

**Minutes of the meeting of the
Resources and Fire and Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee
held on 3rd December 2015**

Present

Members: Councillor John Appleton
Councillor Richard Chattaway (Replacing Matt Western)
Councillor Nicola Davies
Councillor Neil Dirveiks
Councillor Peter Fowler (Chair)
Councillor John Holland
Councillor Keith Kondakor
Councillor Phillip Morris-Jones
Councillor Chris Saint

Other Councillors: Alan Cockburn, Deputy Leader

Officers: Sally Baxter, Democratic Services Officer
Kushal Birla, Head of Customer Service
David Carter, Strategic Director, Resources Group
Tejay De Kretser, Business Development and Improvement
Manager
Sue Evans, Head of HR and Organisational Development
Karen Smith, Customer Relations Manager
Andy Hickmott, Chief Fire Officer
Tricia Morrison, Acting Head of Service
Rob Moyney, Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Gary Phillips, Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Virginia Rennie, Group Accountant
Steve Smith, Head of Physical Assets
Paul Williams, Democratic Services Team Leader.

1. General

(1) Apologies

Councillors Izzi Seccombe, Kam Kaur and Matt Western
(Councillor Richard Chattaway to replace for this meeting).

The Chair and the committees' best wishes were recorded for
Councillor Matt Western and that he has a speedy recovery.

**(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 17 September 2015

The Committee agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2015 be signed as a correct record.

Item 6 – A schedule detailing slippage, including thresholds, was still outstanding. This would be provided as soon as possible.

Item 8 – A member of the committee explained that the importance of compatible information systems was important for the development and success of the Multi- Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). It was suggested that the committee monitor the progress of the information system to ensure that it would be ready, in a timely manner, for the implementation of the MASH.

An update would be reported to the committee at the next meeting scheduled for 21st January 2016 with regard to the committee investigating the possibility of the council having an equity stake in businesses who receive assistance from the programme of Business Loans and Grants.

2. Public Question Time

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

3. Questions to Cabinet and Portfolio Holders

No questions were asked by the committee however, some discussion was had about the outcome of the Spending Review and the impact it could have on new modelling of spends. Councillor Cockburn stated that large savings still needed to be identified and further discussion was appropriate for Council. He also clarified that Peppercorn Rents would be considered at the Cabinet meeting scheduled for 26th January 2016.

4. Work Programme 2015/16

The committee considered the report and appendices which contained the work programme, and were invited to make suggestions of items to add to the programme. The Chair informed that a report explaining benchmarking of Fire and Rescue Services across England had been added to the Work Programme for consideration in January 2016. Also, an additional meeting had been arranged for 17th March 2016.

In response to a question, Andy Hickmott, Chief Fire Officer, highlighted that the report for consideration later at today's committee

meeting included information about recruitment. If members wanted more information, another report could be considered at a future meeting.

In response to a report suggestion, David Carter, Strategic Director for Resources, informed the meeting that a report regarding the National Living Wage and the financial impact it will have on Warwickshire County Council, was to be considered at a meeting of Council. Members may wish to wait and have a report at a later date to address anything coming out of this paper. A discussion ensued about potential working models including the impact on NJC spinal columns and budget implications.

Resolved:

That the Resources and Fire and Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee agree the 2015/16 Work Programme.

5. Future Reporting of the One Organisational Plan

Tricia Morrison, Acting Head of Service, introduced the report setting out what had been undertaken to identify how information and what information should be presented to committee. The new structure was designed to provide headline reporting and key messages that were within the remit of the committee.

Feedback on the new presentation of information which was being considered by the committee at Item 6 was welcomed. Future work would include developing and providing a suite of tailored dashboards for each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, and benchmarking information with other local authorities.

Resolved:

The Resources and Fire and Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee agree to note the report and the next steps as outlined in section 5 of the report.

6. 2015/16 One Organisational Plan – Quarter 2

Tricia Morrison, Acting head of Service, reiterated that the report had been designed in response to members' feedback and suggestions. The information provided headlines and key messages in relation to the remit of the committee to assist effective scrutiny and monitoring of performance.

An in-depth discussion took place about the number of service areas that were outside set tolerances therefore were reported as being red.

The committee considered the levels of red to be disappointing. The committee was reminded that the report used exception reporting thus would include areas primarily outside tolerances. Those service areas not in the report were meeting targets.

It was agreed that the format of the report was improved and had responded to Members requests for exception reporting. Other observations was that it was easier to identify areas for further scrutiny however, the report was a public document and would benefit from some commentary to add context and explain the nature of exception reporting and the performance of the authority.

