Minutes of the meeting of the

Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

held on 11 February 2015

Present

Members: Councillor Nicola Davies
                 Councillor Neil Dirveiks
                 Councillor Peter Fowler
                 Councillor Keith Kondakor
                 Councillor Keith Lloyd
                 Councillor Phillip Morris-Jones
                 Councillor Chris Saint
                 Councillor June Tandy (Chair)
                 Councillor Alan Webb

Other Councillors: Councillor Richard Chattaway.

Officers: Elizabeth Abbott, Business Partner – Planning, Performance
                 and Improvement
                 John Betts, Head of Finance
                 Kushal Birla, Head of Customer Service
                 David Carter, Strategic Director, Resources Group
                 Marcus Herron, Service Manager, Service Development &
                 Assurance
                 Tricia Morrison, Acting Head of Service, Service Improvement &
                 Change Management
                 Paul Spencer, Democratic Services Officer

1.   General

(1)   Apologies

Councillor John Appleton

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

None.

(3)   Minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 25 November 2014

The Committee agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on
4 September 2014 be signed by the Chair as a true and

accurate record, subject to an alteration on page nine, to correct the start time of the meeting on 11 February 2015 to 2pm.

The Chair reported on matters arising from the last minutes. Members had been invited to undertake a tour of Old Shire Hall. Briefing notes had been circulated regarding the Capital Programme and slippage, an action plan for responding to complaints in Social Care services and on the Community Infrastructure Levy. A report on property protocols would be provided to the meeting on 13 May 2015.

With regard to the KNUCKLE project and providing an update on the commencement date and schedule of works, it was suggested that this be provided to all members, not just members of the Committee

2. Public Question Time

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

3. Questions to Cabinet and Portfolio Holders

The Chair noted that no Portfolio Holders were present. Councillor Chattaway was in attendance to submit a question. The Chair would raise their absence at the Leaders' Liaison Group the following day.

4. One Organisational Plan Quarter 3 Progress Report

John Betts, Head of Finance introduced the One Organisational Plan report for quarter three (April – December 2014). He explained the documents appended to the report including the report considered by Cabinet on 27 January, dashboard information and detailed business unit background information relevant to the remit of the Committee. There were no overspends for services falling within the remit of the Committee and an outline was given of underspends in three areas, which were within tolerances.

Tricia Morrison, Acting Head of Service, Service Improvement & Change Management referred members to a circulated briefing note on slippage in the Capital Programme and a key messages document for the quarter three progress report. The Chair noted that several documents had been circulated immediately prior to the meeting. If members needed to ask further questions after the meeting, having read this documentation, she asked that they copy her in to the correspondence.

Members submitted questions and sought further information on the following areas, with responses provided as indicated:

- Challenges from the Local Government Ombudsman particularly relating to 'Blue Badge' applications. A review of reporting categories and a more assertive approach by the Ombudsman had increased the number of challenges received, making year-on-year comparisons no longer possible. Discussions with other authorities showed a similar trend across the region.
- A new measure for the outcome "high quality, needs based public services are deployed effectively and efficiently" was discussed, particularly the planned approach to establish baseline data.
- Levels of sickness absence. There had been a slight increase when compared to the data for the previous year. A member requested a breakdown showing the number of lost days each year and the service area where the employee worked. It was noted that the highest absence reason was stress related illness, but there was a projected underspend on occupational health services.
- On the performance commentary, an improved position was reported from that shown for the previous quarter. A member noted that information was not available on the status of one of the 14 key business outcomes. This would be researched and provided to members.
- The commissioning approach to service delivery was discussed. This is a new global measure with no baseline information being available presently. A business case would be required for each service area where adopting a commissioning approach was proposed, to show that there was a saving or greater benefit.
- Levels of borrowing and slippage were discussed, together with the use of reserves. The points were noted and budget managers were asked to review the profile of actual expenditure. Whilst reasons given for slippage were reasonable and due to a variety of internal and external factors, there was a need to ensure expenditure profiles were more accurate.
- The position on improving broadband services in Warwickshire was clarified. Presently, phase one was progressing well and was ahead of time. Further details could be provided on phases two and three, which was anticipated to be completed during 2017/18 at the earliest. Some of the detailed information held by the Authority was commercially sensitive.

Resolved:

That the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the report and appendices in the One Organisational Plan Quarter three progress report.

5. Client Information Systems - Project Update

Marcus Herron, Service Manager, Service Development & Assurance presented this item. Background was provided on the decision to replace the core IT systems and databases that support Social Care and Education. The decisions on procurement had been delegated to two strategic directors, with Council requesting that an update be provided to this Committee.

The report outlined the progress to date. The procurement of Corelogic's Mosaic product as the new social care system followed soft market testing, visits to and discussions with other authorities and a comprehensive four week assessment of two shortlisted suppliers. The project was progressing over two phases, with the procurement and completion of an education system by February 2015 and the implementation of the Mosaic product for social care by December 2015. Whilst some delays had been experienced, the project was broadly on time. The report emphasised the information governance focus, the predicted budget savings on the contract cost and ongoing revenue savings. Further sections of the report looked at key risks and mitigations, together with the timescales for completion of the project.

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

1) Assurances were sought that the system would operate correctly when it went live. There would be an audit quality control assurance process and extensive user acceptance testing against sample cases before the new system was implemented.

2) The rationale for replacing the IT system was discussed. A key aspect was the need for flexibility and this system would help integration of service delivery.

3) The ability of the system to share appropriate information (with suitable safeguards), with health and third sector bodies such as Barnardos was discussed.

4) The need for additional infrastructure at Children's centres was questioned. This would need to be researched, but it was noted that infrastructure was not within the scope of the current project.

Resolved:

That the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the information contained in the report.

6. Work Programme 2015/16

The Committee reviewed its work programme for the remainder of the municipal year, with the Chair inviting suggestions for additional scrutiny areas.

The value of the site visits to smallholdings was stated, it being questioned whether a similar approach could be taken for the Council's commercial portfolio, with a tour and/or presentation. This could include the number, size and location of units, tenures and rental income. The Chair agreed that a presentation would be useful. It was noted that a review of this area was currently ongoing and the findings could be reported to the Committee's meeting in May or July, subject to the review being completed. It was agreed that this meeting could involve members of the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, given the regeneration and economic development aspects.

It was suggested that the Committee review broadband internet service provision for town centres, particularly for business premises. Members were advised that the County Council couldn't invest resources for broadband in commercial premises. Another point made was the lack of economic viability of providing broadband services to very remote rural domestic premises.

Clarification was provided on the planned reports to the Committee on the Council's property protocol and peppercorn rents. The revised policy would be presented at the May Committee before consideration by Cabinet and in November, the Committee could review the implications of any decision taken to not offer peppercorn rents to community groups.

An update was requested to the next meeting, on the concern raised at the November Committee (Minute No. 4, point 9), regarding the concerns expressed on the target for complaint handling and children's services.

Resolved:

That the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee agrees the additions to its work programme, as outlined above.

7. Urgent Matters

There were no urgent matters raised for discussion.

8.   Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee was confirmed as 13 May 2015 at 2p.m.

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Chair