

OVERVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY FORUM MEETING

Thursday, 30th January, 2014

Present:-

Councillor Innes (Chair)

Councillors	Bagley	Gilby +++++ +++++
	Borrell	Hawksworth
	Bradford	King + ++
	Burrows +++	Lowe
	Callan	Tom Murphy
	Flood	Slack
	Gibson	

Anita Cunningham, Scrutiny Officer

Barry Dawson, Head of Finance +++

Mark Evans, Head of Business Transformation + ++

Sara Goodwin, Head of Governance +

Steve Miller, arvato Head of Architecture and Design ++

John Moran, Client Officer +++++

Donna Reddish, Policy Manager +++++

Mary Stead, Democratic Services Officer

Darren Webber, arvato Head of ICT ++

+ Attended for Minute No. 62

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

No declarations were received.

61 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lang.

62 **EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR GOVERNANCE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT - REPORT ON CHESTERFIELD PROCUREMENT SERVICE**

Councillor King, Executive Member for Governance and Organisational Development, Sara Goodwin, Head of Governance, and Mark Evans, Head of Business Transformation explained the reasons for the restructure of the Council's Procurement function.

The rationale for the restructure included:

- Experience gained from operating a short term in-house solution when Chesterfield withdrew from the Shared Procurement Unit hosted by Bolsover District Council.
- Increasing demands on the Procurement Unit, resulting from several major projects currently being undertaken by the Council, for example by Housing Services.
- Delivering the fundamental objectives of the Procurement function, to ensure that the process was legal, low-risk and achieved best value for the Council.
- Additional work to ensure compliance with the new EU Public Procurement Directives, and other legislation.
- Implementing the transition to electronic procurement activity, in line with these new directives.

At Joint Cabinet and Employment and General Committee Minute No. 24 the appointment of a Procurement Manager and a Procurement Officer had been approved. The additional cost of these posts would be financed from the Housing Revenue Account.

There was discussion about the difficulties recruiting suitably qualified and experienced Procurement staff, and the need to work in partnership with other local authorities where possible.

The Head of Governance and Head of Business Transformation were thanked for providing an explanation of the need to appoint Procurement staff at this time.

It was also recommended that a shared service option should be looked at in the future.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted, and a shared service option be looked at in the future.

63 EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR GOVERNANCE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT - PROGRESS REPORT ON THE ICT STRATEGY

Councillor King, Executive Member for Governance and Organisational Development, Mark Evans, Head of Business Transformation, Steve Miller, arvato Head of Architecture and Design, and Darren Webber, arvato ICT Manager, attended the meeting to provide a summary of the Council's ICT Strategy 2012 – 2014.

The ICT Strategy was intended to facilitate delivery of the Corporate Plan 2012 -15, the Borough Council's Transformation Plan, the Customer Services Strategy, the Workforce Strategy, the Corporate Management Plan and the 'Great Place, Great Service' strategy, in which ICT would play a key role.

The ICT Strategy governance structure and Terms of Reference had been approved in January 2013 and has subsequently been considered in detail in joint workshops involving Heads of Service, Service Managers, and senior arvato managers, as well as ICT Project Teams. These workshops had produced a prioritised ICT Project Programme.

Governance was through an ICT Strategic Board, operational management and specialised user groups to prioritise projects and implement the strategy.

Key themes in the ICT Strategy were:

- developing citizen centric services
- equipping staff and Elected Members to work flexibly, using remote and mobile technology
- improvements to the Application system

- Corporate Intranet development
- Corporate Document Management System
- Geographical Information System
- e-payments
- replacement Contractor System for the Operational Services Division
- migration to new secure network, complying with current regulations and offering better data protection
- changing ICT governance structure to link with the 'Great Place, Great Service' governance structure
- facilitating staff moves within the Town Hall and from East Lodge and Staveley Housing Office.

The Borough Council IT infrastructure had been upgraded by significant investment in new equipment and operating systems that matched more closely the Council's requirements.

Improving communication between systems that had been set up by different departments was a priority, to increase efficiency.

arvato had been able to use its experience in other work-places to suggest ways to resolve IT problems, by integrating systems more effectively, and upgrading equipment. There was now a virtual infrastructure in operation, and back-up units to increase resilience. Access to planning documents had been made easier by a recent upgrade.

Members raised specific IT issues, which would be investigated by the ICT Manager, and requested further training on the use of Ipads, and on more recent versions of Word.

