

## **RESOURCES AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY, 29 OCTOBER 2018**

PRESENT:- Councillors Brian Mattock (Chair), Steve Weisinger (Vice-Chair), Steve Allsopp, Claire Ellis, Des Moffatt and Timothy Swinyard

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mary Friend, Andy Spry and Robert Wright.

### **7. Declarations of Interest**

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting. No declarations were made.

### **8. Minutes**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2018, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### **9. Public Question Time**

Mr Roy Worman asked public questions in respect (i) the Council's Communications Policy and how this might be improved, (ii) the Council's call-in call-in process, and (iii) the rationale for issues being debated by the Council in private. The Chair responded at the meeting.

### **10. Update on Resources and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2017-2018**

The Committee received a presentation setting out an update on the Committee's 2017/18 Work Programme and actions previously requested by the Committee.

Following a presentation by Sam Mowbray, Director Performance, Organisation Improvement and Communications the Committee discussed the following points raised in the presentation:

- Progress made in respect of the Swindon Programme.
- The delivery of Information Technology systems and the embedding of an improved culture within this delivery programme.
- The programme for developing the skills of managers and aspiring leaders as part of the Council's delivery programmes.
- Work being undertaken as part of organisational management and development to improve culture, service delivery and putting the customer and customer support at the forefront of the Council's work.
- The Council's communications strategy.
- The current status of the Wichelstowe development.
- Support provided to Credit Unions as part of the wider work in respect of debt management advice.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

## **11. Presentation - The Swindon Programme**

The Committee received a presentation on the Swindon Programme.

Following a presentation by Glen Peach, Director of Digital Services and Corporate Programmes the Committee discussed the following points raised in the presentation:

- The current status of the four themes contained within the Swindon Programme and plans in place to ensure their timely delivery.
- The delivery of business case in respect of the loneliness and isolation and learning disability themes.
- Progress in the delivery of the Skype for business pilot, digital discovery work (the precursor to forthcoming digitalisation work) and the Council's career website and governance for the Swindon Programme.
- The current risk assessment in respect of work related to the delivery of the Swindon Programme.
- The current status of in-year savings and savings identified for future years as part of the Swindon Programme.
- The current progress in respect of the Organisational Excellence theme, Digital Services and in particular on-line forms.
- The continued modernisation of customer services and call centre.
- The procurement of major information technology systems and soft market testing prior to procurement.
- Workforce modernisation including pay and reward, employee value, absence management and specialist consolidation.
- Commissioning, procurement and commercialisation targets and savings.
- The resourcing of the Council's Call Centre, current demand, prioritisation for vulnerable residents, staff training and demand management in respect of this service.
- The need to clearly communicate with the problem where system problems are identified.
- Current trends in respect of volumes of telephone calls being handled by the call centre.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That officers be requested to investigate methods for prioritising telephone calls from vulnerable residents and those organisations who assist vulnerable residents.

## **12. Digital Strategy Update**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Digital Services and Corporate Programmes setting out an update on the Council's Digital Strategy.

Following a presentation of the report the Director of Digital Services and Corporate Programmes the Committee discussed the following points raised during his presentation:

- The strategy's role, in conjunction with the customer access strategy and supported by an IT Strategy and a cyber protection strategy in enabling the Council to function properly within a changing digital world.

- The challenges faced in modernising the Council's major IT systems.
- Engagement of residents who did not have access to digital services or who preferred to use alternative methods of communication.
- How the Council could learn from other Local Authorities who had trialled new IT technologies and systems.
- How the Council could achieve a better system of data sharing through agreements with its partners.
- The use of information technology to allow staff to be more flexible in working and to maximise the Council's use of resources, including building space.

Resolved – (1) That the Council's Digital Strategy be endorsed.

(2) That the work of the Director of Digital Services and Corporate Programmes and Cabinet Member for Corporate and Customer Services and the Corporate Management Team to develop the Council's Digital Strategy be supported.

(3) That the Director of Digital Services and Corporate Programmes be requested to forward to members of this Committee details of any problems regarding the sharing of data arising from the transfer of library services to alternative providers within the Borough.

### **13. Consultation / Engagement Strategy**

The Committee received a presentation by Sam Mowbray, Director Performance, Organisation Improvement and Communications and Philip Avery, Head of Communications, Performance and Engagement setting out details of the Council's Consultation and Engagement Strategy.

Following a presentation by Sam Mowbray, Director Performance, Organisation Improvement and Communications and Phil Avery, Head of Communications, Performance and Engagement the Committee discussed the following points raised in the presentation:

- The Council's Consultation Policy which was due for renewal and how this policy assisted the engagement strategy.
- Anecdotal feedback from Council forums on the effectiveness of current engagement with local residents prior to decisions being made by the Council.
- Engagement with members prior to consultation with local residents and the creation of a new Council Engagement Strategy.
- The results of the Local Government Association Residents Survey undertaken in 2017 which showed that Swindon was broadly in line with the national average in a number of categories including satisfaction with the Council, Trust in the Council, the provision of Value for Money Services, the Council's level of engagement with residents and Residents feeling well informed.
- The suggestion from the Local Government Association Residents Survey that the Council needed to improve its engagement of local residents which to allow them to feel they have influence and to increase the level of trust.
- The methods by which local residents were currently obtaining information from the Council.
- Current forms of public engagement by the Council and how these might be improved.
- The need to keep Councillors fully informed regarding issues within their

wards.

- The need to talk to residents at an early stage prior to decisions being made, especially in the climate of scarcer resources being available to the Council, and for residents to see the results arising from any consultation.
- How the Council can engage a wider range of residents across a wide range of issues and maximise the expertise available within the Borough.
- The need for the Council to acknowledge mistakes it makes and for full engagement even on difficult issues in order to build trust.

Resolved – That the officers be thanked for their interesting and useful presentation.

#### **14.**

#### **Work Programme 2018-2019**

The Committee considered a report by the Interim Director of Law Services setting out the Committee's Work Programme, agreed at its meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That consideration of the Swindon Programme be deferred until the meeting of this Committee scheduled to be held on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

(3) That an update on financial issues affecting this Council resulting from the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Budget be considered at the next meeting of this Committee.