

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

22 JANUARY 2015

Present: Councillor K Collett (Chair)
Councillors J Aron, N Bell, K Hastrick, A Khan, P Taylor and
D Walford

Officers: Committee and Scrutiny Officer

43 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

There was a change of membership for this meeting: Councillor Taylor replaced Councillor Greenslade and Councillor Khan replaced Councillor Joynes.

Apologies were received from Councillor Dhindsa.

No apologies were received from Councillor Martins.

44 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS (IF ANY)

There were no disclosures of interest.

45 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2014 were submitted and signed.

46 OUTSTANDING ACTIONS AND QUESTIONS

The Scrutiny Committee received a list of outstanding Actions and Questions.

PI 39 (CCS12 – Complaints resolved at Stage 1) and PI 40 (CCS2 – Improved street cleanliness)

It was noted that a further update would be provided in March when the Quarter 3 performance data was due to be considered.

PI 41 (CCS2 – Improved street cleanliness)

The Chair requested that when officers attended the Scrutiny Committee in March they should be asked to provide financial information in respect of fly tipping.

PI 45 (HR1 – sickness absence)

It was noted that the questions and actions had moved away from the original performance indicator. The Chair suggested that if the Scrutiny Committee agreed, this item would be removed from the next update. The Committee and Scrutiny Officer advised that she would start a new reference for any further actions.

The Committee and Scrutiny Officer reported that following the publication of the agenda she had received responses from the Head of Community and Customer Services and Head of Revenues and Benefits. She informed the Scrutiny Committee that the Housing Service provided a drop-in session at set times each day of the week. The information was available on the Council's website. When an advisor was not on duty the member of the public would be offered the option of contacting the service by telephone.

The Head of Revenues and Benefits had advised that the number of staff present in the Customer Service Centre had increased from one officer to two approximately a year ago. A third officer was located in the Customer Service Centre's back office for those times when an additional officer was required in the main reception area. He had added that if another officer was required to be constantly present in the Customer Service Centre this would have an impact on processing claims.

The Committee and Scrutiny Officer stated that the full responses would be circulated to the Scrutiny Committee and would be attached to the minutes for this meeting.

Councillor Bell asked whether the recent letters sent to those people on the housing list had had an impact on the number of visitors to the Customer Service Centre. The Committee and Scrutiny Officer said that she would contact the service and report back to the Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Taylor suggested that average waiting times for Revenues and Benefits could be added to the information reported to the Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel.

The Committee and Scrutiny Officer responded that she would contact the Head of Revenues and Benefits to ask if this information could be provided at future meetings.

PI 47 (Review of the Corporate Plan)

The Chair informed the Scrutiny Committee that she had met with the Partnerships and Performance Section Head and Committee and Scrutiny Officer and reviewed the Corporate Plan. A number of areas had been suggested as potential scrutiny topics and would be included in the work programme for 2015/16.

In response to a question about a future review of Communications and its content, the Committee and Scrutiny Officer explained that only the subjects had been identified and further work needed to be carried out on the scope of the reviews. The Scrutiny Committee would be able to discuss the subjects in more detail at its first meeting in the new Municipal Year. Members would be able to suggest specific requirements for each subject that they wanted to scrutinise.

Councillor Khan commented that in his opinion too much work had been taken from Overview and Scrutiny Committee and transferred to Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel. He felt that all performance indicators should be reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This Scrutiny Committee should have an overview of all scrutiny within the Borough.

The Committee and Scrutiny Officer advised that when Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel had been established, it had been agreed that the terms of reference should include the review of the relevant performance indicators for the outsourced services. She added that the Scrutiny Panel was able to monitor the indicators and identify any issues as they arose; it was immediately able to review its work programme and amend it as necessary. The Scrutiny Panel had also requested additional performance data following its reviews.

Councillor Taylor, who chaired Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel, suggested that the Constitution Working Party could be asked to review the arrangements and consider whether further changes needed to be made to the terms of reference for Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel.

Councillor Khan commented that if he wished to raise a matter at this meeting about a service which had been contracted out, he was unable to and would have to wait until the relevant scrutiny meeting met.

RESOLVED –

1. that the update be amended as noted.
2. that the Committee and Scrutiny Officer contact the Head of Democracy and Governance to request a meeting of the Constitution Working Party be arranged to review the terms of reference for Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel.

47

EXECUTIVE DECISION PROGRESS REPORT

The Scrutiny Committee received the latest edition of the Executive Decision Progress Report 2014/15.

