

OUTSOURCED SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

22 OCTOBER 2014

Present: Councillor P Taylor (Chair)

Councillors K Collett, S Counter (minute numbers 18 to 22),
A Joynes and R Martins

Also present: Spencer Clarkson (Capita) (minute numbers 15 to 18) and
Kenny MacKenzie (Capita) (minute numbers 15 to 18)

Officers: Shared Director of Finance
ICT Client Section Head
Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer (JK)
Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer (AG)

15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/ COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

There was one change of membership for this meeting: Councillor Collett replaced Councillor Greenslade.

The Vice Chair, Councillor Hastrick, had sent her apologies.

The Lead Member for Shared Services, Councillor Matthew Bedford (Three Rivers District Council), had sent his apologies.

The Portfolio Holder, Councillor Watkin, sent his apologies after the meeting.

No apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dhindsa.

16 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

17 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2014 were submitted and signed.

18 UPDATE ON ACTIONS

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

The Chair asked whether the item at VE12 of the Outstanding Actions and Questions report was practicable. The Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer (JK) informed the Panel that overgrown vegetation could be reported on the Hertfordshire County Council Highway's fault reporting website and that they did most of the works. She confirmed that the Transport and Infrastructure Section Head was the contact within WBC.

Councillor Collett made reference to VE9 stating that there had been no launch event in Woodside this year despite a Green Flag being held. It was agreed that the matter be discussed at the next Panel meeting with the Environmental Services Client Manager for Parks and Streets.

ACTION - Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer

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

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ICT CONTRACT

The Panel received a report from the ICT Client Section Head updating Members on matters in relation to the ICT contract. The ICT Client Section Head introduced the report and invited questions.

Councillor Martins thanked the ICT Client Section Head for the report and asked whether user requirements would be driving improvements and what the time frame would be to get the service to the required standard.

The ICT Client Section Head explained that feedback was being obtained from staff and that all services were being engaged. This informed how the technology could be improved to help support users. She added that from a contract management perspective, users were being forthright with information and she was confident ICT were aware of the issues. The contract team conducted a gap analysis looking at what was actually being delivered and comparing this to the contracted delivery. User experience was used within this. With regard to the time frame, it was anticipated that the core contract delivery would be much improved by Christmas with the Modernising IT programme being implemented longer term – March 2015. She explained how the improvements would relate to the Public Service Network (PSN) for members.

The Chair asked if there were any figures in relation to the additional resources being utilised. The ICT Client Section Head explained that the Capita Account Manager would be able to assist with this information and there would be more detail in 2015. The Capita Account Manager advised that there would be seven additional staff employed by Christmas and that there would ultimately be 10 staff engaged with the account recovery team.

Councillor Joynes expressed concerns that staff may be employed on weekly contracts that were not effective. The Capita Account Manager responded that

agency staff were only employed to fill gaps and that they were not engaged on weekly contracts; rather they could be given a week's notice. Agency staff would be employed until Christmas with some taking on permanent roles.

Councillor Joynes asked whether there would be a permanent team by Christmas. The Capita Account Manager said that the proportion of permanent staff would gradually increase. He agreed that it was more effective to have permanent staff with a good knowledge of the issues and with the right skills; and that was the aim for the construct of the team.

In response to a question from Councillor Counter about the longer term plans, the ICT Client Section Head explained there would be a six to eight month time frame to resolve the current problems (under the Modernising IT programme) when greater value would then be obtained from Capita, such as looking at innovation forums, which was within the contract. Work had now commenced in this regard with Capita interviewing all services across Watford and Three Rivers and preparing a strategic document. She explained that she had received positive feedback from services about the entire process. An examination of high level processes had been conducted which would identify the key strategic requirements within service areas, as well as other issues and these would then inform Leadership Team and Management board decisions around the development of further detailed business cases for further investment in technology.

