

Minutes of the meeting of the Resources, Performance and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 25 July 2006.

**Present:**

**Members of the Committee:**

Councillor David Booth (Chair of Committee)  
“ Bob Hicks (Vice-Chair)  
“ George Atkinson  
“ Les Caborn  
“ Tom Cavanagh  
“ Chris Davis  
“ Brian Moss  
“ Heather Timms  
“ Sid Tooth  
“ John Vereker

**Also in attendance**

Councillor Alan Cockburn (Resources)  
Councillor Peter Fowler (Performance and Development)

**Officers:**

Julia Brook, Organisation Development Manager  
David Carter, Strategic Director of Performance and Development  
Dave Clarke, Strategic Director of Resources  
Louise Denton, Assistant to Liberal Democrat Group  
Nick Gower-Johnson, County Partnerships Manager  
Mandeep Kalsi, Administrative Officer  
Sue Littlewood, Corporate Planning Manager  
Ann Mawdsley, Member Services  
Bob Perks, Head of Human Resources  
Jane Pollard, Overview and Scrutiny Manager  
Steve Smith, Head of Property  
Paul Williams, Scrutiny Officer.

**1. General**

**(1) Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Collett and Knapman.

**(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 councillors 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.  
Councillor Sid Tooth, Member of the North Warwickshire Borough Council.

**(3) Minutes of the meeting held on the 6 June 2006 (copy attached) and Matters Arising**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Resources, Performance and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 6 June 2006 be approved with the following correction:

**Page 4 – 5. The Minutes of the meeting of the former Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 25<sup>th</sup> April 2006 – second bullet point.**

The words “related to the total debt of 3.7%” be replaced with the words “of the total debt raised”.

**There were no matters arising**

**2. Resources Portfolio**

The Committee received a presentation from Councillor Alan Cockburn (Portfolio Holder for Resources) on the portfolio and the way forward.

During his presentation Councillor Cockburn noted that the Resources Directorate had the following ten targets for 2006/07:

- To define the Medium Term Financial Planning Framework. This would require the prioritisation of services for investment and disinvestment due to limited resources and a high demand from some services such as Adult Services.
- To implement a revised organisational structure for the Resources Directorate. The merging of three Departments required a rationalisation of common processes. This was being achieved using the EFQM model and making savings where possible.
- To define an Accommodation Strategy for all centrally based Council staff. The seminar held in June had enabled Members to discuss the way forward and it was noted that decisions needed to be made on accommodation in Shire Hall to meet the deadline of March 2007.
- To review the Corporate Property Strategy in light of Customer Access and Neighbourhood Services. The public and political groups were all in favour of One Stop Shops but the establishment of these required resources.

- To produce a Capital Receipts Strategy.
- To complete the implementation of the first phase of the HRMS Payroll System which was expected to come online in September 2006.
- To produce a strategy to address the consequential impact of Single Status on the Catering and Cleaning Services. Single Status had been anticipated for some time and the Council could be vulnerable to equal pay claims particularly in the catering section. This was made worse by the 9% decrease in school meal demand since the Jamie Oliver programmes on school meals.
- To determine resources for the implementation of Management Services.
- To produce an integrated Property IT Strategy to include areas such as hot desking, home working and mobile working.
- To develop a revised 10-year ICT Strategy, building on work carried out by Deloites but would looking far enough forward to beyond the life of current equipment and needing to be dynamic and flexible.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were made:

1. Decisions had not yet been made on disinvestment and a report on the way forward would be taken to the Leaders Liaison Group and the Strategic Management Team following discussion by the political groups. It was agreed that if the Council was going to achieve its priorities Members would have to work together.
2. Reports should focus on the benefits as well as the difficulties of single status.
3. Where possible, the Corporate Property Strategy needed to be logical and compatible with staff within Directorates being close together geographically.

The Chair thanked Councillor Cockburn for his presentation and noted that Councillor Fowler would give a presentation on his portfolio at the next meeting.

### **3. Public Question Time (Standing Order 34)**

There were no public questions.

### **4. Annual Report of WCC Complaints**

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development setting out the detailed analysis of the complaints received by the Council over the last year (April 2005 – March 2006).

Sue Littlewood, Corporate Planning Manager, made the following points:

- a. The report related to the old Departments and complaints and compliments were dealt with in more detail in the Performance Reports.
- b. Analysis of the overall increase in the number of complaints gave the following reasons:

- The system for recording complaints in the Education Department had been revised to include informal and Stage 1 complaints.
  - There were a number of websites available giving advice to children and young people on how to take complaints forward.
  - While there appeared to be not specific reason for the increase in Social Services complaints, this was generally echoed by other authorities across the country.
- c. Most complaints had been dealt with at the informal stage, which was an objective of the Council.
- d. The overall number of compliments had increased.