The ICT Strategy included the provision of more self-service options for the public and for Elected Members, and envisaged WiFi provision in major Council buildings, including the Town Hall committee rooms, the Pomegranate and the Winding Wheel.

The Head of Business Transformation and the arvato managers were thanked for their explanation of the ICT Strategy.

RESOLVED -

That Members and staff be trained on the use of the new equipment to guarantee that equipment was used to its full potential.

64 LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION - UPDATE ON THE BUDGET

Councillor Burrows, Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Regeneration, and Barry Dawson, Head of Finance, provided an update on the Council's Budget.

This included information that had become available since the budget briefing given at the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum meeting on 19 December, 2013.

The update included the latest estimates of the possible deficit in 2014/15 and 2015/16, and information about the measures being taken to ensure that a balanced budget could be achieved. The pension revaluation figures were now available, and there had been further advice on business rate appeals.

There was discussion of the possible impact of budget cuts at Derbyshire County Council on services delivered by the Borough Council.

It was agreed that the 'Great Place, Great Service' project was an appropriate way to continue to provide services with reduced funding, and to protect staff from job-losses, by increasing efficiency and flexibility in working methods and service delivery.

Other options for balancing the budget were being considered, and some had already been implemented, including the merging of the Housing and Spirepride depots and some increases in fees and charges.

The changes in Chesterfield's economic base would affect revenue from business rates and Council Tax, now that old-established industries were being replaced by new businesses, but the long-term impact on the town, and on housing demand, would take many years to quantify.

Developments at Markham Vale and Chesterfield Waterside, with investment through Sheffield City Region and D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnerships, were progressing.

The success of Regeneration staff and Destination Chesterfield in promoting Chesterfield had recently been recognised by two national awards, for place-making and for the indoor market. The positive response to an opinion survey of 3000 Chesterfield citizens, with a response from over 800, was encouraging.

The town was attracting an increasing number of visitors, brought by coach and it was estimated that these visits had increased by over 15% in the past three years. Responses from visitors were generally positive.

RESOLVED -

That the Leader and Head of Finance be thanked for their update.

65 DEPUTY LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR PLANNING - PROGRESS REPORT ON 'GREAT PLACE, GREAT SERVICE'

Councillor Gilby, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Planning, and John Moran, Client Manager, gave a progress report on the 'Great Place, Great Service' strategy.

This strategy was intended to protect jobs and continue to deliver services at a reduced cost, because of a reduction of 27% in funding from central government. £1.4 million was being invested to save £3.5 million over 10 years.

The Client Manager explained that this would be a branded programme of activity, bringing together other strategies in an integrated approach. These strategies included:-

- Workforce Strategy
- Customer Services Strategy
- ICT Strategy
- Transformation Strategy.

The 'Great Place, Great Service' strategy had been approved by the Joint Cabinet and Employment and General Committee on 3 December 2013, at Minute No.16, and staff briefings had been given, stating that the first steps in the programme would be implemented within 90 days.

The actions already taken included:-

- appointing a Programme Office and three Project Officers
- establishing a governance structure for the project
- setting up groups of volunteers for key projects
- completing the project architecture (project initiative documents, terms of reference for volunteer groups, and project plans).
- making plans for a model office to show staff how the changes in working environments will look
- trialling a system to avoid the need for staff to clock in and out
- work to refurbish the Town Hall basement to allow for voluntary organisations to move in
- completion of the 'super depot' at Stonegravels for Spirepride and the Operational Services Division
- putting East Lodge on the market
- installing machines to receive rent and council tax payments at the Healthy Living Centre, enabling the Council to market the former Staveley Area Office
- recruiting more staff to join the Project Academy
- working on the installation of WiFi in Committee Room 1 at the Town Hall

Members congratulated the staff concerned on the rapid progress being made in modernising working environments, although there were some reservations about the suitability of 'open plan' offices for all staff.

The Town Hall's listed building status had resulted in delays while consent was obtained to alter the interior of a listed building.

Customers were encouraged to use the Customer Centric Services Centre, as well as on-line and telephone enquiries, instead of coming in person to the Town Hall for advice and assistance. Channel shift, away from face-to-face encounters, was popular with younger people, and self-service options were being increased. Work was in progress to map the current interactions between staff and the public, so that there would be a baseline from which to plan changes.

The use of electronic rather than paper communication was already reducing the cost of postage and printing, and when Document Management Systems were installed in more workplaces this saving would be even greater.

It was hoped that new ways of working would free more space in the Town Hall, to be let to other public sector organisations, to raise revenue.

