

## **OVERVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY FORUM**

**Tuesday, 14th June, 2016**

Present:-

Councillor P Gilby (Chair)

Councillors	J Barr	Councillors	Derbyshire
	Borrell		Miles
	Burrows +		Flood
	Callan		Perkins
	V Diouf		

Anita Cunningham, Policy and Scrutiny Officer  
 Karen Brown, Transformation Programme Manager ++  
 Barry Dawson, Chief Finance Officer +++  
 James Drury, Executive Director ++  
 John Fern, Communications and Marketing Manager ++++  
 Rachel Lenthall, Committee and Scrutiny Coordinator  
 Rachel O'Neil, Customer, Commissioning and Change Manager ++

+ Attended for Minutes Nos. 4 and 5

++ Attended for Minute No. 3

+++ Attended for Minute No. 4

++++ Attended for Minute No. 5

\*Matters dealt with under the Delegation Scheme

### **1 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' AND OFFICERS INTERESTS RELATING TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

No declarations of interest were received.

### **2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Catt, Dyke and Slack.

### **3 CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION - GREAT PLACE, GREAT SERVICE PROGRESS REPORT**

The Executive Director, James Drury, and the Transformation Programme Manager attended to provide members with a progress update on the Great Place, Great Service (GPGS) programme. The Executive Director informed the committee of the progress made on GPGS projects and the areas of improvement that were being worked on. GPGS had identified that reviews were needed to examine how the Council ran certain services including ICT, Support Services, customer service and rent collection.

The Procurement partnership with the NHS started in January 2016. Though there had been teething problems during the initial few months, 36 contracts had been managed by the NHS of which 8 had been completed with savings of £37k achieved by the partnership to date. The council's new Customer, Commissioning and Change Manager had joined the corporate management team in June 2016 and would drive the commercial side of GPGS. In addition, the new Information Assurance Officer post had been filled and the post holder was due to start in August 2016.

Progress was also provided on:

- Smarter Working – Town Hall restack, flexible working
- Estate Rationalisation
- ICT Infrastructure
- Website/Intranet
- Commercialisation
- Change Readiness and Change Management

Members asked about the rent collection contract with Arvato and whether the performance indicators were too low and needed to be renegotiated. Members had concerns with the timings and frequency of visits to tenants for rent recovery and asked if changes were to be made to the process. Members also commented that as tenants do not receive rent books anymore, it was more difficult for them to keep a track of their rent, particularly elderly tenants.

The Executive Director advised that the letting process had recently been updated to include a financial assessment; this would provide a clearer picture of the prospective tenant's financial circumstances and reduce rent arrears on introductory tenancies. When there is a visible impact, consideration would be given to making changes to the performance indicators. However, there was also a need for the different teams

involved with tenancies to work better together to share information so a full picture behind a tenants' debt could be seen. Ongoing work was being undertaken to look into how and when visits to tenants were conducted and a small tenant's group had been set up to review the letters sent out by rent recovery.

Members raised concerns about the levels of asbestos discovered in the Town Hall and asked whether asbestos tests were carried out when work was undertaken in the basement and if the current tenants would be affected by the planned works associated with the Town Hall restack.

The Transformation Programme Manager advised that targeted tests had been undertaken prior to work being carried out in the basement. The Executive Director added that the asbestos is more concentrated on the lower floors of the Town Hall and the tenants in the basement would be consulted if they were to be affected.

Members were pleased to hear that the new Information Assurance Officer had been recruited and asked if the extra work taken on by the Council would lead to renegotiations of the contract with Arvato. The Executive Director replied that though the Council is taking back some Information Assurance work, since the original contract was created with Arvato the requirements have become more demanding and would not have been expected in the original contract therefore it would be unwise to enter into renegotiations at this stage.

The Chair thanked the Executive Director and Transformation Programme Manager for the progress report.

## **RESOLVED –**

- 1) That the update be noted.
- 2) That an update on GPGS be brought to the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum in January, 2017.
- 3) That an update on the questions raised by Members be brought to the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum in January, 2017.

