

OVERVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY FORUM MEETING

Thursday, 13th November, 2014

Present:-

Councillor Slack (Chair)

| | | |
|-------------|-----------|------------|
| Councillors | Bagley | King +++++ |
| | Burrows + | Gibson |
| | Borrell | Lowe |
| | Dyke | Tom Murphy |
| | Flood | Paul Stone |

Anita Cunningham, Policy and Scrutiny Officer
 Barry Dawson, Head of Finance ++++
 Martin Elliott, Committee and Scrutiny Coordinator
 John Fern, Communications and Marketing Manager +++
 John Moran, GPGS Project Manager ++

+ Attended for Minute Nos. 34, 35 and 36
 ++ Attended for Minute Nos. 35 and 37
 +++ Attended for Minute No. 34
 ++++ Attended for Minute No. 36
 +++++ Attended for Minute No. 37

32 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' AND OFFICERS INTERESTS RELATING TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

No declarations were received.

33 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Bradford, Callan and Innes.

34 LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION - REPORT ON THE COUNCIL'S EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The Leader and Executive Member for Regeneration and the Communications and Marketing Manager presented the draft External

Communications Strategy. The strategy aims to reduce inconsistencies in Chesterfield Borough Council's corporate branding and also to enable a more effective and up to date style of communication with the public.

The Communications and Marketing Manager noted that the work and input of the members of the Scrutiny Project Group and Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been integral in its development and that Section 4 of the strategy builds on the forums recommendations. It was also advised that the External Communications Strategy links in closely with the Internal Communications Strategy and that they need to be viewed side by side to give the full picture of the Council's approach to communication.

The Communications and Marketing Manager also advised that much of the delivery and implementation of the External Communications strategy would be via the Great Place, Great Service programme.

The Leader and Executive Member for Regeneration noted that the draft strategy was an excellent example of Scrutiny work and of Scrutiny having a direct impact on the development of policy. He thanked the Forum for the work they had done in the development of the strategy.

Members asked several questions about how the strategy would be implemented with regard to the move from paper based to digital methods of communication. The Communications and Marketing Manager advised that after assessing if a communication is needed it will always be a "digital first" approach but consideration will be given to whether a paper version is also needed to ensure equality of access for all sections of the community.

Members also asked how the website would be managed on a day to day basis as the amount of services and transactions on the site increased in response to the work to channel shift as many transactions as possible away from phone and face to face contact to the website. The Communications and Marketing Manager advised that work does need to be done to ensure that the website can be viewed correctly on all platforms and that there will need to be more active management of the website. With this need in mind a request is being submitted to the Joint Cabinet and Employment and General Committee to approve the creation of the post of Digital Content Editor.

Forum members praised the content of the Council's Facebook page and noted how promptly the comments were answered by the Communications team. They did however note that expectations from the public on the speed and time of responses need to be managed so that staff would not be dealing with work created by social media comments at antisocial times of day. The Communications and Marketing Manager advised that this does need to be managed better and that the Contact Centre could potentially be utilised more in the future with the delivery of the council's social media presence but that the existing contract with Arvato would need to be changed to make this happen.

The Leader and Executive Member for Regeneration and the Communications and Marketing Manager were thanked by members for presenting the strategy and for answering the Forum's questions.

RESOLVED –

1. That the content of the draft External Communications Strategy is supported.
2. That it is confirmed that the draft strategy addresses the recommendations of the scrutiny project group on external communications.
3. That a progress report on the implementation of the strategy be provided to the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum in six months time.

35 LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION - GREAT PLACE, GREAT SERVICE PROGRESS REPORT

The Leader and Executive Member for Regeneration and the Great Place, Great Service Project Manager presented a progress report on the Great Place, Great Service project.

The Great Place, Great Service Project Manager advised Forum members of progress to date over the four areas of Great Place, Great Service; Transformation, ICT, Customer Services and Property. A formal lean review of Environmental Services had begun with current work processes being mapped so that they can be analysed to find a leaner, smarter way of working which will deliver a better service to residents and

businesses. In ICT work has been progressing on delivering a flexible working solution that will allow the job roles identified as being able to work flexibly a real workable offering.