More flexible working would also make it possible to offer a service to the public for more of the day, in response to demand.

Funds released by the sale of property would be reinvested in measures that would achieve further savings.

The Forum would continue to be updated on progress at every meeting.

RESOLVED -

That a report on the first 90 days of the 'Great Place, Great Service' programme be given to the next meeting of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum.

66 DEPUTY LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR PLANNING - REPORT ON CORPORATE PLAN

Councillor Gilby, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Planning, and Donna Reddish, Policy Manager, provided an update on the Borough Council's Corporate Plan.

As a result of a peer challenge exercise, it had been decided to simplify and prioritise the Corporate Plan, so that the number of projects matched

the funding available and organisational capacity to deliver them. A revised Corporate Plan was being prepared by the Policy Manager and Communications and Marketing Manager.

The proposed priorities related to:-

- making Chesterfield a thriving borough – through a variety of aims such as creating and safeguarding jobs, regeneration projects and attracting visitors to the town;
- improving the quality of life for local people – including aims for decent homes, crime reduction, reduced anti-social behaviour, healthy lifestyles, clean streets and good quality parks and open spaces;
- providing value for money services – including aims around achieving value for money and effective customer service channels.

Proposed key projects for 2014 – 15 were:-

- 'Great Place, Great Service'
- the Waterside development
- achieving the Decent Homes Standard
- building a new Sports Centre at Queen's Park.

After discussion, Members agreed with the suggested priorities, and hoped that some of the other projects from the old Corporate Plan would be reinstated when resources permitted.

The Policy Manager was thanked for her presentation.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

67 FORWARD PLAN

The Forward Plan was considered.

An explanation was given of THI (Townscape Heritage Initiative).

There were no further comments on the Forward Plan.

68 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY DEVELOPMENTS

A development session had been held before the meeting of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum on chairing skills, to benefit Members who wished to chair Scrutiny Project Groups.

There were requests for a further session on questioning skills, especially the sequencing of questions. This would be discussed at the next Scrutiny Business Meeting.

Training on the Borough Council's decision-making process was requested, showing how reports moved through the system to a level where decisions were made.

Further suggestions about training needs would be welcomed by the Scrutiny Officer.

69 SCRUTINY MONITORING

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

The Scrutiny Officer reported that the Scrutiny recommendation on Anti-Social Behaviour would be presented to Cabinet when a report on the same issue was under consideration, probably in late February 2014.

There were no other issues arising from the report.

70 SCRUTINY PROJECT GROUP PROGRESS UPDATES

An update was provided on Scrutiny Project Group progress on:-

Welfare Reform

Councillor Hawksworth had attended a meeting of the National Overview and Scrutiny Forum, about the provision of a toolkit on Welfare Reform, for use by Elected Members.

She had hoped that it would provide information that could be used for the scrutiny project, but it had not done so. A meeting of the project group was being arranged to produce a Scoping Document for this project.

External Communications Strategy

Councillor Borrell reported that visits had been made to Lincoln City Council, Derbyshire County Council and the Peak Park Board, to find out more about their communication processes. Written information had been obtained and would be made available.

Communications policy and practice depended to a large extent on local circumstances. The most obvious difference from Lincoln, for example, was the lack of good local radio and television coverage in the Chesterfield area.

There were some differences that could be addressed, for example in some other organisations the communications team included people working on marketing, whereas the Borough Council had marketing staff, but they did not work closely with the communications unit.

There was sufficient information to write a report, and a draft report would be presented at the next meeting of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum.

71 **WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE OVERVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY FORUM**

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

The Work Programme included items that were on the Agenda for every meeting, as well as those that had been dealt with at this meeting, and could now be removed.

Suggestions for the next Agenda included:

- a report on the Customer Survey results
- a report on the Corporate Asset Management Plan

- an update on the dog control measures at Hasland and their possible roll-out across the Borough..

Updates on the Budget, 'Great Place, Great Service' and the ICT Strategy would also be requested.

The Chair announced that negotiations were in progress with the Tenants' Scrutiny Representatives, in order to find a mutually convenient date to meet.

RESOLVED -

That after a meeting with Tenants' Scrutiny Representatives consideration would be given to adding scrutiny of Tenant Involvement to the active part of the work programme.

72 JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MINUTES

The Minutes of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 21 November, 2014 were provided, for information.

No items were raised for the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Panel agenda.

73 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum held on 28 November, 12 December and 19 December 2013 were presented.

RESOLVED -

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