In response to comments, Councillor Alan Cockburn informed that the target savings for the One Organisation Plan which was 18 months into the 4 year plan, were on target to be met despite challenges and reducing budgets.

In response to a question about Quarter 1 performance and why the figures were forecasts, David Carter explained that actual figures would not be available until year end. Forecasting allowed services to identify direction of performance and Heads of Service to manage accordingly.

The committee provided further feedback about the new format of the report and asked that when producing statistical information and figures, a consistent approach should be used to avoid confusion.

In response to a question regarding target groups for Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC), Andy Hickmott, Chief Fire Officer, clarified that the over 65's were the target group. Some non-target groups were receiving the HFSC; this was attributed to new legislation requiring landlord's to ensure that there is a working smoke alarm in privately rented accommodation. Andy Hickmott also provided clarification on the target savings for 2016-17 and 2017-18.

In response to a question, Kushal Birla, Head of Customer Service, provided an overview of work being undertaken with regard to Customer feedback to identify and address performance targets that were not being met. A full overview and discussion would be provided later in the meeting when considering the Customer Journey report.

Resolved:

That the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the report.

7. Integrated Peer Review Action Plan: Quarterly Progress Report

Tricia Morrison, Acting Head of Service, introduced the report and provided background information to the Integrated Peer Challenge

Action Plan. Warwickshire County Council commissioned three Peer Challenges in 2014/15 and feedback from each of the reviews were presented with recommendations. Five themes were derived from the recommendations: Commissioning, Customer Journey, Health & Social Care Integration, Community Capacity and Economic Growth.

Cabinet, at its' meeting on 16th July 2015, received the Action Plan and it was agreed that quarterly progress updates would be reported to both Cabinet and Resources and Fire and Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The first Progress report was considered by Cabinet on 12th November 2015 and the committee were being asked to consider the progress to date which was also available on the dashboard.

In response to a question about commissioning models, Tricia Morrison would provide specific examples of work to the committee but verbally informed that the People Group were looking to adopt outcome based models especially when working with multiple partners. **Tricia Morrison to provide.**

Tricia Morrison would also provide information about the areas of Warwickshire that have been identified for investment (Economic Growth theme). Timescales for the implementation of a Skills web portal to help link schools and businesses would also be provided. **Tricia Morrison to provide.**

Following discussion, the committee asked that information should be added to the Economic Growth theme to include the value and occupancy of starter units.

Resolved:

That the Resources and Fire and Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the report.

8. Customer Journey and Customer Feedback update

Kushal Birla, Head of Customer Service, introduced the report. Work began on the Corporate Customer Journey programme in January 2015 which identified four priority areas of work: Highways and Transport, Adult Social Care and Support, Children's Social Care and Safeguarding, Getting the Basics right. With regard to customer feedback, a system ('Contact us') would give service users the opportunity to provide feedback. The authority would use this function to report the outcome and response. It was anticipated that this would help with providing timely information.

Kushal Birla reported that work was well underway with the Highways and Transport priority and Adult Social Care. Transactional issues ie, issue reporting had been considered with regard to the first priority. She reported that they were concentrating on providing a 24/7 digital reporting system which would be used to give the public a mechanism for reporting issues and providing feedback on what action has been taken. There were 2 elements to the Adult Social Care; The Transformation Programme and work being undertaken about value in light of the transfer from the 'One Front Door' to the Contact Centre.

Progress on the adult social care customer journey mapping included defining the 'overarching, customer journey for Adult Social Care and defining a range of more detailed 'customer journeys'. The Customer Self-service Account was launched at the end of April 2015; to date, 23,828 accounts had been created.

In response to a comment from the committee, David Carter informed the committee that the decision to leave the Contact Centre services provided by WCC was taken by Warwick District Council (WDC). The service will cease March 2016 and WCC will support WDC through the transition stage.

In response to a question raised regarding the impact of MASH on the customer contact landscape, Kushal Birla reported that several measures had been taken including working with Adult Social Care and Children's Services. Adult social care was investigating the option to route into the Contact Centre and whether this was appropriate. Children's services were in discussions to identify what was appropriate to mitigate against inappropriate enquiries entering the system when they should be addressed via another mechanism.

The committee agreed that the Self-service account would be beneficial for residents and WCC. A further benefit would include a section where members of the public could see what work has been scheduled within a time frame. Following discussion, savings from street lighting and where they are allocated was discussed. Further information was requested. **Kushal Birla to action.**

With regard to retaining services for people that did not have access to I.T, Warwickshire One Direct One Stop Shops were still in operation in addition to doing work within the community to promote using technology. The committee welcomed this approach and highlighted the importance of being accessible to all sections of the community.

