

OVERVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY FORUM**Thursday, 19th June, 2014**

Present:-

Councillor Slack (Chair)

Councillors	Innes	Gilby+++++ ++++++
	Bagley	King++ ++++++ ++++++
	Blank+++++	Lowe
	Borrell	Paul Stone
	Burrows +++	

Barry Dawson, Head of Finance +++
 Anita Cunningham, Policy and Scrutiny Officer
 John Fern, Communications and Marketing Manager ++++
 Sara Goodwin, Head of Governance +
 John Moran, GPGS Project Manager ++++
 Donna Reddish, Policy Manager +++++
 Gerard Rogers, Deputy Monitoring Officer ++
 Mary Stead, Democratic Services Officer

+ Attended for Minute No. 3
 ++ Attended for Minute No. 4
 +++ Attended for Minute No. 5
 ++++ Attended for Minute No. 6
 +++++ Attended for Minute No. 7
 ++++++ Attended for Minute No. 8

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

No declarations were received.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Bradford, Callan, Hawksworth and Lang.

3 REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER ON APPOINTMENT OF A SCRUTINY MEMBER TO SHEFFIELD CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY

The Monitoring Officer submitted a proposal to appoint a Scrutiny Member to Sheffield City Region Combined Authority.

As a non-constituent member of the Sheffield City Region Combined Authority, Chesterfield Borough Council had been invited to nominate a Member, who would

have voting rights, to attend the Combined Authority's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum would propose a nominee to Full Council for approval.

RESOLVED –

(1) That Scrutiny agree the nomination of Councillor Innes as Member of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum to be the Council's representative on the Scrutiny Committee of the Sheffield City Region Combined Authority.

(2) That the nomination be referred to Full Council for approval at its meeting on 30 July, 2014.

4 EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR GOVERNANCE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT - REPORT ON THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION

The Executive Member for Governance and Organisational Development and the Deputy Monitoring Officer provided an update on the Council's Constitution.

The update included a definition of the constitution, and an explanation of the reasons why councils must have a constitution to take decisions and implement them. Details of the structure of the current constitution were given, and the reasons for reviewing it were explained.

A Constitution Working Group had reviewed the Constitution in order to simplify, shorten and modernise it. The revised Constitution would be more accessible and easier to update. It would allow more delegation of decision-making to officers, leaving Members to take the higher-level policy and strategy decisions.

The Constitution was now available on line, and could therefore be more easily updated when necessary.

Sections that had been extensively rewritten included Scrutiny Procedures and Standards and Codes of Conduct, in order to reflect changed procedures. Revisions of Part 3, which covers delegations, were still being carried out.

During the review process, new factors had emerged that would influence the new Constitution. These included the Great Place:Great Service strategy, and the Heads of Service review.

Other local authority constitutions had been studied, and the one used by Oxford City Council was believed to provide a model for a clearer and simpler constitution. The Constitution Working Group was in the process of adapting the Oxford model to produce a constitution for Chesterfield Borough Council. This would be an enabling constitution, which would be responsive to change, easier to navigate, simpler, in Plain English and much shorter.

After discussion by political groups and Council services, it would be considered by Full Council and if adopted, training would then be given to staff and Members on this new Constitution.

RESOLVED –

(1) That the update be noted.

(2) That the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum supported, in principle, the proposed revised Constitution.

5 LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION - PROGRESS REPORT ON THE BUDGET

The Leader of the Council, and the Head of Finance submitted a report on the General Fund Revenue and Capital Outturns for 2013/14, providing details of significant variations from the revised estimates.

A verbal update was given on the most recent changes to the Council's financial position, as a result of property sales, borrowing to implement the Capital Programme and backdated business rate appeals affecting the Collection Fund.

Carry Forward requests listed in the report had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 17 June, 2014.

The Head of Finance responded to Members' questions about the details of the Budget report, and would be providing a further budget report to Cabinet in July 2014.

RESOLVED –

That the Head of Finance be thanked for the update.

6 DEPUTY LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR PLANNING, EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR GOVERNANCE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CUSTOMERS AND COMMUNITIES - PROGRESS REPORT ON GREAT PLACE, GREAT SERVICE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Planning, the Executive Member for Governance and Organisational Development, and the Executive Member for Customers and Communities, the Communications and Marketing Manager and the GPGS Programme Manager provided an update on the four aspects of the Great Place:Great Service (GPGS) strategy: Workforce, Property/Accommodation, ICT and Customer Services.

The GPGS strategy was being implemented by staff in Business Transformation, ICT, Communications and the Project Academy, and it also involved Kier and arvato, through the Public:Private Partnership arrangements. The GPGS Steering Group was meeting fortnightly, and had delegated decision-making powers.

