

RESOURCES AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 4 MARCH 2019

PRESENT:- Councillors Brian Mattock (Chair), Steve Weisinger (Vice-Chair), Steve Allsopp, Claire Ellis, Mary Friend, Des Moffatt, Andy Spry, Timothy Swinyard and Robert Wright

29. 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.

30. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 16th January 2019 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Members noted that the Key Performance Indicators relating to the success of the Digitalisation Programme for Customer Services (Minute 25 refers) will be circulated once the Corporate Management Team and the Swindon Programme Board have had sight of them.

Members noted that the outcomes and findings from the latest LGA Peer Review (Minute 26 refers) will be circulated once the Leader, Shadow Leader and Chief Executive have signed them off.

31. Public Question Time

Mr Roy Worman, Haydon Wick, asked questions at the meeting in respect of:

- a) The absence of timelines within the 'Progress towards the Council's Vision, Priorities and Pledges' report which would give an indication of progress.
- b) The public availability of the data showing progress and achievements on a month by month basis.
- c) The use of the term 'On Track' to measure progress against the Council's Pledges, and what this means in real terms.
- d) Whether the Council's Vision, Priorities and Pledges could include a goal towards publishing a five year supply of housing stock.

The Chair, Councillor Tim Swinyard and Mr Martin Bell, Intelligence Lead (Analysis and Performance Improvement), responded at the meeting.

32. Progress towards the Council's Vision, Priorities and Pledges

The Committee considered a report providing details of the progress being made towards the Council's Vision, Priorities and Pledges. Mr Bell introduced the report and highlighted the following points:

- That the Pledges had been refreshed at the end of 2018 and agreed by Cabinet.
- That the number of Pledges had reduced from 30 to 26, due to some having been completed and others having been changed.
- Responsible officers across service areas provide monthly updates, used to

populate scorecards. Directors discuss these at Corporate Management Team meetings, and the information is also provided to Cabinet Members for Leadership Advisory Group meetings.

- Overall progress against the Pledges is made available on the Swindon Borough Council website.

Following the presentation of the report, the Committee discussed the following points raised:

- Potential future additions to the report, including: identifying what resources are being used to deliver Pledges; future resource implications; a sense of where pinch points are; where delivery on Pledges is falling behind or moving ahead; and, how concerns are being addressed.
- Projects indicated within the report as currently being on track and which have previously had delays and amendments, such as the Bus Boulevard, Aspen House and Kimmerfields.
- How the responsibility for delivering Priority Three (Ensuring clean and safe streets and improving public spaces) has mostly been devolved to Parish Councils.
- The strategy for capitalising upon and enhancing the value of the land owned by the Council, particularly in the town centre, to attract investment and income.
- The importance of members of the Heritage Zone Board knowing the content and value of assets to attract borrowing and investment.

Resolved – (1) To note the contents of the report.

(2) That the report be brought to the attention of the Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's for potential inclusion in their Work Programmes for the 2019/2020 Municipal Year.

33. Presentation - Swindon Programme

The Committee received a presentation from the Director of Digital Services and Corporate Programmes providing an update on the Directorate Scorecards showing the activity and progress under the Swindon Programme. He highlighted the following:

- That the former One Stop Shop had been designed as a supported fulfilment service, but the progressive digitalisation of services has allowed the remodelling of the customer service centre to an assisted self-service function.
- The scorecards were previously sorted in themes, but are now structured in Directorates.
- That the Children's Directorate has its own improvement plans, which the others do not.
- How some projects are supported by the Corporate Programme Team, with the smaller non-supported projects being governed within services.

Following the presentation, the Committee discussed the following points raised:

- The allowances required for those residents who cannot be moved on to the digital platform and who are unable to visit the new customer service centre in person.
- The problems currently being experienced by residents trying to subscribe to green waste services, and how a move to six-monthly subscriptions may help

address cyclical pressures on the contact centre.

- Recent communication errors regarding green waste direct debits, and the steps being taken to ensure these are avoided in future.
- Staffing pressures on entry level positions, and what can be done to successfully retain trained staff and ensure succession planning.
- The need for council tenants to speak directly to the Housing Team for help and assistance with enquiries.
- The governance arrangements in place once it is identified that a work stream is behind on its deliverables.
- How the gross savings are calculated against the annual revenue budget from redundancy, salary and pension costs.
- The net effect on overhead costs from the reduction in staff, and also the opportunities this presents to rationalise property.
- Progress with the property review, and the expectation that the final report will be presented for consideration in the next Municipal Year. Members noted that buildings have already been closed, and that locality based areas are now being reviewed.
- How the Swindon Programme has initially focussed on short term pressures due to the current financial constraints, and the proposals for achieving longer term savings following the end of the Programme.
- How the Council can help mitigate the impact from the Honda factory closure.
- The paper filing systems being used in some children's services, and proposals for the restructuring of that data using an Electronic Data Management System in line with Ofsted recommendations.
- How the budgets as set out in the Scorecards are aggressive and aspirational, with high targets for achievement, in comparison to the actual budget update reports presented to Cabinet and Council which may indicate different outcomes.
- How absence levels can be an indicator of low morale, pressures and stress, and how the projects within the Programme are helping to raise awareness and reduce those levels.
- Ensuring there are no resource pressures on report authors which affects their ability to bring forward items for consideration by Committee within expected timeframes.
- How the Property Team has resource pressures at the moment, and the subsequent delays in transferring assets to Parish Councils.

Resolved – (1) To note the contents of the presentation.

(2) That the Director of Digital Services and Corporate Programmes be thanked for their comprehensive and informative presentation.

34. Work Programme 2018-2019

The Committee considered a report of the Interim Director of Law (Interim Monitoring Officer) setting out the topics for inclusion in the Committee's 2018/2019 Work Programme, as agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 11th June 2018, and updated during the course of the Municipal Year.

Resolved – That the Work Programme for 2018/19 be noted.