

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

24 October 2019

Present: Councillor A Grimston (Chair)
Councillor J Dhindsa (Vice-Chair)
Councillors D Allen-Williamson (for minute numbers 39 to 45),
K Crout, R Martins, B Mauthoor, M Parker, G Saffery and
M Turmaine

Officers: Head of Leisure and Environmental Services
Contract & Partnership Manager – Leisure & Community
Services
Watford 2020 Programme Manager
Senior Democratic Services Officer

34 **Apologies for Absence/Committee Membership**

There was a change of membership for this meeting: Councillor Crout replaced Councillor Stiff.

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

There were no disclosures of interest.

36 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2019 were submitted and signed.

37 **Other scrutiny meetings - minutes**

The scrutiny committee noted the scrutiny task groups that had taken place since its last meeting.

38 **Call-in**

It was noted that no key executive decisions had been called in.

Watford 2020 Update

The scrutiny committee received a report of the Watford 2020 Programme Manager which provided the latest progress on the council's transformation programme.

The Watford 2020 Programme Manager highlighted some of the key headlines from the update. He reminded councillors that the programme had moved into its final six months and was due to end in March 2020. He advised that Firmstep forms had been tested by councillors at Member Development Group, by officers at various types of meetings and by the public in the Customer Service Centre.

The Customer Management System replacement had been flagged as 'red'. There had been issues in connecting the front and back office links. It was noted that this work was progressing. The Watford 2020 Programme Manager informed the scrutiny committee that the pest control process was one of the most complex processes that the team had been building because of the need for it to integrate with several other systems in order to work.

The Watford 2020 Programme Manager advised that the online modules required for Revenues and Benefits had now been tested and were working as expected. It was anticipated that this function would go live from 11 November.

The Watford 2020 Programme Manager then provided the scrutiny committee with a demonstration of one of the key online Firmstep reporting tools, 'Report It'. This tool would allow customers to report an issue on the street or in a park online by using a map. The tool integrated with different internal systems to allow different parts of the council to deliver the service for customers. The list of reporting topics was not set and could be added to as other options arose. There was some final testing to be carried out and the team was aiming for it to go live on 5 November. It was explained that a second iteration of the tool would be produced in a couple of months with additional functionality and following feedback from customers.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Watford 2020 Programme Manager explained that the council's website and the online forms were fully responsive to mobile devices including phones. As part of the second iteration of the form it would be added to the Members' Portal. It was hoped this would happen by the end of this year.

Following a question about publicising the various forms, the Watford 2020 Programme Manager advised that there would be a soft launch on 5 November. Once everything was in place, including the feedback loop and it had been fully tested there would be a bigger launch probably in the spring. The publicity

would include through social media, on-street advertising and other formats. It would be fully discussed with the Communications Team.

The Watford 2020 Programme Manager responded to a councillor's question about cost savings as a result of the programme. He explained that saving funds was not the only point of the programme. It was also about improving processes for customers and allowing customers to transact with the council outside of the usual office hours. The programme changes also cut out the duplication of processes, where officers had to transfer information from one system to another. It was envisaged that it would also result in fewer visits to the Customer Service Centre. The overall benefits of the programme would be tracked through to 2023. He emphasised that the new online forms including 'Report It' would not lead to other contact channels being closed. However with the new forms the information was relayed direct to the service that needed the information.

RESOLVED –

that the Watford 2020 update be noted.

40

Review of the Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework Year 3 and the period 2016-19

The scrutiny committee received a report of the Head of Leisure and Environmental Services which provided information on the performance of the Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework during year 3 (2018-19) and the funding period 2016-2019.

The Contracts and Partnership Manager – Leisure and Community introduced the report and details of the framework throughout the funding period. She responded to councillors' questions about key performance indicators for the different organisations and the workforce information. It was agreed the officer would ask if it was possible to view the evaluation information and then report back to councillors on the results. It was noted that Watford Palace Theatre had improved its evaluation processes which had improved the results shown in the report when compared to previous years.

The Contracts and Partnership Manager and Head of Leisure and Environmental Services advised that Holywell Community Centre attracted a number of people from outside the borough due to its location on the boundary with Three Rivers and was not very far from the London Borough of Hillingdon. In addition the information was based on people willing to complete the surveys and also on hire events. Following a question about the workforce figures for Holywell Community Centre and Watford and Three Rivers Trust, officers agreed to check

whether the figures were correct and if the workforce worked for both organisations.

A councillor asked officers to investigate key performance indicator 4 for Watford and Three Rivers Trust. She was concerned about the low number of successful fundraising applications during 2018-19 compared to 2017-18. It was agreed officers would find out more information and circulate it to the scrutiny committee.

The scrutiny committee noted that the food vouchers issued by Watford Citizens Advice Bureau were not part of its funding from the council. However officers would find out how the process worked and how the vouchers were funded.

In response to a question about future challenges the Contracts and Partnership Manager advised that funding and volunteering were the biggest issues facing organisations. Many organisations were reliant on the funding they received from the council. Other funding streams were available and organisations were encouraged to investigate them. Officers would work with organisations, for example to see how they could generate funds themselves.

The Head of Leisure and Environmental Services confirmed that the council's officers held regular discussions with the organisations.

The scrutiny committee had a discussion about the workforce data. It was noted that some information was not available. Councillors were reminded that any staff survey requesting equalities data from individuals was not compulsory. The Head of Leisure and Environmental Services confirmed that officers had spoken to the management team about trying to incentivise staff to complete the data. However based on a 10% return the data would not be accurate enough to report.

A councillor commented that there was no reference to senior posts and relevant equalities data. The Head of Leisure and Environmental Services advised that he would contact the council's Group Head of Human Resources and if the information should be available under the Equal Pay Act.

RESOLVED –

that the report be noted.

41 **Mental Health Task Group - final report**

The scrutiny committee received a report of the Democratic Services Officer which included the Mental Health Task Group's final report.

Councillor Saffery, the Task Group's chair, introduced the report and the recommendations. He explained that the task group had restricted its remit to the voluntary sector, but did include GP referrals. He advised that as the recommendations moved to the Health and Wellbeing Forum there would be an opportunity to include the county council and NHS.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer added that she intended to forward the report and recommendations to the Mayor, Portfolio Holder for Communities and the Group Head of Community and Environmental Services if the scrutiny committee agreed the report.

The chair thanked everyone who had been involved in the task group and Councillor Saffery for chairing it.

RESOLVED –

that the final report and recommendations of the Mental Health Task Group be agreed and forwarded to the council's Health and Wellbeing Forum.

42 **Executive Decision Progress Report**

The scrutiny committee received the 2019/20 Executive Decision Progress Report.

RESOLVED –

that the 2019/20 Executive Decision Progress report be noted.

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

Councillor Grimston advised that she had recently attended an interesting Health Scrutiny Committee. She would circulate a report to members.

44 **Work Programme**

The scrutiny committee received the updated draft of its work programme, incorporating the suggestions from the previous meetings.

RESOLVED –

that the work programme be updated as discussed during the meeting.

45

Dates of Next Meetings

- Thursday 28 November 2019
- Thursday 19 December 2019
- Thursday 6 February 2019

Chair

The Meeting started at 7.00 pm
and finished at 8.30 pm