

Minutes of the meeting of the Resources, Performance and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 6 June 2006.

Present:

Members of the Committee:

Councillor David Booth (Chair of Committee)
“ Bob Hicks (Vice-Chair)
“ George Atkinson
“ Les Caborn
“ Tom Cavanagh
“ Gordon Collett (replacing Philip Morris-Jones)
“ Chris Davis
“ Anne Forwood (replacing Sid Tooth)
“ Nina Knapman
“ Brian Moss
“ Heather Timms
“ John Vereker

Also in attendance

Councillor Alan Farnell (Leader of the Council)
Councillor Bob Stevens (Deputy Leader)
Councillor Peter Fowler (Performance and Development)

Officers:

Kushal Birla, Head of Customer Services,
David Carter, Strategic Director of Performance and Development.
Dave Clarke, Strategic Director of Resources
Pete Keeley, Member Services.
Graham Shaw, Financial Manager.
Paul Williams, Scrutiny Officer.

1. Election of Chair

Councillor Chris Davis moved, Councillor Nina Knapman seconded and it was Resolved:-

That Councillor David Booth be elected as Chair of the Resources, Performance and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2. Election of Deputy Chair.

Councillor Anne Forwood moved, Councillor Brian Moss seconded and it was Resolved:

That Councillor Bob Hicks be elected as Vice Chair of the Resources, Performance and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3. General

(1) Apologies.

None.

(2) Members' Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

Personal interests relating to any item on the agenda arising by virtue of the members serving as District/Borough councilors are declared below:

Councillor Tom Cavanagh, Member of Rugby Borough Council.
Councillor Les Caborn, Member of Warwick District Council.
Councillor Gordon Collett, Member of the Rugby Borough Council.
Councillor Chris Davis, Member of Warwick District Council.
Councillor Brian Moss, Member of the North Warwickshire Borough Council.
Councillor Heather Timms, Member of Rugby Borough Council.

(3) Remit of the Resources, Performance and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee noted its remit to advise on the development of policies and to scrutinise performance in relation to finance, property, e-government and information technology, traded services, facilities management services, customer service and access, change management, organisational development, information management, the development and coordination of partnership working including local area agreements and community partnerships, human resources, communication, corporate and community governance and law and probity.

4. Strategic Direction

The Committee received a presentation from Councillor Alan Farnell (Leader of the Council) and Councillor Bob Stevens (Deputy Leader) on the strategic direction and targets given to the portfolio holders for Performance and Development and Resources for 2006 through to 2009.

During his presentation Councillor Alan Farnell made the following points:-

Member should bear in mind that changes were continuing following the reduction in departments down to 6 directorates.

Major aims :-

- Tackle medium term financial planning. This was being considered by Strategic Directors Management Team before being developed into the budget for 2007/08.
- It was crucial that to get the structure of the new Directorates correct and all posts would need to be in place. This will need time to embed.
- Accommodation strategy would be prepared. Phase I of the Saltisford development was on track and Phase II would be occupied at end of year or early next year
- The Corporate Property Strategy was being developed
- The Customer Access Policy would be reviewed.

- Strategy for the use of capital receipts was being developed for October
- The HRMS payroll project was on track for full implementation during August
- Preparations were being made for single status
- Work would be needed to address the 9% reduction in the number of school meals following recent TV coverage of meals provided nationally
- With regard to the management of County Buildings a facilities manager was being appointed.
- Property and IT funding strategy needed to be developed to prepare for the introduction of new ways of working.

During his introduction Councillor Bob Stevens drew attention to work being undertaken in the development of Partnership working and Local Area Agreements and the importance of the LSPs. He outlined the following themes:

- Improve performance management of council
- Strengthen relationships with voluntary and community sectors including town and parish councils
- Develop the profile of the Council as a “can do” Council making people proud of being associated with.
- Customer Service /One stop shops with the goal of access
- HR future examination of several aspects including the progress with single status and the development of absence management.

He also stressed the continuing importance of strong governance and probity arrangements.