In Customer Services work is continuing to collect data showing how residents and business currently interact with the Council. This will enable effective decisions to be made to promote and utilise the best channel for customers to access the services they want at a time that is suitable to them. The Great Place, Great Service Project Manager advised that in future residents will be able to “self serve” much more to access Council services which will provide a better service to residents and also savings to the Council.

The Great Place, Great Service Project Manager informed forum members that the Conservation Statement on the Town Hall had now been received and showed which areas could and could not be structurally or cosmetically altered. The Great Place, Great Service Project Team are now working with Kier to establish a plan of where teams would ideally be located in the remodeled Town Hall. Kier have also advised that the time from the plans being finalised to the remodeled Town Hall “ribbon cutting” would be twelve months.

The Leader praised officer’s professionalism in the driving forward of the Great Place, Great Service Project. The Leader also advised that as so much of the success of the project depends on effective ICT provision there have been several high level meetings with Arvato on the need for them to improve their delivery of ICT which is currently not at the level the Council expects or needs. The Leader advised the forum he is hopeful from these meetings that ICT performance and delivery will improve, but that if Arvato does not deliver the required improvements in ICT provision the Council may have to consider ending the contract with Arvato.

Members asked if there were clauses in the contract relating to non delivery of KPI’s in the contract with Arvato. The Leader advised that the KPI’s are being delivered on the standard areas of day to day business but that the problems are with the more strategic delivery areas.

Members asked numerous detailed questions about the contract with Arvato and whether the contract had been “future proofed” when it was made. The Leader advised it had been future proofed but due to the nature and fast pace of change, effectively future proofing an ICT contract is very difficult. He also advised that due to changes and expansion at

Arvato, Chesterfield Borough Council does not get the high level support and access that it did initially.

Members asked several questions on how the communication of the Great Place, Great Service Project and its work is going with staff. The Project Manager advised that the recent briefing sessions held for staff had not been very well attended and that different ways of communicating with teams were being looked at.

The Leader and Executive Member for Regeneration the Great Place, Great Service Project Manager were thanked by members for presenting the progress report and for answering the Forum's questions.

RESOLVED –

That the progress report be noted.

36 LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION - BUDGET MONITORING PROGRESS REPORT

The Leader and Executive Member for Regeneration and the Head of Finance presented a Budget Monitoring Progress Report.

The last formal budget report provided an update on the original budget after the first four months of the financial year. The report highlighted how the position had worsened in the current financial year; changing an originally forecast surplus of £244k into a revised deficit forecast of £301k. These shortfalls were mainly due to a potential £250k increase in the pension costs for staff transferred under the PPP contract, 'big ticket' savings targets not being achieved and a possible £100k shortfall in shortfall in car park income.

The Head of Finance reported that since this update the current situation shows an improving budgetary position due to a distinct possibility that the £250k PPP pension issue can be reduced or eliminated, although this is yet to be formally confirmed by the Pension Authority as well as the forecast car parking income shortfall being reduced by £50k. For later years the potential of PPP pension costs resolution and the income from Business Rate Pooling showed an improved budget situation. It was stressed however that there were still lots of risks in the assumptions that had been made. The Head of Finance also advised that with significant savings of £1.25 million still needing to be delivered and with the Local

Government Finance settlement figure not being known until 17 December, 2014 forecasting was difficult.

The Leader and Executive Member for Regeneration praised officers for the efforts to produce a balanced budget and also noted the transparency with which finance matters were conducted. He also advised that he would be attending the upcoming Community Assemblies with the Head of Finance to consult on Council Tax setting.

Members asked several questions relating to aspects of the report along with Council Tax setting which the Leader and the Head of Finance answered.

Members agreed that with further budget cuts likely in the future there needs to be more and better communication with the community regarding the financial situation of the Council and that hard choices will need to be made on spending priorities. It was also noted that the realities of the portion of the Council Tax received by Chesterfield Borough Council are better communicated to residents.

Members also considered that it would be beneficial for an extra meeting of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum to be called for December to allow members to examine the full budget monitoring report for the second quarter before it is considered by Council on 17 December.