Following a question from Councillor Khan regarding those cases when call-in had not been applicable, the Committee and Scrutiny Officer explained the General Exception and Special Urgency rules as set out in the Council's Constitution. She advised that when officers informed Democratic Services that an urgent decision needed to be taken the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny

Committee was contacted and asked to agree that a decision could be taken under the Special Urgency rules.

The Chair advised that she took this role very seriously and thoroughly reviewed any requests. When she felt that more information was needed before she could make a decision, she would contact the relevant Head of Service.

RESOLVED –

that the report be noted.

48

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillor Aron, the Council's representative appointed to the Health Scrutiny Committee, informed Members that since the last Overview and Scrutiny Committee she had attended two Health Scrutiny Committees, including a visit to Watford Hospital. She referred Members to the *Your Care, Your Future* review that was currently being carried out in West Hertfordshire. She encouraged Members to inform their residents about this important review. She had been informed at Health Scrutiny Committee that only 357 responses had been received. NHS England had been asked to attend the Scrutiny Committee's meeting in June to provide feedback on the responses to the review.

The agendas, reports and minutes for the Health Scrutiny Committee were available on the County Council's website.

RESOLVED –

that the update be noted.

49

BUDGET PANEL

Councillor Khan, Chair of Budget Panel, reported that Budget Panel had met twice since November. At the December meeting the Panel had reviewed the proposed fees and charges for 2015/16. The Panel had recommended to Cabinet that charges for the removal of graffiti should be frozen until a scrutiny review could take place.

The Committee and Scrutiny Officer advised that she was unsure whether the Panel's recommendation had been accepted by Cabinet. She would contact the Democratic Services Manager and Director of Finance Shared Services to seek an update and then report back to Budget Panel and Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Khan stated that at the meeting held in January, the Panel had discussed the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the draft budget for 2015/16, prior to their consideration by Cabinet.

RESOLVED –

that the update be noted.

50 **OUTSOURCED SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL**

Councillor Taylor, Chair of Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel, informed the Scrutiny Committee that there had been two meetings since November. The first meeting, which was held in November, scrutinised the contract with Veolia. Members had raised their concerns about street cleansing. In January the Scrutiny Panel had reviewed SLM; cleaning had been discussed and the work being carried out by the contractor to resolve this issue. The Scrutiny Panel had carried out two site visits; one to Woodside Leisure Centre and the other to the Depot. It was noted that at its next meeting the Scrutiny Panel would be carrying out a further review of the contract with Capita and the provision of ICT services.

RESOLVED –

that the update be noted.

51 **COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP TASK GROUP**

The Community Safety Partnership Task Group had met once since November. Councillor McLeod, the Chair of the Task Group had provided a written update as she was unable to attend the meeting. The Committee and Scrutiny Officer apologised that the update was not available; however, she had been unable to open the document. It would be circulated as soon as possible.

It was noted that an all-member briefing on domestic violence had been arranged for 18 February. At the Task Group's next meeting the Probation Service would be attending to explain about its service.

RESOLVED –

that the update be circulated as soon as possible.

52 **PROPERTY TASK GROUP UPDATE**

Councillor Bell, the Chair of the Property Task Group, informed the Scrutiny Committee that the Task Group had not met. At its last meeting it had been agreed that officers should move forward in respect of garages and hostels. Councillor Bell advised that he was not aware if any action had been taken and would seek an update from officers.

RESOLVED –

that the update be noted.

53 **CONTROLLED PARKING ZONES (CPZ) POLICIES TASK GROUP UPDATE**

Councillor Collett, the Chair of the new Task Group, informed the Scrutiny Committee that the Task Group had met on two occasions. At its most recent meeting Members had reviewed 13 specific issues, which officers advised were raised or challenged by residents and Members; they sought the Task Group's views. The Task Group would be meeting again on 2 February to agree its final report before it was presented to Cabinet on 16 February.

The Committee and Scrutiny Officer advised that as there would not be an Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to Cabinet, she intended to circulate the report to the Scrutiny Committee for information. At the March meeting she would provide a report on the Task Group's final report and Cabinet's response.

RESOLVED –

that the update be noted.

54 **DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

- Thursday 5 February 2015 (For call-in only)
- Thursday 5 March 2015
- Thursday 26 March 2015 (For call-in only)

Chair

The Meeting started at 7.00 pm
and finished at 8.10 pm