

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

27 September 2018

Present: Councillor K Hastrick (Chair)
Councillors S Bashir, S Cavinder, K Crout, I Hamid, M Hofman and
R Martins

Officers: Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications
Head of Service Transformation
Watford 2020 Programme Manager
Committee and Scrutiny Officer

28 **Apologies for Absence/Committee Membership**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dhindsa and Stotesbury.

29 **Disclosure of interests (if any)**

There were no disclosures of interests.

30 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2018 were submitted and signed.

31 **Call-in**

The scrutiny committee noted that no executive key decisions had been called in.

32 **Watford 2020 update**

The Watford 2020 Programme Manager provided the scrutiny committee with an update on the progress of the Watford 2020 programme. He highlighted key headlines in the report.

The Watford 2020 Programme Manager informed the scrutiny committee that the work had progressed to the detailed design phase of the work. The programme team was working with officers within the services to find out how to develop and improve the processes. Once this stage had been completed and agreed by the Programme Board the next step would be to start building the new processes.

The Watford 2020 Programme Manager advised that a second staff survey had been completed. The results showed that there was an improved understanding of the programme and seemed very positive. 89% of those completing the survey were positive about the future changes. Many of them were involved in the programme.

The Watford 2020 Programme Manager mentioned that at a previous meeting he had referred to concerns about resourcing and the difficulty in finalising the team. The final Business Analyst was shortly to be recruited. The Business Support Analyst post had been filled. This was a secondment opportunity for an existing member of staff. The person would work on the programme for two days per week and carry out their substantive role for the rest of the week.

The Watford 2020 Programme Manager then referred to the risks shown in the report. The programme was ambitious and resourcing played an important part in meeting the deadline. It still showed as a high risk; however, the programme was on track. He said that the Watford 2020 programme was a culture change for staff. The Organisational Development partner was working with and providing support to staff as the programme moved forward.

In response to a question about mitigating the risks further so they were no longer showing as 'high', the Watford 2020 Programme Manager explained that the Watford 2020 Programme Board monitored the work carefully and saw if there was any slippage in the timetable. He confirmed that the organisational development partner was an organisation and not an individual.

The Chair thanked the officer for his presentation and noted that a glossary had been included to help councillors understand some of the terminology. She added that in discussions with officers it had been agreed that at the January meeting the scrutiny committee would receive a presentation on the new customer management system, which included a members' portal. All councillors would be invited to the meeting.

33

End of Quarter 1 2018/19: Key Performance Indicator Report

The scrutiny committee received a report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications which provided the results of the key performance indicators at the end of Quarter 1 2018/19.

The Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications advised that based on the figures officers would be able to see where any issues may be beginning to arise. There had been slight dip in the planning indicators. This had been due to a vacancy within the team, which had now been filled. She then referred to the

response times for the Customer Service Centre and the Head of Service Transformation had attended the meeting to provide an explanation.

The Head of Service Transformation informed the scrutiny committee that he had provided a detailed commentary within the report. He said that the first quarter of the year was usually difficult. This was due to the elections and Council Tax billing taking place in that quarter. Both generated additional calls to the council. He referred councillors to the result for the final quarter of 2017/18 which was 9% of calls had a waiting time of over two minutes. Through the Watford 2020 programme officers would be able to obtain better data about the peak times during the year. He added that 98% of calls were answered and the customer satisfaction rate remained high.

In response to a question about support from other services, the Head of Service Transformation confirmed that other departments did co-operate with the Customer Service Centre (CSC). The biggest challenges were at election time and Council Tax billing. The staff employed in the CSC were multi-skilled. The service had just taken on two temporary members of staff who specialised in revenues.

The Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications added that the Voter ID pilot had generated additional calls with people checking the types of ID they could use, in addition to the usual type of questions received at election time.

The Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications informed the scrutiny committee that Freedom of Information (FOI) responses had been included for the first time. The management and coordination of FOIs was an area within the responsibilities of the Head of Service Transformation. There were quite a few late responses in the first quarter. The requests included people asking for information hoping to do business with the council in the future, from journalists and repeat questions that were sent in on a regular basis.

In response to a question about the number of requests, the Committee and Scrutiny Officer advised that Audit Committee reviewed the requests on a half yearly basis. For the period from 1 October 2017 to 31 March 2018 there had been 346 Freedom of Information requests.

Following a question about charging for providing replies, the Head of Service Transformation explained that officers could assess how much work was required to find the information and collate the response. If the required work would cost more than the cost limit referred to in legislation the council was able to offer to supply the information to the person and recover any costs. If it was below the set figure the council was able to require payment only for copying and posting. Through the Watford 2020 programme officers would be looking to find a more efficient process.

The Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications referred the scrutiny committee to the Housing indicators. The top reason for homelessness remained as the loss of private sector tenancy.