The Capita Account Manager commented that the improvements may be seen a little sooner, and within 6 months, and would be driven by a solid plan. Steps were already being taken to replace some technology.

In response to a question from Councillor Martins, the Capita Account Manager explained that PRINCE 2 methodology was used as the project management tool in line with the public service in general.

The Chair invited the non-committee members to ask any questions. Councillor Williams asked when the PSN accreditation would take place. The ICT Client Section Head explained there was an annual requirement for all Local Authorities to be accredited to PSN (Public Service Network). Watford's accreditation submission was due 31st December and as part of the submission an IT health check would be undertaken by a third party.

Councillor Williams made reference to page 20 of the ACTiCA report and asked what data had been lost as referred to on the page. The ICT Client Section Head explained that as the document was now somewhat historic (going back to 2011) she was not aware of what the data related to. In response to a further question from Councillor Williams, the ICT Client Section Head clarified that the ACTiCA document helped inform the initial outsourcing debate and did not reflect the position now with Capita.

Councillor Khan outlined his expertise around IT issues and his understanding of the decision to outsource the IT services; and his disquiet with this. He asked when radical change was anticipated and when lessons would be learnt. He

also asked how matters would be resolved. The Capita Managing Director thanked Councillor Khan for explaining the historic situation. He said that Councillor Khan was correct in that Capita had not delivered. He explained he had met with the council over the last few months to resolve the issues and had also met a number of user groups. It was the intention of Capita to apportion considerable funds to provide for a quality service. He complimented the Council for its patience and constructive approach. There was now an intention to drive through the enhancements required and to see demonstrable improvements. He emphasised that Capita was committed to the project and that it had a strong desire to gain the confidence of the Council. He concluded that proof of the improvements would be evidenced from information from the users of the service.

Councillor Khan asked whether there was a roadmap for the changes and if this would be seen by members of the Panel. The ICT Client Section Head explained that a roadmap was being prepared and this comprised two main elements; firstly, rectifying the gaps in the core service and, secondly, the Modernise IT programme. She explained that the plan had been agreed in principle with some finalising of detail required. She was currently checking on time scales to determine when the various activities would be in place; it would be premature to release the document at this stage.

In response to a further question from Councillor Khan, the ICT Client Section Head explained that she was working with Capita on the roadmap on a daily basis and determining how the various work-streams would be managed with a 'green lights' approach guiding progression. Milestones were being developed for both Capita and the Council that would be monitored. She anticipated that the roadmap would be completed within the next 10 days and would then go through appropriate channels for approval. It would then be possible to circulate the document.

ACTION – Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer to circulate the roadmap to the Panel once approved.

Councillor Williams asked how standards of hardware would be maintained in the future and whether the Council website was to be improved as this was out of date. The ICT Client Section Head explained that there were plans to modernise the IT and that hardware would not be left for year on year as had occurred in the past. Decisions would be made as to when hardware should be replaced with reference to business requirements – these plans would forecast when replacement was necessary and these would be forward looking and future based. At this stage absolute numbers were not known – the Council had a mix of desktops, some new and some old. Consequently, putting Windows 7 on older equipment would not necessarily provide an effective service. Similarly, there was a mix of old and new servers and decisions had to be made as to the replacement of the older systems which may not be suitable for new operating systems e.g. 2008. With regard to the website; the ICT Client Section Head explained that this was a matter for the Communications Team and she understood that the matter was under review.

Councillor Collett thanked the Capita Managing Director and Account Manager for their honesty about the issues and for setting aside additional funds. She asked whether officers would be trained in the new technology and whether members would receive appropriate briefings. The ICT Client Section Head explained that staff would be trained as part of the Modernising IT programme and members would receive suitable briefing.

In response to a further question from Councillor Collett about difficulty in recruiting good quality IT staff, the ICT Client Section Head said that she was aware of these issues and this was one of the reasons the service was originally outsourced. Capita were also aware of the importance of effective staff and this formed part of the resolution programme. She added that permanent staff with an awareness of local problems provided the best service. She concluded by advising members that the Appgate system was under review so as to improve usability.