The committee highlighted that complaints with regard to children's social care were still reporting low levels and questioned what affect this could potentially have on the MASH. It was agreed that the committee would receive a report at a future meeting to monitor progress.

Resolved:

That the Resources and Fire and Rescue Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- i) Notes the report, and;
- ii) Receives a progress report on customer feedback within six months.

9. HR and Property Rationalisation

Steve Smith, Head of Physical Assets, introduced the report and referred to the list of 139 properties that had been disposed/ surrendered. The report was separated into two parts; information and updates on the Property Rationalisation Programme (PRP) and information regarding the way we work. It was important to consider the inter-relationship because the flexible ways of working agenda had influenced the PRP ie, employee mind-sets with regard to fixed desks, use of laptops instead of desk tops and locations they can work from.

Following questions from the committee, the following points were raised:

- A change in mind-sets of both officers and managers had resulted in working from home. Being outcome based ensured that productivity was the measure for effective working from home.
- Clarification was sought about the use of capital receipts. Property being disposed would generate capital and it would be beneficial for the committee to have information separated into capital and revenue. **Steve Smith to action.**
- Identification of property for disposal followed a procedure which included a report to the Portfolio Holder detailing the property, its value and a marketing strategy.
- Community value is considered when identifying potential properties for disposal/surrender. This helped balance the needs of the community and WCC.
- Modern and flexible working included working from other WCC or partner offices. An example was the provision of 'touchdown spaces', a list of which could be accessed on the intranet, which gave officers the space to work from where is closer to their location, as opposed to where the service was based. This helped increase productivity and supported the reducing the carbon footprint initiative.
- Officers working from home were provided with WCC mobile phones or were expected to provide contact details so that they could be contacted when required during the working day.
- A member of the committee thanked the Physical Assets Team for keeping him informed of disposals within his constituency,

the report reflected the information he previously had so was reassured that there were good levels of communication with members.

Resolved:

That the Resources and Fire and Rescue Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- i) Notes the report, and;
- ii) Receives information on the capital and revenue generated by the 139 disposed of or surrendered.

10. WFRS: A report on the operational impact of the revised response standards

Rob Moyney, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, referred the committee to the report and appendix. The Chief Fire Officer presented a report to the County Council on 24th September 2014 setting out the operational implications of the 2014–18 budget. At this meeting, Council agreed to receive a report to evaluate the impact of the revised response standards once they had been in operation for 6 months. This report would provide the evaluation.

Following the first Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) the response standards were simplified resulting in two response times to be measured; a 10 minute response time for urban areas and a 20 minute for rural areas. Clarification was provided on emergency priorities; Priority 1 were incidents that involved direct threat to life and Priority 2 were those where a building was on fire but there was no persons reported to be trapped within the building.

From a period of 6 months, starting from April 2015, the 10 minute response rate for Priority 1 and 2 incidents was met on average 74% of the time with an average response of 8.4 minutes. For the 15 minute response standard, it was below the 90% target at an average of 75%. Locations of incidents were presented on maps; red represented fires, green represented Road Traffic Accidents (RTA) and blue represented where special services were required.

Measures were in place to improve performance such as IDS recruitment, tracking software for fire engines and fire fighters and engines were deployed to areas where a gap was created because of attendance at an incident. Rob Moyney highlighted that the service was 2 years into 4 year budget plan and that performance was being managed on a weekly basis.

National interest and discussion regarding response times was creating concern about the decrease in response times. It was accepted that different response times would operate due to geography of areas but

had ways of working been identified for the remaining 2 years of the budget plan to manage the challenges faced by the budget. Rob Moyney reassured the committee that mechanisms were in place such as resources and people, to respond to the budget challenges. Andy Hickmott, Chief Fire Officer, clarified that responses' County wide had not decreased especially in urban areas and RTA's were not included in the pre-2014 monitoring process.

In response to questions from the committee, the following points were raised:

- Allocation of resources was considered to be cost effective when based on operational cover. Dynamic moving ensured that resources and people were situated where they needed to be.
- It would be useful to have information about incidents that were on the borders with other Fire and Rescue Services to see what the impact was on those areas that were on the border. It was clarified that if other services had a station or appliance nearer than WFRS, the neighbouring service would be asked to attend instead even if it was within Warwickshire.

The Chairman thanked officers for their attendance and on behalf of the committee, wished Gary Phillips all the best for the future following his impending departure from the service.

Resolved:

That the Resources and Fire and Rescue Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the report.

11. Urgent Matters

None.

12. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next Resources and Fire and Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee was confirmed as 21st January 2016 at 2p.m. in CR2, Shire Hall.

Closed 4.15 p.m.

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Chair

