

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

27 JUNE 2013

Present: Councillor K Collett (Chair)
Councillor A Khan (Vice-Chair)
Councillors J Aron, N Bell, K Hastrick, S Johnson, A Lovejoy and
R Martins

Also present: Louise Gaffney, Director of Strategy and Infrastructure,
West Herts Hospitals NHS Trust (for minute numbers 1 to 4)
Frank Hennessy, Programme Director, Change Review,
West Herts Hospitals NHS Trust (for minute numbers 1 to 4)
Councillors Connal and Joynes
Councillor Watkin, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Shared
Services (for minute numbers 1 to 5)

Officers: Head of Revenues and Benefits (Shared Services)
Partnerships and Performance Section Head
Committee and Scrutiny Officer

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Greenslade.

2 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS (IF ANY)

There were no disclosures of interest.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 26 March and 22 April 2013 were submitted and signed.

4 HOSPITAL CAR PARK UPDATE

Louise Gaffney, the Director of Strategy and Infrastructure spoke to the Scrutiny Committee about the results of the 'listening exercise' that had been carried out by the West Herts Hospitals NHS Trust. The aim of the consultation was to involve people in the Trust's decision-making process for the car park and other transport related matters. There had been over 3,000 responses to the consultation. It was clear from the responses that there were no easy answers, as there were many contradictory comments. The Trust would not be able to implement all the suggestions submitted.

Ms Gaffney informed Members about the proposals for the inter-site bus service. The Trust would be promoting discounted fares for public transport to staff.

The results of the consultation showed that 66% felt that blue badge holders should be given free parking. The Trust had discussed the parking arrangements with members from the Disability Forum, who had stated that they were willing to pay for an appropriate service. The matter would be discussed further when the hospital's new car parking facilities had been developed. 17% of the responders stated they had blue badges.

The majority of those who had selected an option had chosen option 3. This included an hourly charging structure with no free parking time. The Trust was re-considering the original option and adapting it. It was felt that the 30-minute free waiting time should be retained. 582 of the responders had suggested different pay structures. The concessions would be continued.

Ms Gaffney advised the Scrutiny Committee that the Trust would be making its decision on the charging structure and the charge for the intersite bus within the next two weeks. The information would be circulated to contact groups and the media.

Members welcomed the news that blue badge holders would not be charged for parking when the new charging structure was introduced. They were also pleased that the free 30-minute waiting time would be retained. It was hoped that consultation would continue to be carried out by the Trust in the future. Reference was made to the Task Group's original recommendations and how Members had felt the introduction of an automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) system would be a solution. Members asked the Trust to remember patients when it was making its decisions.

Ms Gaffney stated that the Trust had listened to people, including patients through the 'listening exercise'. This had been the reason for deciding to introduce an hourly-rate structured parking scheme. The Trust would like to move to an ANPR system but it was unable to do this with the current infrastructure. When a new car park had been built it would be possible to consider the introduction of a pay on exit system. At the present time this was not possible due to the number of different exits on site.

Following questions about the car park being used as a means for the Trust to make money and about the current contractor, Ms Gaffney explained that currently the Trust made a loss on the car park. The Trust was aiming to break even with the new charging structure. The income from the intersite bus did not subsidise the car parking. The income from the car park charges was used to maintain the car parks and their security. There were also overheads to pay, for example charges for the land which was not owned by the Trust. She add that if the right charging structure was not in place then the car parking budget would have to be subsidised by other budgets within the hospitals.

Ms Gaffney explained that the current car park contract expired in 2014. The Trust had already started to look at the requirements for a new contract. Tenders would be sought ready for next year. She informed Members how the income from the car parks was divided between the Trust and the contractor.

Frank Hennessy added that the base contract set an agreed anticipated income. The Trust was therefore guaranteed a minimum income. Any additional income from the car parks was then split through a profit share arrangement.

It was agreed that the Committee and Scrutiny Officer would circulate information relating to the new payment structure to the Scrutiny Committee once it had been made available.

The Chair thanked Louise Gaffney and Frank Hennessy for attending the meeting and updating the Scrutiny Committee on the results of the consultation.

ACTION: Committee and Scrutiny Officer

5

BENEFITS DEPARTMENT UPDATE

The Scrutiny Committee received a report from the Head of Revenues and Benefits providing an update on the progress of the Benefits department.

The Head of Revenues and Benefits highlighted some of the impacts on the service and additional measures which had been implemented.

The Portfolio Holder stated that he shared Members' concerns about the performance indicators for the completion of change in circumstances. This indicator still remained high and was not reducing as fast as he would wish.

Members commented on the report and posed a number of questions.

The Head of Revenues and Benefits informed the Scrutiny Committee that the service still used SERCO to assist with the change in circumstance applications. The service no longer contracted out work to Liberata. He confirmed that SERCO did not have direct contact with claimants unless they needed to obtain specific information. The Head of Revenues and Benefits explained that he had been set the objective of achieving the 8-day target for processing applications by the end of March 2014. He added that the new Director of Finance came from an authority which had made huge strides in reducing the time taken to process claims.

