

OVERVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY FORUM MEETING

Wednesday, 10th September, 2014

Present:-

Councillor Innes(Chair)

Councillors	Burrows +++++	Gibson
	Borrell	King +
	Bradford	Hill +
	Callan	Tom Murphy
	Flood	Slack
		Paul Stone

Jonathan Alsop, ICT Projects Manager ++
 Anita Cunningham, Policy and Scrutiny Officer
 Barry Dawson, Head of Finance +++++
 Martin Elliott, Committee and Scrutiny Coordinator
 Julie McGrogan, Housing Service Manager – Customer Division ++++
 John Moran, GPGS Project Manager ++
 Donna Reddish, Policy Manager +++

+	Attended for Minute Nos. 20 and 21
++	Attended for Minute No. 20
+++	Attended for Minute No. 21
++++	Attended for Minute No. 22
+++++	Attended for Minute No. 23

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

No declarations were received.

19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Bagley, Hawksworth and Lowe.

20 **EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR GOVERNANCE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT - PROGRESS REPORT ON ICT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE GREAT PLACE, GREAT SERVICE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME.**

The Executive Member for Governance and Organisational Development, the Great Place, Great Service Project Manager and the ICT Projects Manager provided an update on ICT developments in the Great Place, Great Service Transformation Programme.

The Great Place, Great Service Project Manager provided details on progress regarding Document Management Systems, Flexible Working and the progress of the development of Self Service facilities to enable residents to access Council Services effectively and efficiently.

The ICT Projects Manager presented a report on the Great Place, Great Service ICT developments in relation to the ICT Strategy 2012 - 2014. The implementation of this Strategy was being merged with the needs and goals of the Council's Great Place, Great Service initiative.

The Forum was also advised of the current situation regarding Microsoft Licences and that the Council was currently "under-licensed". The ICT Projects Manager gave details of the various options being considered to resolve this situation.

Members asked questions regarding the under-licensing situation and were provided with cost details. Members also asked questions regarding self service, flexible working, data security, ICT procurement and accessing documents on iPads when not at the Town Hall.

It was asked if the possibility of the Council employing an ICT expert to represent the its interests when dealing with arvato, had been considered. The Executive Member and Project Managers advised that this was something that was seen as beneficial and was being considered.

The Executive Member for Governance and Organisational Development, the Great Place, Great Service Project Manager and the ICT Projects Manager were thanked for their update.

RESOLVED –

That the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum recommend that Chesterfield Borough Council employ an ICT specialist to represent the Council's ICT needs and requirements.

21 **EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR GOVERNANCE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT - REPORT ON THE ANNUAL REVIEW OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS**

The Executive Member for Governance and Organisational Development and Policy Manager presented the report on the Annual Review of Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements.

The Executive Member gave clarification on the purpose of the report in that it was to evaluate both members and officers experiences of the Scrutiny process.

It was reported that in July 2010 Council agreed to undertake an external review of the overview and scrutiny function. Following this independent review new arrangements were put in place subject to annual evaluation to ensure ongoing improvement.

This report detailed the 2013/14 annual evaluation which involved the survey of Council Members, Chief / Senior Officers, Service Managers and Scrutiny Link Officers, 127 in total. The 44 responses received gave an improved response rate of 16% on last year.

When benchmarking against the 2012/13 review 50% of the measures showed some improvement and 50% declined in performance. In addition concerns had been raised about the large number of respondents choosing the “don’t know” option for the questions indicating a lack of awareness or engagement in overview and scrutiny..

The report also highlighted a number of key changes influencing overview and scrutiny functions since the 2011 external review. These included Health and Wellbeing responsibilities and the Sheffield City Region Combined Authority; Re-focused Corporate Planning and associated resource alignment; Major restructures impacting on Scrutiny including the Corporate Management Team, Governance Service and Policy Service.

It was considered timely to revisit the findings of the 2011 external review and the subsequent arrangements put in place. The scope of the proposed new review included Overview and Scrutiny structure; policies procedures and documents; Overview and Scrutiny work programme; officer resource; and awareness and engagement in the Overview and Scrutiny process. The review should be completed by February 2015 to be implemented early in the 2015/16 financial year.