A list of successes was given, including installation of Wifi in Town Hall Committee Rooms, the disposal of some Council properties, and the letting of the Town Hall Lower Ground Floor to voluntary agencies. Work was in progress to set up a model office, in order to consult staff about their proposed new working environment.

Senior staff were being trained to implement a LEAN approach, and were being given leadership coaching. It was intended that every employee would be offered the opportunity to spend three years acquiring an NVQ to enhance their skills. A training programme 'The Art of Being Your Best' had already been attended by over a quarter of the workforce. Workforce development was being achieved by these measures.

Data on all contacts made by the public with the Council was being analysed, to identify opportunities for channel shift so that the public would use more self-service and rely less on interaction with staff to achieve the service that they were accessing.

It was hoped that progress towards implementing a Customer Relations Management system would be made, enabling a better workflow to be designed and implemented. The intention was to establish an electronic mailroom, replacing, as far as possible, the use of the internal post within the Council.

A Document Management System was being implemented, and a pilot programme was under way in Planning, where documents were being back-scanned, to reduce the amount of stored paperwork, making storage rooms available for other uses. A workflow programme was being trialled in Governance, through the Legal Case Management system.

Improvements in the ICT system were required to implement the GPGS programme. The ICT service was under discussion with arvato, because the Council's expectations had changed as the use of electronic media and digital data storage had developed since the contracts had been signed. Work was also in progress to rationalise the Council's ICT hardware and software, to facilitate communication between services, and with the public.

Consideration was being given to encouraging staff to work more flexibly, if this suited their job, and staff were being categorised into five groups, depending on how easily they could deliver the service without being present on Council premises for the whole working week.

Better asset management was crucial to the implementation of GPGS, because disposal of assets would raise the funding needed to train and equip staff to deliver the services in a more cost-effective and efficient way. Examples were given of assets recently sold, to enable activity to be concentrated in premises that were better adapted to new ways of working, and also more accessible to the public.

Details were provided of a communications programme to keep staff updated on GPGS progress. The staff survey carried out in 2014 had indicated which aspects of the transformation programme needed more attention and resources, and efforts

would be made to respond to the issues raised in the survey, by implementing an action plan and by improving communication with staff..

RESOLVED –

That the reports be noted.

7 DEPUTY LEADER FOR PLANNING - PROGRESS REPORT ON CORPORATE PERFORMANCE

The Deputy Leader for Planning and the Policy Manager submitted a progress report on Corporate Performance, based on the draft Annual Performance Management report that would be submitted to Cabinet on 7 July, 2014.

The report included details of the performance outturn against the 2013/14 Corporate Plan.

80% of Corporate Plan targets had been met or exceeded, despite the financial challenges faced by the Council.

The report included details of opportunities to improve performance further in 2014/15 by using the Local Government Association's LG Inform Benchmarking tool, through learning about best practice from the East Midlands Councils Performance Management Network, and through partnership evaluation, to ensure that partnerships offered the best possible value for money.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

8 EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR GOVERNANCE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT - DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT ON OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS

The Executive Member for Governance and Organisational Development and the Policy and Scrutiny Officer submitted their report on the Annual Review of Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements.

The report had been produced in response to Cabinet Minute No. 0056 (2013/14) requiring an annual review of progress in implementing the Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements Action Plan.

The report gave details of scrutiny successes and achievements, during the two years in which the new scrutiny arrangements had been in place. It also provided information on the timetable and methodology of the review process, including a survey of Members and officers.

The survey results had been analysed, and key findings included:

- generally positive views of the scrutiny arrangements
- a need to promote learning and development
- improvements in resourcing for scrutiny work
- greater understanding of Scrutiny Project Group scoping
- the value of pre-agenda meetings.

Scrutiny Members were thanked for their hard work and co-operation in improving the scrutiny process, and increasing its value to the Council .

It was agreed that improvements were still needed to most aspects of the internal communication process, to enable Scrutiny members to do their work more easily, and to keep staff and other Members informed of their role and progress.

Recommendations would be made to Council on the current working arrangements, and on ways to promote and develop them, so as to continue the effective and efficient delivery of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function.

RESOLVED –

That the report and recommendations be supported and submitted to Cabinet and Council for approval.

9 SCRUTINY PROJECT GROUP REPORT ON EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Councillors Bagley and Borrell presented the draft report of the Scrutiny Project Group on External Communications. They had worked closely with the Council's Communications and Marketing Manager to undertake the work.

The report summarised the Council's current communications arrangements, and gave details of the review and evaluation of these arrangements.