Councillor Martins asked that in future reports more context was given to some of the data. For example there were no details of how many complaints had been resolved in 10 days; the number of complaints received would help councillors better understand the information. It was agreed this information would be added to future reports.

RESOLVED –

1. that the key performance indicator results for the end of Quarter 1 2018/19 be noted.
2. that the additional information requested be included in future reports.

34 **Executive Decision Progress Report**

The Scrutiny Committee received the latest edition of the Executive Decision Progress Report for 2018/19.

RESOLVED –

that the updated report be noted.

35 **Review: Tackling Loneliness Task Group's recommendations**

The scrutiny committee received a report of the Committee and Scrutiny Officer setting out each of the recommendations, Cabinet's comments and the actions since March 2018.

The scrutiny committee asked the Committee and Scrutiny Officer to investigate the possibility of expanding the circulation of notices to Watford Library, the Café in the Library and supermarkets. The Committee and Scrutiny Officer advised that the main point of the recommendation was to signpost people to organisations through the council's own premises. She reminded the scrutiny committee that this was an area outside the remit of the council, as Adult Care Services were the responsibility of the County Council.

Councillor Cavinder, who had been a member of the task group, was concerned that the councillors' training had not yet been arranged. The Committee and Scrutiny Officer explained that officers were trying to find the right training to

cover this topic. Councillor Cavinder asked that an update was given to the members involved in the task group.

RESOLVED –

1. that the latest update be noted.
2. that a further update be provided to the scrutiny committee at its January meeting.

36 **Hertfordshire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee**

Councillor Hastrick, the council's representative to the Health Scrutiny Committee reported that she had received a phone call with some news about Watford General Hospital. The hospital would receive £1.2 million for emergency care. The changes had to be in place by Christmas. If she received any further information she would provide an update to the councillors.

37 **Dates of Next Meetings**

- Thursday 25 October 2018 (for call-in only)
- Thursday 29 November 2018
- Thursday 20 December 2019 (for call-in only)

38 **Commissioning Framework Task Group - recommendations**

The scrutiny committee received a report of the Committee and Scrutiny Officer including the final recommendations from the Commissioning Framework task group and the general principles.

Councillor Martins, the task group's chair, explained the work carried out and how the councillors had reached their conclusions. He said that they had recognised that additional work would be required and therefore had made their recommendation to retain the current framework for a further year, enabling this work to be carried out. A key point had been to improve the monitoring mechanisms of the framework and ensure the organisations' work justified the funds they were granted.

RESOLVED –

that the Commissioning Framework Task Group's recommendations and general principles be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration as part of the Leisure and Environmental Services Section Head's report to Cabinet about the current and future Commissioning Framework.

39 **Watford Community Housing Task Group - update**

The Chair provided an update on the progress of the Watford Community Housing Task Group, which had its first meeting on 24 September. Councillor Khan, one of the proposers of the topic, had been elected as Chair. The next meeting was due to take place on 17 October when representatives from the trust had been invited. It was planned to hold future meeting at various locations in the community. Final details had yet to be confirmed. All councillors would be made aware of the venues and dates and were welcome to attend.

40 **Budget Panel**

The Chair of budget Panel, Councillor Bashir, informed the scrutiny committee of the panel's work at its last meeting. Members had reviewed the first quarter of the financial year and had discussed the variances outlined in the report. The panel had also been provided with a presentation about the Property Investment Board and its work.

41 **Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel**

The Chair of Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel, Councillor Cavinder, gave an update on the panel's last meeting. In addition to reviewing the first quarter's performance results, the panel had received a presentation from the Parks Team and Veolia. A discussion had taken place about the work programme. Although the programme was reasonably full it had been agreed to add ICT and street cleaning.

Councillor Hastrick suggested that ICT should also be reviewed at Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Committee and Scrutiny Officer explained this would not be appropriate as ICT was within the remit of Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel, as part of it was outsourced and it was a shared service. She added that Audit Committee also monitored aspects of ICT and officers were due to present a report to its December meeting.

In response to a suggestion from Councillor Bashir about the market being discussed at the scrutiny panel, Councillor Cavinder said that he felt the new contractor should be given at least six months before they were asked to attend scrutiny. It was suggested that it may be suitable for one of the first meetings in the new municipal year.

42 **Community Safety Partnership Task Group**

The Chair of Community Safety Partnership Task Group, Councillor Crout, advised that the task group's first meeting had taken place on 24 July 2018. The task group had reviewed the Community Safety Partnership's plan for 2018/9 and had agreed its work programme for the remainder of the year.

43 **Work Programme**

The scrutiny committee received its updated work programme. The Committee and Scrutiny Officer advised that she would update the programme to reflect the items discussed during the meeting.

RESOLVED –

that the work programme for Overview and Scrutiny Committee be updated as agreed during the meeting.

Chair

The Meeting started at 7.00 pm
and finished at 8.25 pm