Following a question about the average processing time within Hertfordshire, the Head of Revenues and Benefits advised that the last data he had received related to Quarter 2 in 2012/13. The average was 18 days. This resembled the level of performance in Three Rivers District Council prior to the introduction of Shared Services.

The Chair thanked the officer for the update. It was agreed that a further update would be given in six months time.

The Chair asked the Head of Revenues and Benefits to pass on the Scrutiny Committee's best wishes to David Gardner on his retirement from Three Rivers District Council.

RESOLVED –

that a further update be presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in six months.

ACTION: Committee and Scrutiny Officer

6

UPDATE ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND MEASURES - END OF YEAR (QUARTER 4) 2012/13

The Scrutiny Committee received a report of the Partnerships and Performance Section Head setting out the Key Performance Indicators and the end of year performance measures for 2012/13. The Partnerships and Performance Section Head highlighted some of the key aspects of the report.

The Partnerships and Performance Section Head informed the Scrutiny Committee that with effect from 1 July 2013, those indicators related to waste and recycling, street cleansing and ICT would be transferred to the report presented to the Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel. This Scrutiny Committee would receive the first quarter's results at its meeting in July.

HR1 / KPI 8 – Sickness absence

Following a question about the target being reduced to 5, the Partnerships and Performance Section Head explained that the figure of 4.5 quoted in the report had been reviewed. The revised figures showed a cumulative absence rate for those staff not being transferred as just over five days. She explained that sickness monitoring was carried out very differently at Watford Borough Council compared to Three Rivers District Council. Shared Services had just started using First Care, the same as Watford Borough Council, and there had been an increase in sickness rates reported since the introduction.

Data for services transferred to Veolia

The Partnerships and Performance Section Head informed the Scrutiny Committee that Veolia would be required to provide regular performance information to the Council's Client Team. The information would be provided to the Outsourced Services Panel as part of its regular report.

ES7 – Flyposting

In response to a question from the Chair regarding flyposting, the Partnerships and Performance Section Head explained that flyposting was used as a cheap form of advertising. The service was very rigorous in dealing with this matter and had been disappointed with the performance results, which were a result of increased activity.

ES6 / KPI4iii – Graffiti

The Partnerships and Performance Section Head informed the Scrutiny Committee that as far as she was aware the performance indicator definitely related to graffiti on public land but would check whether the removal of graffiti from private property was included.

Co5 - % of stage 1 complaints resolved within 10 days

Following comments from the Vice-Chair, the Partnerships and Performance Section Head informed the Scrutiny Committee that the current three stage system was being streamlined to a two stage system. The complaints form was in the process of being revised. It was also possible to submit a complaint online.

The Partnerships and Performance Section Head advised that she would confirm whether Councillors contacting the Town Hall with a resident's complaint would be registered in the complaints system.

RESOLVED –

1. that the performance of the Council's key performance indicators for 2012/13 at the end of quarter 4 be noted.
2. that the performance of the additional performance measures at the end of quarter 4 be noted.
3. that the current set of indicators continues in 2013/14, noting that those associated with Environmental Services and ICT will be reported to the Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel from quarter 2.

7

OUTSTANDING ACTIONS AND QUESTIONS

The Scrutiny Committee received an update incorporating the outstanding actions and questions raised at previous meetings. Responses were included within the document.

The Committee and Scrutiny Officer advised Members that following discussions with the Housing Section Head it was proposed to reschedule the review of the performance of the Council's new Nomination Policy to March 2014. She

explained that the proposed Nomination Policy was not due to be presented to Cabinet until September. Members agreed with this suggestion.

The Committee and Scrutiny Officer informed the Scrutiny Committee that, following a discussion with the Chair, it had been decided to move the two items related to the voluntary sector to 25 July. This meeting had originally been due to only consider any called in Executive decisions.

Members considered the responses to each of the outstanding actions and questions.

RESOLVED –

that the outstanding actions and questions' update be amended as discussed.

8

EXECUTIVE DECISION PROGRESS REPORT

The Scrutiny Committee received the final edition of the Executive Decision Progress Report for 2012/13 and the latest edition for 2013/14.

Members asked to be provided with updates on the progress of the Shared Services software upgrade and the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme.

RESOLVED –

that the latest update be noted.

