

**Minutes of the meeting of the
Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
held on 10th July 2013**

Present

Members: Councillor Nicola Davies
Councillor Martin Heatley (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Phillip Morris-Jones
Councillor Bernard Kirton
Councillor Keith Kondakor
Councillor Chris Saint
Councillor June Tandy (Chair)
Councillor Alan Webb
Councillor Mary Webb
Councillor Chris Williams

Other Councillors: Councillor Alan Cockburn, Deputy Leader
Councillor Izzi Seccombe – Leader
Councillor Colin Hayfield, Portfolio Holder, Customers
Councillor Jeff Clarke – Portfolio Holder, Corporate
Business and Environment

Officers: Georgina Atkinson, Democratic Services Team Leader
John Betts, Head of Finance
Kushal Birla, Head of Customer Service
David Carter, Strategic Director, Resources Group
Phil Evans, Head of Service Improvement and Change
Management
Jim Graham, Chief Executive
Greta Needham, Head of Law and Governance
Virginia Rennie, Group Accountant
Garry Rollason, Chief Risk and Assurance Manager
Spencer Payne, Corporate Research Manager

1. General

(1) Apologies

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Neil Dirveiks.

(2) Members' Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

(3) Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 20th February 2013 and the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 21st May 2013

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The Board agreed that the minutes of the meetings held on 20th February 2013 and 21st May 2013 be signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

2. Public Question Time

There were no public questions received or presented at the meeting.

3. Questions to Cabinet and Portfolio Holders

Members considered the Forward Plan of decisions by Cabinet and the Portfolio Holders.

In response to a question raised regarding 'Lease of Horsa Building, Nuneaton' which was scheduled for Cabinet decision on 18th July 2013, Councillor Clarke explained that the lease to the Veterans Contact Point in Nuneaton Town Hall had expired; therefore, this decision would look to assign them a lease for alternative accommodation.

The Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to note the decisions.

4. Organisational Health Report – End of Year 2012/13

John Betts, Head of Corporate Finance, presented the Committee with an overview of the End of Year 2012/13 report which highlighted the County Council's finance, performance, and risk information for April 2012 to March 2013. He explained that the End of Year report used the same format as the quarterly reports and provided an outline of the County Council's overall financial position, together with specific service-level information including budget variations and headline data.

Members were invited to comment on the format of the Organisational Health report and consider whether the presentation was appropriate for members and provided the right balance of detail. In response, the Committee agreed that the existing format was suitable and enabled key issues to be easily identified.

Following questioning from the Committee, the following points were noted:

- 1) As the tender exercise for the NUCKLE project had not yet commenced, there was no financial impact on the County Council at present, beyond that currently budgeted, and it would continue to be project managed by Coventry City Council.

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- 2) Cabinet approval was required to authorise the use of £8.151 million to repay borrowing in 2013/14. This was separate from corporate borrowing and specifically related to the authorisation of services to use reserves to repay self-financed borrowing.
- 3) There was a concern that over 50 per cent of underperforming 'red' indicators related to the 'Community and Customers', 'Safety and Protection' and 'Care and Independence' Ambitions. The Leader assured that these targets were being robustly monitored and had been brought to the attention of the Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to:

- 1) Request that the existing format and presentation of the quarterly Organisational Health report continue; and
- 2) Recommend that the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees consider the sections of the Organisational Health report relevant to their remit.

5. Annual Governance Statement 2012/13

A copy of the draft Annual Governance Statement 2012/13 was presented to the Committee. Greta Needham, Head of Law and Governance, explained that the document, which had been shared with the external auditors (Grant Thornton), provided a summary of the County Council's internal control and risk management procedures. The final version of the document would be presented to September 2013 meetings of the Audit and Standards Committee, Cabinet and Council for approval.

The Chair commended Greta Needham and Legal Services team for their work following the Atherstone-on-Stour fire tragedy.

A discussion took place regarding the governance arrangements of the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP). Members were advised that this was included in the Annual Governance Statement as a key challenge and work would continue with key partners to ensure that governance arrangements were accepted by all parties.

The Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to:

- 1) Note the key challenges that had been identified by the Evaluation Panel;

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- 2) Recommend that the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Business and Environment develop an effective working relationship with the Coroner;
- 3) Request that a seminar on the CWLEP be provided for all members and that the invitation be extended to members from the District and Borough Councils and Coventry City Council; and
- 4) Request further consideration of joint scrutiny options with the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee with regard to the CWLEP.

6. Development of the Organisational Plan 2014-18

David Carter, Strategic Director for Resources Group, referred to the report to Cabinet on 18th July 2013, which outlined the process and timeframe for the development of the Organisational Plan 2014-18. It was reported that at present, the key priorities outlined in the Plan were on track to be discussed by members at Council on 26th September in order to have final approval of the Organisational Plan at Budget Council in February 2014.

It was reported that Section 3 of the report outlined the assessment of the County Council's financial position to 2017/18. This included the ten per cent reduction in funding as announced in the 2015/16 Spending Review and would be further adjusted in line with government funding changes.

In response to a question raised regarding the cost of inflation, John Betts explained that the figures detailed in Section 3 of the report reflected an average cost of inflation across all Council activities and included an estimate of pay awards for County Council employees.

The Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to note the report.

7. Customer Service Business Unit

Kushal Birla, Head of Customer Services, referred to the report which outlined of the role and responsibilities of the Customer Service Business Unit.

In response to a question raised, Kushal Birla clarified that 'Warwickshire Direct' encompassed the One Stops Shops and the 'One Front Door' policy. She agreed that consistency in the terminology would be achieved for all future reports.

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The Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to note the report.

8. Work Programme 2013/14

The Chair presented the Committee with the proposed Work Programme for 2013/14 and invited members to suggest additional items for consideration at future meetings.

The Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed:

- 1) The proposed Work Programme 2013/14;
- 2) The proposed Action Plan; and
- 3) To request further consideration of joint scrutiny options with the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the Community Infrastructure Levy.

9. Any Urgent Items

There were no urgent matters raised for discussion.

10. Date of Next Meeting

The Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted that the date of the next meeting had been scheduled for 16th October 2013.

The Committee rose at 3.15 p.m.

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Chair