The Leader and Chief Finance Officer attended to update Members on the Budget Outturn for 2015/16. Reports were taken to Cabinet on 14 June, 2016 on the individual portfolio accounts and the overall summary for 2015/16. The Chief Finance Officer explained that the original budget forecast a deficit of £94k, the revised budget forecast had predicted a £225k surplus and the actual net surplus for 2015/16 was £448k. The Chief Finance Officer explained which areas had come in over budget or created surpluses and the reasons why that had happened. A working balance of £1.5m would be maintained along with various reserves.

The predicted forecast for 2016/17 would see a budget deficit of £1.3m. The Chief Finance Officer advised that there needed to be a focus on creating a sustainable budget and the Council's reserves could only be used once and should not be relied on. Two areas of income that could potentially change were the New Homes Bonus and the effect devolution may have on Business Rate retention. The Leader added that whilst certain service areas had been a success and had come in under budget, due to future uncertainties the reserves needed to be kept in place.

Members asked if the Council was at risk of getting into serious debt in the future. The Chief Finance Officer replied that there would always be new pressures on the budget however after 2020 a more stable position was predicted. The Leader stressed that the Council was working to become more commercial and self-financing. Members also asked if the forecasted £1.3m deficit figure for 2016/17 could be reduced. The Chief Finance Officer advised that the surpluses and under spends were being looked at to see if a reoccurrence was expected.

Members enquired about the recruitment for the new Director of Resources post and thanked the Chief Finance Officer for the work he had done for the Forum and in particular his support for Scrutiny. The Leader added his thanks to the Chief Finance Officer and informed Members that the first recruitment exercise had returned no suitable candidates for interview. Consequently, the salary had been increased slightly and a new recruitment consultant had been chosen; the search for new candidates was currently underway. The recruitment consultant had been advised to look in both public and private sector markets and was expected to return a better response. In the interim, external support would be sought to cover the role from when the Chief Finance Officer leaves at the end of June, 2016.

The Chair thanked the Leader and Chief Finance Officer for attending to provide Members with the report and answering their questions.

## **RESOLVED –**

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the Forum thanks the Chief Finance Officer and Council, especially the service areas that had engaged in transformation to help the budget situation.
3. That an update on the analysis of service areas, showing how surpluses had been achieved, be brought to Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum in November, 2016.

## **5 LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION - INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS PROGRESS REPORT**

The Leader and Communications and Marketing Manager attended to provide Members with a progress update on the delivery of the Council's Internal and External Communications Strategies. A summary of results from the recent employee survey was provided highlighting areas that had improved or worsened. The new intranet, Aspire, had contributed to an improvement in employees feeling informed, however satisfaction levels about communications between team leaders and managers and their staff, and the frequency of one-to-ones had decreased.

The draft survey results had been discussed with Cabinet Members, Service Managers and at Corporate Management Team meetings. Further analysis would take place within the Workforce Strategy group and would involve focus groups of staff from different levels within the Council. A particular emphasis would be placed on the role of line managers in improving the frequency and quality of team meetings, individual appraisals and one-to-one meetings.

The update on the External Communications strategy included news of the launch of the Council's new website. The main change to the website was that it now had a 'responsive design,' allowing it to be read easily on tablets and smartphones. The next phase of the work on the website was underway and the analysis on analytics has been completed. Customer data, i.e. contact centre enquiries, would be looked at to see how the

website could be used to provide answers and improve navigation for users.

The Leader commented that it had been a long process moving from a semi-professional to a fully professional communications team. Cabinet Members had received media training so that the Leader could step back from doing the majority of media interviews. There had also been a change in the way the Leader and Chief Executive communicate with the workforce which included holding four recent workforce meetings. The meetings involved larger groups of employees from a mixture of Council service areas to give employees the confidence to ask challenging questions.

Members noted that, compared to other organisations, the employee survey results were mostly positive. Members also gave support for the press releases by the Council as they found them useful when dealing with constituents.

Members raised concerns over the decreasing number of employees who said that communication within their service area was good. The Communications and Marketing Manager replied that, within the last few weeks, many staff that previously had no access to emails had been issued with mobile devices to improve communications. In addition, Aspire had only recently been launched at the time of the survey and was expected to improve access to information and communications.