Members of the forum noted that many Members of the Council find the Scrutiny process confusing and that after the review training for Officers and Members should be arranged to increase understanding of the Scrutiny process.

RESOLVED –

1. That the recommendation that an extended internal review of Overview and Scrutiny arrangements takes place during 2014/15 be supported.

2. That the recommendation that the current Overview and Scrutiny committees and arrangements be retained until the 2014/15 review is completed be supported.
3. That further training for Members and Officers be provided after the review.

22 **EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING - REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF TENANT INVOLVEMENT**

The Assistant Executive Member for Housing and the Housing Service Manager, Customer Division presented the report on the Review of Tenant Involvement.

The Housing Service Manager, Customer Division advised that it was important that tenant involvement arrangements fit in with tenant's needs and that the report looked at how tenant involvement in Chesterfield Borough should look in the future to meet tenant's needs effectively.

The Housing Service Manager, Customer Division explained that the Tenant Executive had been noted as a particular area of concern. Membership of the Tenant Executive was small and was also not very representative of the demographics of the Community. Efforts had been made to make the membership more representative of the tenant body but these had been unsuccessful.

It was also reported that a particular area of concern with the current tenant involvement arrangements were low attendance at Area Panels and that it had been very difficult to increase attendances. It was noted that attendances did increase when a particular issue of concern was being discussed but that attendance would fall again when the issue had been resolved. As this method of engagement was the main method of engagement and was not working it was necessary to look at alternative methods.

The Forum was advised that there was now a Tenant Involvement Vehicle that goes around the estates and was proving very effective in managing to engage with a broader tenant group.

Members were pleased to see the proposal to have a reward scheme for young people to encourage them to get involved in community activities, such as litter picking, as a positive way of getting young people involved in their local communities.

Members asked several questions on the report and the Assistant Executive Member for Housing and the Housing Service Manager, Customer Division provided detailed answers. Members also asked what feedback from tenants there had been to the proposals. The Assistant Executive Member advised that while any proposed changes were seen with concern that overall the feedback received on the proposals was positive.

The Assistant Executive Member and the Housing Service Manager, Customer Division were thanked for the update for answering the Forum's questions.

RESOLVED –

1. That the proposal that Area Panels be discontinued and replaced by estate based Tenant Engagement events, be supported.
2. That the proposal to dissolve the Tenant Executive and replaced it with less formal, workshop style Service Review Groups to look at particular parts of the Service, be supported.
3. That the proposal to end funding of TARA's with effect from 31 March 2015 be supported.
4. That the proposal to with work with the two TARAs during the remainder of this financial year to assist them in securing alternative funding and in ensuring that they are financially secure going forward, be supported.
5. That the proposal to pool the Estate Improvement Budget thus enabling larger projects to be considered, be supported.

23 LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION -
REPORT ON BUDGET MONITORING FOR 2014/2015 AND UPDATED
MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

The Council Leader and Executive Member for Regeneration and Head of Finance presented the Report on Budget Monitoring for 2014/2015 and Updated Medium Term Financial Plan.

The indications were that the medium term outlook would continue to be challenging. A provisional Government Grant allocation for 2015/16 was released as part of the 2014/15 settlement process but there had been no indication about subsequent years. The Medium Term forecast approved by the Full Council on 27th February 2014 showed a deficit of £1.2m in 2015/16 rising to £2.0m in 2016/17 before the savings targets were taken into account. The savings assumed in the budget were £1.7m in both 2015/16 and 2016/17, leaving a net surplus in 2015/16 of £0.5m and a deficit in 2016/17 of £0.3m.

The financial year started with a forecast surplus of £244k after allowing for £824k of savings. The latest forecast, after just four months into the financial year, showed that the originally forecast surplus of **£244k** had now changed to a deficit of **£301k**.

The report further outlined budget variances in the current financial year, highlighting future budget issues and providing an update on the medium term financial forecast. A number of measures were also proposed to tackle the forecast deficit position in the short and medium-term.