During the ensuing discussion the following issues were raised:

1. Members requested Sue Littlewood to report on whether the complaints received were for services undertaken by Social Services or included services delivered by outside agencies.
2. The complaints about school meals only included those made directly to the Council.
3. All complaints received in respect of bus services were logged and taken up with the operators.
4. Decisions made at the Ombudsman's discretion were not dismissed decisions but where the Ombudsman had, for a variety of reasons, decided not to proceed. Premature complaints were where the Ombudsman felt an issue had not been taken fully through the Council's procedures and returned the case to the Council

Agreed:

- (1) That Members note the Council's full year complaints figures together with the detailed analysis of the complaints data.
- (2) To receive a further report outlining changes made through the complaints procedure and giving additional information on complaints referred to the Ombudsman.

## **5. Review of Scrutiny**

Members considered the report of the Strategic Director for Performance and Development advising Members of the arrangements for the review of the overview and scrutiny function and seeking views on the future role of overview and scrutiny and how its effectiveness could be improved. The Chair urged Members to complete the questionnaires they had received by the end of the week.

Jane Pollard made the following points:

1. The Scrutiny Review was expected to be complete by September with a final report to full Council on 31 October.
2. A seminar on Scrutiny had been arranged for all Members on the afternoon of 13 September.
3. The report was intended to stimulate the debate for Members in terms of what changes they would like to see and how they would like scrutiny to move forward.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were highlighted:

- a. The effectiveness of scrutiny relied on Members taking ownership and proper management by the Chair.
- b. Members agreed that having opposition chairs worked well but that the process needed to be as apolitical as possible.
- c. Members needed to work as individuals as well as in smaller groups and in select committees such as the Avon River and Winter Gritting Reviews. Concern was raised at the time-consuming nature of some types of scrutiny particularly when done on top of formal meetings.
- d. Looking at best practice in like counties would be useful.
- e. Public interest was an area Members had responsibility for and it was suggested that invitations to interest groups could be one way of increasing engagement.
- f. Members agreed that it would be useful to sit on committees with representatives from partner agencies on an equal basis. Nick Gower-Johnson noted that the Local Area Agreement Steering Group had a multi-agency representation, which had set up a task and finish group to look into governance issues. A progress report would be brought to the November meeting of the Committee.
- g. Overview and Scrutiny was a useful tool provided reports were received early, the Committee set targets and received feedback within agreed timescales for monitoring.
- h. There was a need to engage the interest of Cabinet Members.
- i. Members noted their concern at the reactive nature of scrutiny and agreed that there were areas that could be identified for scrutiny to be carried out over a length of time rather than always monitoring the past.

Agreed:

That the Committee endorse the report.

## **6. Partnerships and Partnership Working**

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Performance and Development seeking to inform Members of the key work that is being undertaken by the Partnerships and Communities Team.

Nick Gower-Johnson, County Partnerships Manager, noted that this was a fast moving area and a further report would be brought to the Committee in late autumn (see 5.e above) and Member input would be welcomed as the area developed.

During the ensuing discussion the following issues were raised:

- i. A review was being undertaken of partnership working to ensure its effectiveness in improving services and would take into account the Government White Paper expected in October and the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group.
- ii. A toolkit was being developed for Departments to assess the partnerships they were involved in.

The discussion that following highlighted the following points:

1. The “pump-priming” grant of £1,275,500 had already been allocated in an agreed way between the Council and partners.

2. The performance reward grant for achieving 100% of all enhanced targets would be an asset and held in trust for LPSA2.
3. Projects felt there was generally enough funding to reach targets, but there was no funding to cover officer time.
4. LAA partners had agreed that Stronger Communities and Safer Communities should be split to begin with but the intention had always been for these areas to ultimately sit together.
5. A lot of activity was taking place at the level of the thematic groups and while there were mandatory Government targets, these needed to be made relevant to residents of Warwickshire and block leaders had been briefed to be realistic in terms of outcomes.
6. While the vision was being developed, it had to be a process that brought about real improvement in terms of outcomes for local people.
7. The partnership needed to be looked at from the citizen's end and they needed to be informed and know who was responsible for delivery of services and where those services were coming from.
8. Members requested that the next report to Committee include areas working effectively and why and where they were not working, what could be done.
9. Political proportionality did not apply to LAAs and it was agreed that partnerships should work through consensus with no one group dominating the partnership.

Agreed:

- (1) That the Committee note the report.
- (2) That a progress report be brought to the Committee in the late autumn, including the wider issue of partnership
- (3) A further report is made to this Committee in early 2007 to describe progress made – particularly in relation to the development of the Warwickshire Local Area Agreement.

