

Minutes of the Resources, Performance and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on the 19 June 2007.

Present:

Members of the Committee:

Councillor David Booth (Chair of Committee)

“ John Haynes (Vice-Chair)

“ George Atkinson

“ Les Caborn

“ Tom Cavanagh

“ Chris Davis

“ Brian Moss

“ Phillip Morris-Jones

“ Dave Shilton

“ Ian Smith

“ Sid Tooth

“ John Vereker

Also in attendance

Officers:

Performance and Development Directorate

Kushal Birla, Head of Customer Service and Access.

David Carter, Strategic Director of Performance and Development.

Pete Keeley, Member Services.

Paul Williams, Scrutiny Officer.

Resources Directorate

Dave Clarke, Strategic Director of Resources.

Simon Hill, Development Manager.

Election of Chair.

Councillor John Haynes moved, Councillor Chris Davis seconded and it was Resolved:

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

Appointment of Vice Chair.

Councillor David Booth moved, Councillor Brian Moss seconded and it was Resolved:-

That Councillor John Haynes be appointed as Vice Chair of the Resources, Performance and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

General

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 were declared below:

Councillor Les Caborn, Member of Warwick District Council.

Councillor Tom Cavanagh, Member of Rugby Borough Council.

Councillor Chris Davis, Member of Warwick District Council.

Councillor Brian Moss, Member of the North Warwickshire Borough Council.

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

Other Interests

Councillor David Booth declare a personal interest in **Agenda Item 9(2) Performance Report for the Resources Directorate** in view of his son's employment in IT.

(3) Minutes of the meeting held on the 24 April 2007 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 24 April 2007 be approved and be signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising

Minute 6 – Employee Absence Management

In response to comments from Councillor John Vereker, David Carter, Strategic Director of Performance and Development, indicated that he would respond direct regarding the manner in which the council reconcile any difficulties in the disability related absence and the aim to reduce absence levels.

4. Public Question Time (Standing Order 34)

There were no questions from the public.

5. Chair's Annual Report

The Committee considered the annual report of the Chair of the Resources, Performance and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee which summarised the work undertaken by the committee in 2006 and outlined future commitments for 2007.

Following introductory comments from the Chair, the following points were noted during the discussion:

It was intended that the new Coroners Service would be in operation by January 2008.

It was proposed to consult heads and governors of schools in neighbouring counties about school meals.

References to "sickness" management in the report would be changed to "absence" management.

Invoices were issued in accordance with contract arrangements and could relate to services undertaken over a period of time.

Resolved:

That the Resources, Performance and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed the annual report as amended for referral to the Council on 11th September 2007.

6. Invitation to Shape the Review and Development of the New Corporate Complaints Policy, Procedures and Strategy

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development which invited Members to nominate representatives to engage in the review and development of the corporate complaints policy, procedure and strategy.

Resolved:

That the Committee:

Endorses the establishment of a Members' Group to participate in the review and development of the corporate complaints policy, procedure and strategy, for the duration of the project.

Appoints Councillors David Booth, John Haynes and John Vereker as members of the group.

7. Report on the 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 during 2006/2007 in regards to the development of the One Stop Shops/Kiosks and the Customer Service Centre.

The Committee was asked to consider and comment on the progress during 2006/2007 and indicate any further information it required.

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

It was noted that the Warwickshire Association of Chief Executives was to consider customer service issues including a common approach, hours of operations and the lessons learnt from the Integrated Customer Service Centre with Warwick District Council.

Consideration should be given to increasing the level of publicity for the services provided at Kings House at Bedworth.

Consideration was being given to the range of services to be provided at a One Stop Shop at the Shire Hall.

Matters relating to disabled access including suitable hand rails, were being considered as part of the Shire Hall refurbishment project.

The importance of Randolph Turpin to Warwick should not be overlooked in the provision of tourist information.

The use of kiosks should not be considered as the complete answer for customer access in all situations bearing in mind that there would be occasions when face to face contact was desirable.

It was noted that the use of information buses was being trialled.

Lighthorne Heath was to have a new Post Office and it was suggested that the opportunity should be taken to provide access to the council's services.