The Head of Finance advised that due to poor attendance and engagement the process of Budget Consultation with the public was under review in order to develop a method of consultation that more residents would participate in.

It was also advised that while it is not unusual for a pessimistic budget forecast to be produced at the early stages of a financial year, only for a surplus to be achieved by the end of the year, these early warning signs need to be taken seriously and acted upon.

Members asked several questions relating to aspects of the report which the Leader and the Head of Finance answered. Members also asked what the Budget situation may look like at the end of the financial year. The Head of Finance advised that he expected some but not all of the anticipated deficits to be resolved.

The Leader advised that it was getting more difficult each year to balance the budget with the financial pressures currently being experienced by local authorities. Members noted that despite these budgetary pressures the Council was still providing excellent services to residents.

Members thanked the Leader and Head of Finance for attending and presenting a good report and for doing well in managing the Council's finances.

RESOLVED -

1. That the budget monitoring report for the four months to the end of July be noted.
2. That the proposal to review the previously approved use of reserves as set out in Section 6 of the report, be supported.
3. That the updated medium term forecast, risks and savings targets be noted.
4. That the budget preparation guidelines be noted.
5. That the consideration of change to the approach to budget consultation be supported.
6. That the proposed short and medium term actions to address the forecast budget deficits be supported.

24 REVISED SCRUTINY PROJECT GROUP GUIDANCE

The Policy and Scrutiny Officer presented the revised version of the guidance document for Scrutiny Project Groups.

The document had had some small tidying amendments with the only major change being to paragraph 10 stating that final Scrutiny Project Group reports must be received at a Scrutiny Business Meeting for sign off before the report progresses

through the decision making process. The Policy and Scrutiny Officer would then manage transition of all reports to Scrutiny Committee and onwards to Cabinet (or other decision making body) as appropriate.

RESOLVED –

That the revised version of the guidance document for Scrutiny Project Groups be approved.

25 FORWARD PLAN

The Forward Plan was considered. Progress with Key Decision No 296 Careline Consortium was raised.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Forward Plan be noted.
2. That it be noted that Key Decision No. 296 Careline Consortium would be scheduled for the agenda of the meeting of the Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on 2 October, 2014

26 SCRUTINY MONITORING

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

RESOLVED –

1. That the Review of External Communications Scrutiny Project Group be discussed on agenda item 11, Work Programme for the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum.
2. That the Anti Social Behaviour item be removed from the Monitoring report.

27 SCRUTINY PROJECT GROUP PROGRESS UPDATES

An update was requested on the progress of the Scrutiny Project Group on Welfare Reform. No report was available.

RESOLVED –

That the Committee and Scrutiny Coordinator contact the Scrutiny Project Group leader for an update on this project group.

28 WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE OVERVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY FORUM

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

The Chair advised that the first meeting of the Scrutiny Project Group on Dog Fouling had taken place this week.

RESOLVED –

1. That an update of the External Communications Policy be scheduled for the January meeting of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum.
2. That the item on Dog Control Measures Progress Report be scheduled for the January meeting of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum.
3. That an update on the Chesterfield Procurement Service be circulated to Members of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum.
4. That an update on the item on Corporate Asset Management be circulated to Members of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum.
5. That the item on the Disposal of Hazardous Waste be removed from the Work Programme.
6. That the Asbestos Disposal Policy is circulated to Members of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum.

29 JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

The Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Scrutiny Panel held on 28 July, 2014 were presented.

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes be noted.

30 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY DEVELOPMENTS

The Policy and Scrutiny Officer asked the Members of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum whether they wanted to continue having:

- Great Place, Great Service briefings held before meetings of the Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee meetings.

- Scrutiny training sessions held before meetings of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum.

Members agreed that these sessions were useful and that they benefited from attending them.

RESOLVED -

1. That the Great Place, Great Service briefings before meetings of the Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee meeting continue.
2. That the Scrutiny training sessions before meetings of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum continue.

31 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum held on 19 June 2014 were presented.

RESOLVED –

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