## **7. Corporate Asset Management Plan Performance Indicator Report**

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Resources asking the Committee to note and make observations on the Asset Management Plan Property Performance Indicators prior to submission to the Cabinet for approval before submission to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Dave Clarke noted the key messages from the report:

- i. priority work was being addressed properly and to date there was no urgent work outstanding.
- ii. the property condition was in the main satisfactory.
- iii. comparative information showed that Warwickshire compared well to other authorities.

He added that there was a need to develop a new Capital Receipts Strategy, which would be driven by property performance.

During the ensuing discussion the following issues were raised:

1. Phil Evans, the newly appointed Head of Service for Traded Services and Facilities would pull together more complete information on items such as management costs for future reports.
2. The large variance in figures reflected the extent to which seriously deteriorating; underperforming properties were being patched up.
3. Properties were given an overall ranking to identify performability, compiled from scores on condition and suitability.
4. There came a time with any asset when the performance justified a change. Northgate Street was a good example of this.
5. The Committee agreed to receive a report at the November meeting on the Capital Receipt Strategy.

Agreed:

That the Resources, Performance and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the report and the Corporate AMP Performance Indicator Report at Appendix A.

## **8. Performance and Development Asset Management Report**

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development summarising the property aims of the Performance and Development Directorate and giving a detailed audit of its current and future accommodation requirements.

David Carter noted the urgency for decisions to be made regarding property. He added that while staff from the Children, Young People and Families Directorate were moving out of Northgate Street, there were 30-40 Performance and Development staff waiting to move into Northgate Street on a temporary basis as it was preferable to their current accommodation.

Agreed:

That the Committee notes the Asset Management Plan and implementation programme for the Performance and Development Directorate.

## **9. Property Condition: Maintenance Backlog**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Resources drawing attention to the current condition of the Council's property stock to enable planned maintenance work to be costed, prioritised and planned, and recommends additional investment.

Dave Clarke noted that the report had been brought to Members to put the deteriorating property issue in context for the forthcoming budget round and would inform Members for their budget consideration later in the year.

The Chair requested that when the information was presented during the budget process the following needed to be included:

- Examples of what gradings meant in real terms

- What savings could be made long-term through maintenance.

Agreed:

- (1) That the Committee note the report.
- (2) That the consideration of a continuous annual increase to the Revenue and Capital Planned Maintenance Investment to address the condition issues and to prevent further deterioration of the Warwickshire County Council property stock, be deferred to the next report.

## **10. Public Consultation on 2007/08 Budget and Council Tax**

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Resources proposing a process for conducting public consultation on the 2007/08 Budget and Council Tax.

Dave Clarke proposed using a process similar to last year, which involved collating information from questionnaires and officers presenting the budget at the Area Committees, which had worked well. He added that an invitation would be extended to the District/Borough Councils and the Police to participate in the process.

Agreed:

That the Committee:

- (1) Endorse the proposals for public consultation on the 2007/08 Budget and Council Tax outlined in Section 3 of the report, and
- (2) Support the involvement of the Police and District/Borough Councils in the process.

## **11(1) Chief Executive's Department – Full Year Performance Report 2005/06**

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development summarising the performance of the former Chief Executive's Department for 2005/06 which relates to Corporate Objective 6: *Ensure sound governance of the County Council to provide accessible, responsive and well-managed services.*

During the ensuing discussion the following points were raised:

1. Inductions for staff in terms of their own jobs and directorates were done straight away and every effort would be made to carry out corporate inductions sooner. Members agreed that both inductions were equally important for staff and should have the same priority.
2. The process for calculating the percentage of letters and e-mails responded to within the target time had been suspended as it was considered unreliable. The monitoring in this area was now being done more systematically and was expected to show improved results.
3. The Domino Dot pilot run by Property Services to scan documents proved to be inappropriate and not sufficiently resilient to meet their



requirements. Other produces would be reviewed as part of the ICT Strategy.

4. The reluctance of some frontline staff to have their full name on display was noted and it was suggested that they could be supplied with a name badge displaying their first names only.

Agreed:

The Resources, Performance and Development O&S:

- a) note the Performance Report submitted by the former Chief Executive's department for the full-year 2005/06
- b) endorse the proposed remedial actions.

#### **11(2) CAMS, Property Services & Treasurers Full Year Performance Report 2005/06**

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Resources summarising the combined Full Year Performance Report 2005/06 for CAMS, Property Services and Treasurers Departments as they were prior to April 2006.

Dave Clarke noted that future reports would be combined and that performance had held well in difficult circumstances.

Agreed:

The Resources, Performance and Development O&S:

- a) note the Performance Reports submitted by the former CAMS, Property Services and Treasurers Departments for the full-year 2005/06
- b) endorse the proposed remedial actions.

