of the Project be communicated to all Surrey County Council staff, including those in remote buildings and without access to the Snet.

Select Committee Next Steps

The Committee to receive a further update in January

93/14 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT [Item 9]**Declarations of Interest:**

None.

Witnesses:

Julie Fisher, Strategic Director for Business Services
Kevin Kilburn, Deputy Chief Finance Officer

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman provided the Committee with a brief update on the recent Performance & Sub Group meeting (please see attached).
2. The Committee were informed that the Council had improved its position with regards to the overspend. Adult Social Care's overspend was projected at £2.7million; however savings had been made in Senior Management costs through reorganisation and increased realignment with Clinical Commission Group areas. It was noted that the majority of senior management savings would be achieved next year.
3. A list of assumptions for the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) had been requested and would be considered at a future Sub Group meeting.
4. It was noted that the Sub Group had discussed recommending a Decision Making Accountability (DMA) review of the Council's structures.. This process had been endorsed by the Local Government Association and would cost approximately £25,000. Members recommended that this be explored further.

Keith Witham left the meeting at 12.15pm

5. The Committee were informed that the Council was working with East Sussex on a proposal for a Business Services partnership, known as 'South East Business Services' Savings from management costs, transactional services and the Shared Services partnership would be calculated with the intention of being included in a future MTFP.
6. The Strategic Director for Business Services explained to the Committee that the South East Business Services partnership had

never been included as part of the 2015/2016 the Public Safety Transformation Network (PTSN) savings in the MTFP, which had subsequently been deleted. Members were keen to understand more about the potential savings associated with this partnership and the Strategic Director for Business Services agreed to share this information when more precise figures were available.

Actions/Further Information to be Provided:

That information regarding the DMA process be sent to the Strategic Director for Business Services for consideration.

The Strategic Director for Business Services to share savings identified through the South East Business Services Partnership with the Committee when available.

Recommendations:

None.

Select Committee Next Steps:

None.

94/14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 10]

The next Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be held on Wednesday 3 December at 10.00am.

Meeting ended at: 12.29 pm

Chairman