During the following discussion the following points were raised:

- (1) Members requested that clear organisational charts relating to the new Directorates should be provided at the earliest opportunity.
- (2) There should be clear indication of the Council’s employment practices which should be pursued in positive way
- (3) The new facilities management across all buildings will mean more efficient management of buildings
- (4) The new facilities manager post was being appointed to be funded without additional budget provisions. Facilities management will apply to across all council buildings and will result in more efficient use of buildings.
- (5) The Council should influence the use of school buildings for community uses.
- (6) Savings would result from the establishment of the Customer Centre and HRMS.
- (7) The role of scrutiny was being reviewed

- (8) With regard to partnership working the importance of partners feeling they have a level of ownership was stressed. Budgetary responsibilities would assist in this respect.
- (9) Members will need briefing about Local Access Agreements and where we are starting from. If possible this would be in the form of a report to the July meeting of the Committee.
- (10) Members noted that the Capital and Property Panel was still in existence.

The Chair thanked both Councillor Alan Farnell and Bob Stevens for their presentations to the committee.

5. The Minutes of the meeting of the former Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 25th April 2006

Members noted the following points:-

- o Dave Clarke, the Strategic Director of Resources, intended to submit a report about ICT in Schools to a future meeting.
- o With regard to Minute 8 – Debt recovery update, the reference to debt at the 31st March being 3.7% related to the total debt of 3.7%.

6. Public Question Time (Standing Order 34)

There were no public questions.

The Chair reported that, following consultation with other members of the Committee, he had signed an urgency notice relating to a decision the Cabinet took on the 25 May 2006 concerning The Saltisford office development.

7. Development of Customer Access for the County Council

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development which informed members of progress in regards to the customer service and access agenda with specific focus on the development of the Customer Service Centre and the existing One Stop Shop at Kenilworth.

Following introductory comments from Kushal Birla, Head of Customer Service and Access members discussed several aspects of the report. The following points were made during the discussion:-

- o 80% answered at first point of call.
- o It was possible that some calls would be put through to extensions with answer phones. Members were advised that the individual services decided how calls were answered.
- o A report was to be submitted to the Cabinet on delivering the Customer Service and Access Strategy.

- A visit to the Customer Service Centre and Warwickshire Direct at Kenilworth One Stop Shop and Customer Service Centre would be arranged for a group of members.
- There was a need for integration to back office ICT systems.
- Use of the website for on-line transactions would be integral to delivering the customer service strategy.
- Public self service could lower calls to the centre.
- The first point of contact resolution was low for the Library Service as a number of library processes were not fully supported by the web e.g booking computers. This would be developed in the future.

Agreed:-

- (1) That the a report be submitted on the potential for the website to deliver services for the public i.e. on line transactions.
- (2) That arrangements be made for a group of members to visit the Customer Centre and the One Stop Shop at Kenilworth.
- (3) That the Committee continues to receive regular reports on progress with the Customer Service and Access agenda.

8. Provisional Items for Future Meetings

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development which detailed items for future meetings of the Committee and Forward Plan items relevant to the work of the Committee.

The following points were made:

- Members noted that Councillor Alan Cockburn, Cabinet Member for Resources and Councillor Peter Fowler, Cabinet Member for Performance and Development had been invited to future meetings of the Committee to outline their future intentions.
- In response to comments from Councillor George Atkinson, Dave Clarke, Strategic Director of Resources, indicated that it would be difficult to report details of contractual arrangements relating to the payment of invoices, particularly with the PCTs, because of the differences that existed between the various contracts.
- With regard to the reduced demand for school meals as a result of media coverage, a report would be submitted to a future meeting dealing with issues.
- Members noted that, with regard to school meals provision, there was overlap in the responsibilities of the Committee and the Childrens, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Dave Clarke indicated that a report on Single Status would be submitted to a future meeting depending on the time table for Single Status.

- A report would be submitted on the Council's ICT Strategy. This would include the integration of systems and new ways of working.

That other items referred to in the report were noted.

9. Any Other Items

there were no urgent items.

The Committee rose at 11.14 p.m.

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Chair