#### **12(1) Using the EFQM Excellence Model to Assess Departments**

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development giving background on how the County Council uses the EFQM Excellence Model to assess departments. It serves as an introduction to the reports on assessments from individual departments.

David Carter noted that this was an introductory report, which had gone to all Overview and Scrutiny Committees, setting the scene for the departmental EFQM assessments.

Members agreed that they should receive a report on the self-assessments carried out by Directorates in interim years between the formal EFQM assessments.

Agreed:

That the Resources, Performance & Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- note the background information on the Council's EFQM process as context for considering the assessment feedback reports on this agenda
- note that the process is currently under review
- receive a report on self-assessments carried out by Directorates.

### **12(2) Chief Executive's Department EFQM assessment 2005**

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development providing information on the outcome of the Chief Executive's Department EFQM assessment undertaken in 2005.

Agreed:

That the Resources, Performance & Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- note the outcome of the Chief Executive's department's assessment
- endorse the improvement actions identified

### **12(3) 2005 EFQM Assessment of the CAMS, Property Services and Treasurer's Departments**

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Resources outlining the strengths and areas for consideration identified during the recent EFQM assessments of CAMS, Property Services and Treasurer's. Development Activities would be consolidated into a combined plan for the Resource Directorate.

Dave Clarke said that Members needed to look at the trend in the overall score to determine performance as individual scores could be swayed by, for example, low levels of input.

Agreed:

That the Committee note the progress made in the use of the EFQM model by the CAMS, Property Services and Treasurer's Departments, and the consolidated development activities that the Resources Directorate have incorporated into the 2006/07 Business Plan.

### **13. Debt Recovery – Progress Report**

The Committee considered the Joint Report of the Strategic Director of Resources and Strategic Director of Performance and Development in respect of debt recovery.

Dave Clarke noted that while the Council was generally doing well with debt recovery, one area of difficulty was in respect to South Warwickshire PCT. A letter had been sent requesting a meeting with the PCT. He added that the

Council continued to provide services to South Warwickshire PCT clients and it was important that services to vulnerable people were not interrupted.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were raised:

1. The Directorate had previously been asked to widen its comparators beyond just Leicestershire County Council and this had been done.
2. Members requested an information item be included on the agenda following outstanding debts throughout the year and recording progress made with South Warwickshire PCT.

Agreed:

That progress in relation to debt recovery is noted.

## **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

### **14. Human Resources – an update on development of the HR function following the Best Value Review**

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development outlining progress in developing the HR function.

Agreed:

That the progress in developing the HR function set out in this be report be noted.

### **15. 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:

- The report on the “Access Strategy” scheduled for 19 September would be produced by the Performance and Development Directorate and needed to include recommendations.
- The report on “The Demand for School Meals” would be considered at the meeting on 19 September. The Chair requested that, before that meeting, all Members on the Committee sign up to attend their local school and have a school meal to get an idea of what was happening on the ground. Dave Clarke agreed that Sandra Russell would co-ordinate Members and schools and Members were asked to give their names to Paul Williams. He added that this would be a good press opportunity and officers from Communications would be asked to cover some of the visits.
- It was agreed that the following reports be added to the list of “Unallocated” Reports:
  - ICT Strategy Review (Resources)

- Update of HRMS (Resources) – (early 2007 to allow Phase 2 time to work)
- o The Single Status Progress Report (P&D) should include a briefing about the issues faced.
- o A report on the Notes Crash in June would be brought to the Committee later in the year.

The other items referred to in the report were noted.

## **9. Any Other Items**

The Chair reported that together with Councillors Atkinson, Fowler and Hicks he had visited the Customer Service Centre and the Kenilworth Direct One Stop Shop. He noted that the visits had been a positive experience but that the Kenilworth One Stop Shop was not signposted and people using the facility were unaware of the concept.

Dave Clarke gave a verbal report to the Committee on the recent lotus notes crash describing it as the most significant IT problem the Council had experienced in the last 10 years and something the IT Services had had to work extremely hard to try to solve. He added that the GPS system worked on cycles of 1024 weeks and not dates and for an unexplained reason, on 11 June the system had sought the next clear date in a new cycle and picked up the 25 January 2026. This had caused the Notes Application to archive considerable amounts of information. The position had been recovered by reverting to information stored at the last back up. Dave Clarke noted that had the crash affected more than the Notes application it would have been catastrophic for the Council and the systems were now working from four date sources, which validated each other. A report would be brought to the Committee later in the year setting out what happened, what had been done and progress made in recourse with the company supplying the GPS system.

The Committee rose at 12.40 p.m.

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Chair