The Communications and Marketing Manager added that the worst area identified by the survey related to team managers. To help address the problem, meetings had been held at Service Manager level and with Cabinet Members. In addition, the Senior Leadership Team had stressed that they would be taking a firmer approach to team managers and their communications with their staff as the current levels of dissatisfaction were not acceptable. Members were concerned with the low frequency of team meetings and asked if managers were prepared for holding team meetings. The Communications and Marketing Manager advised that, as the survey is anonymous, it was difficult to identify which teams were affected; however holding team meetings was in the team manager's job description so they should be prepared to arrange them.

Members asked if the Council was concerned over the falling number of employees who said that they were proud to tell others that they worked for the Council. The Leader and the Communications and Marketing

Manager advised that the overall trend was good compared to other organisations.

Members asked if the response rate to the survey had increased. The Communications and Marketing Manager replied that the response rate had fallen from 59 per cent to 43 per cent. There had been issues accessing the survey due to server problems which led to some employees giving up before submitting the survey, though extra paper copies were produced to help address this. In addition, one service area had boycotted the survey and the data from two service areas was so low it could not be relied upon.

The Chair commented that the indicators overall were encouraging and praised the proactive approach taken to address the areas of concern that had been raised. The Chair also commended the external website and Aspire, in particular their ability to be accessed on mobile devices. The Chair thanked the Leader and Communications and Marketing Manager for attending.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- 1) That the progress report be noted.
- 2) That the Chairs' comments be noted.

### **6 FORWARD PLAN**

The Forward Plan was considered by the forum.

#### **RESOLVED –**

That the Forward Plan be noted.

### **7 SCRUTINY MONITORING**

The Scrutiny Monitoring schedule was considered by the forum.

#### **RESOLVED –**

1. That the Monitoring Schedule be approved.

2. That the Forum notes the updates on OP4 and OP5 that were provided through the earlier agenda items on Great Place, Great Service and Internal and External Communications.

## **8 WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE OVERVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY FORUM**

The Work Programme for the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum was considered. The Chair noted that the Work Programme now also contained information on when Scrutiny Monitoring was due and which Corporate Working Groups were reporting in to the committee.

The Policy and Scrutiny Officer was invited to explain to the Forum the difference between a Scrutiny Project Group and a Corporate Working Group. It was explained Scrutiny Project Groups (SPGs) are working groups created by Overview and Scrutiny Committees (OSC). The SPG would then report back, and make any recommendations, to the relevant OSC. An OSC then has statutory power to make reports and recommendations to the Executive (Cabinet) or Council.

Corporate Working Groups are created by the Council or the Executive. The Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum may be invited by the Corporate Working Group to appoint one or more members to join. The appointed Scrutiny Member(s) would then report back from the Corporate Working Group to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee. If a request for a Scrutiny Member to join a working group needed a quick decision, the Chairs could invite and agree a nomination to be retrospectively approved by the Forum at its next meeting.

### **RESOLVED –**

- 1) That the Work Programme be approved.
- 2) That the following appointments to the Concessions Policy Corporate Working Group be approved by the Forum: Cllr J Barr, Cllr Catt, Cllr Sarvent and Cllr Slack.
- 3) That the reporting back process for the following groups be approved:



- a. Councillor Derbyshire to report back to the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum from the Member Development Working Group;
- b. Councillor Sarvent to report back to the Community, Customer and Organisational Scrutiny Committee from the Constitution Working Group;
- c. Councillor Perkins to report back to the Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee from the Housing Policy/HRA Working Group.

## 9 **JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

No issues were raised for Joint Overview and Scrutiny.

## 10 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY DEVELOPMENTS**

The Policy and Scrutiny Officer reported on the Sheffield City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee (SCR CA OSC). A draft scheme of governance for the combined authority containing arrangements for the delivery of the combined authority's overview and scrutiny function, was to be considered by the SCR CA OSC on 27 June, 2016 with public consultation due to begin in early July, 2016. The scheme of governance was expected to go back to SCR CA OSC on 21 July, 2016 with the intention of submitting the scheme to the Secretary of State in October/November 2016.

In addition members were informed that the Centre for Public Scrutiny had carried out a piece of work commissioned by the Local Government Association and had published a guidance document on devolution and governance. However, the guidance was more general than originally anticipated and did not contain outcomes specific to SCR CA OSC or other combined authorities overview and scrutiny committees.

### **RESOLVED –**

That the updates be noted.

## 11 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum held on 10 May, 2016 were presented.

**RESOLVED –**

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