It also provided information on the communications strategies used by Lincoln City Council, Derbyshire County Council and the Peak District National Park Authority. Data on website usage had been analysed. Consumer feedback had been considered through use of the 'Are You Being Served?' survey data.

It was believed that there would be a requirement to update the Council's External Communications strategy to meet changing customer requirements, and to respond to organisational changes within the Council, including new ways of working, as part of the GPGS strategy.

There was considerable discussion of the impact on staff of rising customer expectations, which required a change in the policies for responding to enquiries and complaints, offering a more rapid response. Where possible, such matters should be referred to the Customer Services Team, or to other specialist staff who would be able to provide an accurate and appropriate response.

Recommendations in the report were made for a new consumer-led communications strategy for Chesterfield Borough Council. These included a need for:

- clear branding and a 'one council' approach
- better co-ordination of marketing and communication activities
- use of data on usage to develop more effective web content
- consideration of adopting a 'digital first' approach to external communication.

RESOLVED –

That the report be approved and the recommendations be made to Cabinet.

10 OVERVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY FORUM ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14

The draft Scrutiny Annual Report for 2013/14 was presented by the Policy and Scrutiny Officer.

Minor amendments were proposed, and the Chair and Chief Executive's comments were still to be added to it.

RESOLVED –

That the report be agreed in principle, and presented to the next meeting of Council.

11 FORWARD PLAN

The Forward Plan was considered.

It was agreed that the External Communications Scrutiny Project Group report and recommendations be added to it by the Policy and Scrutiny Officer.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

12 SCRUTINY MONITORING

Consideration was given to the Monitoring forum for the implementation of Scrutiny Committee recommendations.

RESOLVED –

That Anti-Social Behaviour policies would continue to be monitored, but that there were no further items to add at this time.

13 WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE OVERVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY FORUM

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

The Work Programme included items that were on the Agenda for every meeting, including Great Place:Great Service and the Council's Budget, as well as those that having been dealt with at this meeting, could now be removed.

Members expressed concern that some issues on the work programme, including those relating to the Housing service, could not always be considered by Scrutiny because reports were not available and then went straight to Cabinet without any prior Scrutiny input.

An example was Tenant Involvement, because the report to Cabinet may have been made before the next meeting of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum in September 2014.

There was discussion of ways to avoid these problems, including greater use being made of the Scrutiny Link Officer meetings and the Scrutiny agenda pre-meetings.

Clarification was also given of the role of the Scrutiny committees. The Overview and Performance Forum deals with corporate issues, and the Enterprise and Wellbeing and Community, Customer and Organisational Scrutiny Committee deal with issues within the relevant service areas, referring matters to the Forum if they appear to be of corporate relevance.

The remit of the three Scrutiny committees had been set out in their Terms of Reference, and agreed by Members and Council.

Some discussion related to the work being done on Health Inequalities, currently the responsibility of the Community, Customer and Organisational Scrutiny Committee, but with cross-cutting implications which might make it a corporate issue.

Because the Forum's remit included responding to public petitions, occasionally that committee dealt with service-related issues, for example the response to the petition on dog control.

Scrutiny Project Groups could be set up by any of the three Scrutiny Committees, and any Scrutiny Member could join them, as could any backbencher.

Suggestions for future Agendas included:

- an update on the STAR survey of Housing tenants;
- a progress report on dog control measures.

- a review of the Council's policies on payments by the public, including rent, Council Tax and also invoices, unless the Community, Customer and Organisational Scrutiny Committee undertook to add this item to their work programme.

Some of these issues could be covered by written reports, but some would need to be considered at meetings of the Forum. It would also be possible to receive briefings on Council policies during the Learning and Development sessions.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the STAR survey be considered at the next meeting.
- (2) That Tenant Involvement be considered at the next meeting unless it had been covered by other means before the meeting.

14 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY DEVELOPMENTS

The Policy and Scrutiny Officer reported that there would be a Learning and Development session on the Scrutiny Survey, to enable Members to examine it more closely.

The Parliamentary Communities and Local Government Select Committee call for evidence, to support its inquiry into Community Rights, had also been circulated for consideration.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

15 JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

The Policy and Scrutiny Officer reported that the Minutes of the last Joint Overview and Scrutiny Panel were not yet available but would be circulated to Scrutiny Members for information.

There were no issues raised for consideration by the next Joint Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

16 SCRUTINY PROJECT GROUP PROGRESS UPDATES

An update was requested on the Scrutiny Project Group progress on:-

Welfare Reform

No report was available.

17 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum held on 3 April 2014 were presented.

RESOLVED –

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