ACTION: Committee and Scrutiny Officer

9

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee and Scrutiny Officer informed the Scrutiny Committee that Watford Borough Council appointed a representative to the County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee. The Health Scrutiny Committee comprised 10 County Councillors and 10 District/Borough Councillors, one from each of the District and Borough Councils within Hertfordshire. The Health Scrutiny Committee covered all aspects of health, including Clinical Commissioning Groups, NHS Trusts, the Health and Wellbeing Board, Healthwatch Hertfordshire and Public Health. Councillor Martins, the Council's representative on the Health Scrutiny Committee, had been invited to provide an update at Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Martins advised that he had attended the first meeting for the current Municipal Year earlier that day. The Health Scrutiny Committee had received 10 presentations, many of which concentrated on the recommendations in the Francis Report. The Members had decided to gather information at this meeting and then consider which areas they wished to scrutinise further. They would set

up small Task Groups in order to cover as many areas as possible. It had been reported that HealthWatch had established stakeholder panels in all areas in the county. He was currently waiting for details of contact points. The Committee and Scrutiny Officer was asked to obtain this information.

It was agreed that the Committee and Scrutiny Officer would circulate the links to the Health Scrutiny Committee's agendas as they became available on the County Council's website.

RESOLVED –

that the update be noted.

ACTION: Committee and Scrutiny Officer

10

OUTSOURCED SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

The Scrutiny Committee received a report of the Committee and Scrutiny Officer setting out the proposed membership for 2013/14 and amendments to the Panel's Terms of Reference.

The Scrutiny Committee raised a number of concerns about the Scrutiny Panel, including the number of meetings a year, reporting mechanisms and training.

The Committee and Scrutiny Officer advised that although the Terms of Reference referred to the panel meeting a maximum of four occasions during the year, if it were felt that additional meetings were required then these could be arranged. The Scrutiny Panel was a sub-panel of Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agenda listed all other scrutiny meetings that had taken place. These included Budget Panel, Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel and Community Safety Partnership Task Group. Members requested that in future the Chairs of Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel and Budget Panel should attend Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide a verbal update on the work of their panels. Members also requested paper copies of all minutes for these groups.

The Committee and Scrutiny Officer informed the Scrutiny Committee that officers were trying to identify appropriate training for the members of Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel. Some of the training courses covered the whole procurement procedure and very little on monitoring contracts.

RESOLVED –

1. that the membership of the Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel be agreed as follows –

- Councillor Shirena Counter
 - Councillor Sue Greenslade
 - Councillor Karen Hastrick
 - Councillor Anne Joynes
 - Councillor Steve Rackett
2. that the revised Terms of Reference for Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel be agreed.

ACTION: Committee and Scrutiny Officer

11

COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP TASK GROUP

The Scrutiny Committee received a report of the Committee and Scrutiny Officer which contained details of those Councillors who wished to join the Community Safety Partnership Task Group.

Councillors Khan and Lovejoy stated that they had not replied to the original email but wished to continue as members of the Task Group. This was agreed. It was noted that the membership would be the same as in 2012/13.

RESOLVED –

that the membership of the Community Safety Partnership Task Group be agreed as follows –

- Councillor Jeanette Aron
- Councillor Anne Joynes
- Councillor Asif Khan
- Councillor Ann Lovejoy
- Councillor Rabi Martins
- Councillor Kelly McLeod
- Councillor Malcolm Meerabux

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MANAGEMENT OF DISABLED PARKING BAYS TASK GROUP

The Scrutiny Committee received a report of the Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer including the Task Group's report.

Councillor Martins, Chair of the Task Group, presented the report to the Scrutiny Committee. He highlighted the large response to the survey. The Task Group had agreed that it would be necessary to monitor the number of complaints in a year's time.

The Scrutiny Committee asked that recommendation 5 be re-worded as it was not clear what type of parking problems should be recorded.

RESOLVED –

1. that the Management of Disabled Parking Bays Task Group conclusions and recommendations be agreed subject to an amendment to number 5.
2. that the report be forwarded to Cabinet for its comments.

ACTION: Committee and Scrutiny Officer and Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer

13

WATFORD COMMUNITY HOUSING TRUST TASK GROUP

Councillor Khan, the Chair of the Watford Community Housing Trust Task Group, provided an update to the Scrutiny Committee. He informed Members that to date there had been two meetings. The initial meeting discussed the topic and how they wished to carry out the review. The second meeting was an open meeting for tenants, who had been invited to speak to the Councillors about their experiences with the Housing Trust.

Other Members of the Task Group also commented. They had noted how a theme had appeared in the residents' comments.

Further meetings were to be arranged including one with the Housing Trust. They felt it was important that the Housing Trust's Chief Executive should respond to the Task Group's questions.

RESOLVED –

that the update be noted.

14

WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Committee received the latest version of the Work Programme. The Committee and Scrutiny Officer advised that following discussions at this meeting it would be updated further. She added that she would also include updates from the Property Task Group which was due to start in September.

RESOLVED –

that the rolling work programme be noted and amended as appropriate.

15

DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

- Thursday 25 July 2013
- Thursday 26 September 2013
- Thursday 24 October 2013 (For call-in only)

Chair

The Meeting started at 7.00 pm
and finished at 9.05 pm