

OUTSOURCED SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

8 JULY 2014

Present: Councillor P Taylor (Chair)
Councillor K Hastrick (Vice-Chair)
Councillors K Collett, S Counter (minute numbers 6 to 8),
J Dhindsa and A Joynes

Officers: Director of Finance
Partnerships and Performance Section Head
Finance Manager (NP)
Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer (JK)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/ COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Greenslade.

There was a change of membership for this meeting: Councillor Collett replaced Councillor Martins.

Councillor Counter had apologised that she would be delayed.

2 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2014 were submitted and signed.

4 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Panel received an update on the revised terms of reference which had been amended following the changes to Shared Services. The revised terms of reference set out which contracts came under the Panel's remit

RESOLVED –

that the revised terms of reference for the Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel be noted.

5 **UPDATE ON ACTIONS**

The Panel received an update on different actions which had arisen from previous meetings.

Councillor Dhindsa referred to PR8, levels of fly-tipping, and asked if this could be broken down by ward. He was also interested in the number of residents who had arranged for bulky items to be collected as this was no longer a free service. The Partnerships and Performance Section Head advised that this indicator was reported to Overview and Scrutiny but a ward by ward breakdown should be possible.

ACTION – Partnerships and Performance Section Head

Councillor Joynes advised that she was aware of issues where it was not clear whether Watford Community Housing Trust or Veolia were responsible for removing fly-tips. The Partnerships and Performance Section Head advised that she would report this issue to the Client Team.

ACTION – Partnerships and Performance Section Head

With reference to the gum-cleaning (VE5), Councillor Joynes referred to problems in local shopping areas outside the town centre. The Partnerships and Performance Section Head noted that the update suggested that this was carried out as and when required. It would be useful for councillors to be able to report areas of concern in their wards. The Client Manager would provide further details about this in his presentation in November.

RESOLVED – that the actions update be noted and the completed actions be signed off.

6 **PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Panel received a report of the Partnerships and Performance Section Head providing the quarterly performance indicators for quarter 4 2013 – 14.

The Partnerships and Performance Section Head introduced the report and advised that following the introduction of the shared services indicators, the report would become quite extensive.

Following a question from Councillor Collett, the Partnerships and Performance Section Head clarified that the groups referred to in paragraph 3.3.4 of the report were priority sports development groups within the community.

The Chair referred to the performance of Veolia in relation to the litter and street debris and asked for an update. The Partnerships and Performance Section Head advised that full information would be available at the end of quarter 1. She noted that changes in the service last year were likely to have impacted on

performance in the short-term. Improvements were expected and there did not seem to have been a significant increase in complaints about litter. The indicator was measured through surveys of areas and training was required for those conducting the surveys. The Client Team carried out spot checks to ensure rigour and consistency. The indicator also tended to vary depending on the parts of the town inspected during each quarter and the time of year.

Councillor Dhindsa reported that he had had some complaints about litter in West Watford, particularly related to takeaways. It was difficult to compare current levels with those assessed before the contract began.

Councillor Collett outlined the problems with litter experienced in Woodside, particularly in alleyways. She understood that there was only one member of staff covering this area. She had noticed a deterioration in standards and referred to problems on Boundary Way.

Councillor Hastrick advised that there had been similar problems in Meriden, particularly in Garston Park. Bags of rubbish were left overnight and foxes then caused a nuisance.

The Partnerships and Performance Section Head confirmed that she would obtain further information about the street cleaning regime including the policy on how long bags could be left before collection.

ACTION – Partnerships and Performance Section Head

The Panel confirmed they were happy with the format of the report.

Councillor Dhindsa noted that there was demand for additional women-only swimming sessions at Central leisure centre. The Partnerships and Performance Section Head responded that she would report this to the Client Manager.

ACTION – Partnerships and Performance Section Head

The Chair and asked for further information about the disparity between levels of participation among 14-25-year-olds at the different leisure centres. The Partnerships and Performance Section Head explained that this could be because the use by schools affected levels of activity at Woodside.

Councillor Dhindsa referred to the Palace Theatre and it was noted that this was not an outsourced service per se, but received funding from the Council. He commended the recent programmes aimed at the BME communities.

Following a question from Councillor Counter, the Partnerships and Performance Section Head explained how the surveys of street cleanliness were carried out. Councillor Dhindsa noted that it was important to check the streets at different points during the day and during the week as this would have an impact on cleanliness. The Partnerships and Performance Section Head responded that she would refer this to the Client Team.

ACTION – Partnerships and Performance Section Head / Client Manager

There was a discussion about whether bins were returned by the waste and recycling teams after being emptied.

With regard to performance by Vinci, Councillor Dhindsa reported that there were often several Civil Enforcement Officers in Vicarage during the early evening. He felt it may be excessive and was concerned about the cost.

RESOLVED –

1. that the Panel notes the performance of the identified outsourced service indicators at the end of quarter 4
2. that the Panel notes the additional areas to be included in reports from 2014/15.
3. that the Panel's requests for additional information be noted.

7 INTRODUCTION TO SHARED SERVICES - LEAD AUTHORITY MODEL

The Panel received a presentation of the Director of Finance.

The presentation covered the following areas:

- An introduction to the lead authority model of shared services. Watford was responsible for delivering ICT and HR and sold these services to Three Rivers. Three Rivers was responsible for delivering Revenues and Benefits and Finance and Watford bought these services.
- How the governance of the four shared services was different and the motivations for the change
- How the services were governed and scrutinised at both Watford and Three Rivers. All four shared services would be monitored by the Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel. Representatives from Three Rivers could attend the Panel, by invitation, to input into items which affected Three Rivers. Cabinet remained the decision-making body.
- The operational service management for the shared services and line management arrangements.
- The delivery of procurement may be added to the agreement to formalise the current arrangement.

Following a question from Councillor Dhindsa, the Director Finance confirmed that there was no detrimental impact on staff. Their terms and conditions would remain the same unless they changed job. The standard rules for TUPE were being followed.

The Director of Finance agreed that she would circulate the Shared Services agreement and the presentation to the Panel.

ACTION - Director of Finance

RESOLVED –

That the presentation be noted.

8 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Panel received a draft work programme for consideration which outlined the proposed content of the meetings scheduled for the year.

The Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer introduced the report and asked the Panel to consider the proposed dates and the content of the items.

In preparation for the meeting on Revenues Benefits in September, the Panel agreed it would be useful to see the last update which went to Overview and Scrutiny.

ACTION- Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer

The Chair asked that the Portfolio Holders be invited to future meetings.

The Director of Finance suggested that the Lead Member(s) for Revenues and Benefits and ICT at Three Rivers be invited to the meetings on the subjects.

ACTION- Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer

With reference to the meeting and ICT, the Director of Finance explained that information would be provided about performance against targets. She added that further work was being undertaken on the indicators to ensure that they accurately reflected the experience of users. Councillor Counter added that it would be useful to the context for the contract including the reasons for outsourcing. The Chair noted that an issue which had been raised at Audit Committee was the security of the ICT systems.

There was a discussion about the implications for remote access of the Public Services Network (PSN) requirements. The Director of Finance advised that a report would be coming to Cabinet to ensure that funds were available to upgrade the systems. The Councils were accredited by PSN last year and work was being undertaken to achieve reaccreditation under the revised regulations.

It was agreed that Members would prefer to start the meetings at 7pm.

ACTION- Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer

RESOLVED –

1. that the work programme be approved.
2. that future meetings begin at 7pm.

The Meeting started at 6.30 pm
and finished at 7.30 pm

Chair