

Minutes of the meeting of the Resources, Performance and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 9 January 2007.

Present:

Members of the Committee:

Councillor David Booth (Chair of Committee)
“ Bob Hicks (Vice-Chair)
“ George Atkinson
“ Tom Cavanagh
“ John Haynes (replacing Brian Moss)
“ Phillip Morris-Jones
“ Heather Timms
“ Sid Tooth
“ John Vereker

Also in attendance

Councillor Peter Fowler (Performance and Development)

Officers:

Resources Directorate

Dave Clarke, Strategic Director of Resources.

Performance and Development Directorate

David Carter, Strategic Director of Performance and Development.

Reuben Bergman, Deputy Head of Human Resources.

Pete Keeley, Member Services.

Paul Williams, Scrutiny Officer.

1. General

(1) Apologies

were received from Councillors Les Caborn, Chris Davis and Nina 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 Les Caborn, Member of Warwick District Council.

Councillor Tom Cavanagh, Member of Rugby Borough 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.

Other Interests

Councillor David Booth declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 4 - 2007/09 to 2009/10 Spending Proposals in view of his membership of the Warwickshire Welfare Rights Advice Service Joint Management Committee.

(3) Minutes of the meeting held on the 14 November 2006 and Matters Arising

(i) Minutes

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Resources, Performance and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 14 November 2006 be approved.

(ii) Matters Arising

(a) Minute 5 – Corporate Capital Receipts Strategy

In response to comments from Councillor George Atkinson, Dave Clarke, Strategic Director of Resources, confirmed that the Committee's comments about the use of capital receipts to replay older debts would be incorporated into the report to the Cabinet.

(b) Delivery of HR Services

In response to comments from the Chair, David Carter, Strategic Director of Performance and Development reported that work was proceeding with the single transaction unit and that a report would be submitted to the next meeting dealing with the standardisation of processes.

2. Public Question Time (Standing Order 34)

There were no public questions

3. Half Year Complaints Reports April to September 2006

The Committee considered reports from the Strategic Directors of Performance and Development and Resources relating to the action taken in respect of complaints received by both Directorates in the half year April to September 2006

(1) Performance and Development Directorate

During his introduction of this item David Carter, Strategic Director of Performance and Development, advised members of the nature of the complaints received by the Performance and Development Directorate and the action taken to resolve them. He indicated that a more comprehensive report would be submitted to the next meeting.

In response to comments from Councillor Bob Hicks, David Carter agreed to instigate a review of the arrangements for the opening of the Nuneaton Registry Office.

(2) Resources Directorate

Dave Clarke, Strategic Director of Resources, introduced the report.

Members requested that if possible, future reports from the two directorates should use similar diagrams in black and white.

The Committee noted the complaints received and the remedial action undertaken

4. Development of Customer Service & Access for Warwickshire County Council

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development which appraised 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 One Stop Shops.

Kushal Birla introduced the report and updated members on several aspects including:

- o In North Warwickshire, the premises for the Joint One Stop Shop will be owned by the Borough Council and will open on the 10 April. Registration Services will be provided.
- o In Nuneaton and Bedworth, there had been a successful launch of the One Stop Shop and publicity would be given to its use by the public and by members for surgeries.
- o With regard to the services in Rugby, a kiosk will be in situ from March/April. Further consideration was being given to the siting of a kiosk at Brownsover.
- o In Stratford on Avon a study was being undertaken into the location of services.

- o With regard to the Shire Hall, consideration was being given to what could be provided in the interim.

Following discussion about existing arrangements with district/borough councils, existing budgetary provision, members agreed that there would be benefits in the Committee visiting the various locations. In particular it was suggested that consideration should be given to holding the next meeting of the Committee at Kings' House Bedworth.

Members noted that the local business community at Bedworth had expressed some concern about the rent being charged at King's House and the implications for rent reviews in the area.

In response to comments about the need for a facility for the public to be able to notify the Council of a change of address once which would then be reflected in all of the councils records etc, members were advised of legal difficulties in sharing information given to a council.

It was agreed that quarterly reporting continues.

5. Public Consultation on 2007/08 Budget and Council Tax: Results

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Resources which provided members with details of the results from the budget consultation on the 2007/08 budget priorities and council tax.

During his introduction of the item, Dave Clarke, Strategic Director of Resources, reported that although there Area Committee meetings had not been well attended, there had been a good response overall to the Council's consultations resulting in a reliable survey.

He stressed the importance of using the Citizens Panel for such consultations to obtain a good cross section of opinion.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the feedback received from the public about the budget for 2007/08 and commended the information to the political groups for consideration when preparing their 2007/08 budget resolutions.

6. Corporate Governance Audit

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development which gave an update on the Directorate and Corporate response to the Corporate Governance Audit.

David Carter Strategic Director of Performance and Development, introduced the main points of the report.

Members noted the following points:

- o The Code for declarations of interest was being reviewed nationally to ease some concerns and make the code easier to interpret
- o Provision had been made in the "Whistle Blowing Code" to enable reports to be made about contractors and by contractors.
- o Officers were also required to make declarations at meetings.

The Committee noted the progress being made both corporately and by Directorates in response to the 2005 Corporate Governance audit.

7. Employee Absence Management

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development which described the latest performance information on employee absence levels.

Rueben Bergman, Deputy Head of Human Resources, introduced the report.

In response to comments made during the discussion members were advised that:

- o The figures shown were totals of all employees.
- o The Council's smoking policy would be more restrictive in the future
- o Consideration would be given to the possibility of an analysis of the nature of illness.

Ron Williamson of the Adult, Health and Community Services Directorate was present for this item and reported details of absence management for the Directorate with reference to a report being submitted to the Adult and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The report had also been circulated to this Committee before the meeting.

He reported that:-

- o The new management for the Directorate was examining the figures including long term sickness and reviewing each case.
- o There were some Home Care sickness issues such back problems from lifting.
- o Managers now had access to improved information for services for people in care through the HRMS.

It was suggested that at some future meeting unions could be invited to talk to members of the committee about issues.

The Committee noted the latest available performance information on absence levels and continued progress in relation to absence management.

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.

Reports relating to School Meals and an Update of HRMS would be submitted to the next meeting.

The Corporate Property Strategy Review would not be ready for reporting to the next meeting.

The Chair requested that consideration should be given to the District/Borough Councils being invited to send representatives to a future Committee to advise of their perceptions joint working in particular any barriers or duplication issues.

9. Any Other Items

there were no items to consider.

10. Report Containing Confidential or Exempt Information

Resolved:

That members of the public be excluded from the meeting for the item mentioned below on the grounds that their presence would involve the disclosure of confidential or exempt information as defined in paragraph 4 of the Local Government Act 1972.

11. Pay and Conditions Review – Update

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development which provided an update on the current issues in relation to the equal pay agenda and the implications for the Council’s pay and conditions review.

During his introduction of the item Reuben Bergman confirmed that an appeal process would be established that involved members and the unions.

The Committee noted the current issues in relation to the equal pay agenda and the implications for our own pay and conditions review.

The Committee rose at 11.45 a.m.

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Chair