Resolved:

That Members endorse the progress during 2006/2007 with regard to the development of the One Stop Shops/Kiosks and the Customer Service Centre.

That quarterly reporting continues.

8. Public Consultation Process for 2008/09 Budget and Council Tax

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Resources which outlined the process to be undertaken for the 2008/09 budget and council tax consultation with the public.

Following introductory comments from Dave Clarke, Strategic Director of Resources, Members discussed several aspects of the proposal and made the following points.

Joint presentations undertaken with the district /borough councils could lead to confusion in a variety of matters such as the services provided by each council.

Councillors should be encouraged to consult their communities on budget proposals.

Possible use of One Stop Shops for obtaining comments from the public.

Electronic consultations should be encouraged.

There was a need to ensure that the Web based game was not abused by multiple voting by users.

There were several views about the benefits of budget presentations being made to Area Committees and the chair indicated that a vote would be taken on the matter.

Resolved by 8 votes to 4:

(1) That presentations be not made to the Area Committees

It was also Resolved:-

(2) That the Committee endorses the proposals for public consultation on the 2008/09 Budget and Council Tax outlined in Section 3 of the report.

9. Performance Reports 2006/2007

The Resources, Performance and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee was asked to:

- a) Consider the performance reports submitted by the Performance and Development and Resources Directorates for full year 2006/2007.
- b) Endorse any remedial actions.
- c) Request any additional information required.

(1) Performance and Development Directorate

David Carter, Strategic Director of Performance and Development introduced the main issues in the report. In particular he drew attention to the progress being made with partnership working under the LAA, the new ways of working, the increased levels of customer satisfaction and the developments with the website and the Intranet.

The following points were noted during the discussion:

With regard to the percentage of residents satisfied with the way the County Council ran things, the achieved performance for 2006/07 was 55% not 58% as shown in the report . The performance level was an issue for the whole Council.

The One Stop Shops were meeting targets

With regard to e-mail response times in the Directorate, the monitoring was undertaken of the general directorate e-mail address not those sent to individual officers.

Further examination would be undertaken into response times to letters received in the Directorate, the target level of satisfaction with the Registration Service, and the need for greater numeric information as opposed to percentage information.

With regard to performance with the payment of invoices, Members noted that the figures in the report related to a small number of invoices received by the Directorate and that the speed of payment was being discussed with the officers concerned.

With regard to the level of the Directorate's reserves, Members noted that the resources allocated for the Area Committees were ring fenced.

Councillor Peter Fowler, Cabinet Member for Performance and Development, accepted the Chair's invitation to speak to a future meeting of the Committee, as had been the case in previous years.

(2) Resources Directorate

During his introduction of the items Dave Clarke, Strategic Director of Resources drew attention to progress with the development of the Shire Hall office project, the Saltisford Offices, Kings House, the ICT Strategy and the school meals budget deficit and the good results from staff surveys.

The following points were noted during the discussion:

With regard to the indicator for the use of resources, the Directorate had failed to meet the target by just one point but that the performance level was fourth best amongst counties.

There were still some changes being made to processes etc as a result of the merger of the three previous departments.

With regard to staff surveys Members noted that response information was summarised at team level.

Attempts were being made to widen access to Lotus Notes for all employees such as school catering staff.

Councillor Alan Cockburn, Cabinet Member for Resources accepted the Chair's invitation to speak to the Committee as in previous years.

The Committee endorsed the remedial action being taken by both Directorates.

10. Items for Future Meetings

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development which detailed actions taken on certain previous decisions, provisional items for future meetings of the Committee and future Cabinet decisions relevant to the work of the Committee.

During the discussion it was agreed that the following items should be added to the submitted programme of items for consideration by the Committee:

A short briefing about the use of Prince 2 project management.

An update on progress with the School Meals project

The development of ICT in Schools

An item about the Forward Plan items relevant to the work of the Committee to be included earlier on the agendas for future meetings.

Members noted that Leaders Liaison Group oversaw the value for money reviews and that Strategic Directors would keep Chairs and Spokespersons of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees briefed on developments.

11. Any Other Items

There were no urgent items to consider.

The Committee rose at 11.45 a.m.

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Chair