Councillor Khan commented that he often needed IT support out of office hours but when contacting the ICT Service Desk he was advised that he should call back the next day. The ICT Client Section Head explained that the account password reset service should be 24 hours, 365 days a year and she understood Councillor Khan's dissatisfaction.

Councillor Khan suggested that the strategic vision should be to optimise progress, maximise outputs and minimise inputs. He explained that he could not see innovation for Council staff at present or improvement in outputs. The ICT Client Section Head said that she agreed with Councillor Khan's sentiments and this was the reason the roadmap was being prepared for approval following the consultation with users. If Capita were then on time in delivering the enhancements to services then the Council would be in a position to consider development of business cases to be more innovative; such as in relation to business process re-engineering and other technologies.

Councillor Joynes highlighted an application used by county councillors that obviated the need for a constant change of passwords. She wondered whether this could be used by WBC. The ICT Client Section Head explained that it would be most appropriate to get the core infrastructure right in the first instance and then look at such issues.

Councillor Martins asked whether the Panel could have a report on progress of the improvements to the service in February/March 2015. This was agreed.

ACTION – ICT Client Section Head to provide the report to the Panel.

The Chair asked that the five core performance indicators as shown on page five of the ICT Client Section Head's report be included in the next performance report to the Panel.

ACTION - The Partnerships and Performance Section Head.

The Chair thanked the representatives from Capita for their attendance.

RESOLVED -

1. that the report and the Panel's comments be noted.
2. that the service be invited to the Panel again in February 2015.

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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

These were as follows:

- The Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer to circulate the ICT roadmap to the Panel following its approval.
- The ICT Client Section Head to provide a report on the progress of improvements to the IT service for the February 2015 meeting of the Panel.
- The Partnership and Performance Section Head to include the five Key Performance Indicators on the core ICT service in the next Performance Report to the Panel.

21

FEEDBACK ON VISIT TO THE DEPOT

The Chair asked for any feedback on the visit to the Depot on 21 October.

Councillor Collett stated that the visit was good and the staff should be complimented on being out in all weathers. She expressed some concern as to the number of shopping trolleys left abandoned in public places. The Director of Finance commented that supermarkets do pay a reward for their return. Councillor Collett also expressed concern about litter in Meriden and Woodside and wondered whether there were enough staff to deal with the issue, particularly as priority seemed to be given to shop fronts. The Chair asked that the matters be discussed at the next meeting of the Panel with the Environmental Services Client Manager for Parks and Streets.

ACTION - Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer

The Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer (JK) suggested that a presentation prepared by the Environmental Services Client Manager for Waste and Recycling outlining how the waste contract worked be re-circulated to the Panel. This was agreed.

ACTION - Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer

The Chair wondered whether there were any maps of areas cleared of litter. Councillor Martins commented that it seemed vague as to how locations were identified for clearing.

Councillor Collett asked that the staff at the Depot be thanked for hosting the visit. The Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer (JK) explained that a message of thanks had been sent.

The Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer (JK) said that it had been suggested that a visit to Leisure Centres might also be of use to the Panel as SLM was an agenda item at the Panel meeting in January. This was agreed and also that the visit should take place before the end of the year - possibly during an evening. Councillors Collett and Joynes said that they would not need to attend as they had a user perspective. The Chair suggested that a Saturday morning should also be considered for the visit. It was agreed that the Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer would arrange the visit and also explore the possibility of visiting the Woodside Stadium.

ACTION - Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer

22

WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair asked that the update on the Veolia contract - waste and recycling be removed from the agenda for the 12 February 2015 meeting and be replaced by the update on the ICT contract with Capita.

ACTION - Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer

Chair

The Meeting started at 7.00 pm
and finished at 8.03 pm