Members thanked the Leader and Head of Finance for attending and answering their questions.

RESOLVED –

1. That the progress report be noted.
2. That an extra meeting of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum be held in December to allow Members to examine the full Budget Monitoring Report before it goes to Council.

The Executive Member for Governance and Organisational Development and the Great Place, Great Service Project Manager provided a progress report on Corporate Services Public Private Partnership Performance.

The Executive Member for Governance and Organisational Development advised that an appointment of an interim Client Manager had now been made and that the private sector delivery partners were performing well against their Key Performance Indicators [KPI's]. Arvato were managing good rates of Council Tax and Business Rates collection as well as increasing the amount of collection by direct debit and Kier were performing well in respect of town centre occupancy rates and accelerating the sale of property assets.

The Executive Member did express concern regarding the provision of ICT and the ability of Arvato to support the pace of change that is needed to keep up with the strategic and Council wide changes being delivered by the Great Place, Great Service programme. The Executive Member also noted that the Great Place, Great Service project was overtaking Arvato in many areas in the pace of change.

Members asked why Arvato was not being stretched to achieve more challenging targets where they were consistently over performing against existing KPI's. The Executive Member advised that KPI's could be looked at to see if they can be changed to uplift performance and to deliver savings. The Executive Member also stated that if the Great Place, Great Service project was to deliver on its objectives then Arvato needs to improve in it's delivery of ICT.

Members asked several more questions regarding KPI's for the private sector delivery partners which the Executive Member answered.

Members also asked when data would be available on how improved ICT provision had improved the situation with regard to online leisure bookings. The Great Place, Great Service Project Manager advised that he would arrange for this information to be circulated to forum members.

The Executive Member for Governance and Organisational Development and the Great Place, Great Service Project Manager were thanked by members for presenting the progress report and for answering the Forum's questions.

RESOLVED –

1. That the progress report be noted.
2. That the Executive Member look at KPI's for scope to uplift performance and deliver savings.

38 FORWARD PLAN

The Forward Plan was considered. Notices of Urgent Decisions were also presented to members of the Committee for information. The Policy and Scrutiny Officer advised that Notices of Urgent Decisions would be included on future Scrutiny Committee agendas as an information item.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Forward Plan be noted.
2. That the Notices of Urgent Decisions be noted

39 SCRUTINY MONITORING

Consideration was given to the Implementation Monitoring Form for Scrutiny Committee Recommendations.

RESOLVED –

That the first progress report on the External Communications Strategy be scheduled 6 months from the date of this meeting.

40 SCRUTINY PROJECT GROUP PROGRESS UPDATES

No updates were available.

41 WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE OVERVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY FORUM

The Work Programme for the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum was considered.

RESOLVED –

1. To approve the Work Programme.
2. To put on hold the item on Welfare Reform due to uncertainties of how this issue will develop over the coming months.
3. To keep Great Place, Great Service progress reports on the Work Programme but that the informal briefing meetings held before the Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee meetings cease and are replaced by fortnightly email briefings from the GPGS Project Manager to Members.
4. That an extra meeting of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum be arranged for 4 December, 2014 to allow members to consider the Budget Monitoring Report before it is presented to Council for approval.
5. That the Committee and Scrutiny Coordinator synchronises, where possible the meeting dates of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum for 2015/16 to follow the Budget setting and monitoring process to allow members adequate time to scrutinise the reports.

42

JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

The Chair advised the Committee that he had recently attended a meeting of Joint Scrutiny with Bolsover and North East Derbyshire District Councils but due to the limited number of shared services between all three authorities there had been few items on the agenda.

Committee members agreed that Joint Scrutiny was important and useful where services are shared, but that it should also reflect new and emerging working relationships with the Sheffield City Region Combined Authority, D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership and Derbyshire wide.

RESOLVED –

That the Scrutiny Chairs; Councillors Innes and Slack provide a report on how Joint Scrutiny can work best in the future with existing and new delivery partners.

43 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY DEVELOPMENTS

There were no developments reported.

44 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum held on 10 September 2014 were presented.

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.