

PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Thursday, 13 March 2014 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 1.05 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Liz Brighthouse OBE – in the Chair

Councillor Neil Fawcett (Deputy Chairman)

Councillor Lynda Atkins

Councillor John Christie

Councillor Yvonne Constance

Councillor Mark Gray

Councillor Jenny Hannaby

Councillor Richard Langridge

Councillor Sandy Lovatt

Councillor Lawrie Stratford

Officers:

Whole of meeting Eira Hale, Sue Whitehead (Chief Executive's Office)

Part of meeting

Agenda Item

Officer Attending

5 & 6

Maggie Scott, Head of Policy; Sue Scane, Director for Environment & Economy; Frances Craven, Deputy Director, Education & Early Intervention; Sarah Livadeas, Deputy Director Joint Commissioning; John Dixon, Interim Deputy Director Adult Social Care; Val Messenger, Public Health; Dave Etheridge, Chief Fire Officer

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Sarah Livadeas, Deputy Director Joint Commissioning; Andrew Colling (Quality, Procurement and Contracts);

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Peter Clark, County Solicitor & Monitoring Officer

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Peter Clark, County Solicitor & Monitoring Officer; Glenn Watson, (Chief Executive's Office)

The Scrutiny Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting [, together with a schedule of addenda tabled at the meeting/the following additional documents:] and agreed as set out below. Copies of the agenda and reports [agenda, reports and schedule/additional documents] are attached to the signed Minutes.

6/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda No. 1)

Apologies were submitted by Councillor Coates.

7/14 MINUTES
(Agenda No. 3)

The Minutes of the meetings held on 16 December 2013 and 9 January 2014 were agreed and signed.

The Committee agreed that the following 2 items be considered together in order to make best use of Director's time. For ease of reference the discussion on the 2 items are recorded separately

8/14 DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN AND CORPORATE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR 2014/15
(Agenda No. 5)

Maggie Scott, Head of Policy introduced the annual refresh of the Corporate Plan, highlighting that it set out some fundamental changes to the way the Council achieved its objectives.

During general discussion the Committee referred to the large scope of the plan and queried how it could respond to changing circumstances such as the recent flooding. There was some discussion on the inclusion of information on the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. It was felt that there was a mismatch between the references to size of economic growth and to infrastructure. Individual examples were given which Maggie Scott agreed to take back to Environment & Economy for consideration as part of the Strategic Economic Plan. It was noted that there was no mention of agriculture. The Council needed to focus on prevention and this needed to be reflected in the report. A member highlighted the role of the Scrutiny Committee and noted that the Plan was a good statement of intent but that there was no way to use it directly to further the work of the Committee. The audience of the report was recognised with it aimed at informing the wider world. The substance beneath the Plan would appear elsewhere.

Environment & Economy

Sue Scane, Director for Environment & Economy highlighted the role of the Local Enterprise Partnership and its close working with the County Council. The City Deal was testament to that and in refuting comments that there were little infrastructure plans South of Oxford she indicated that Science Vale was a major beneficiary. Sue Scane highlighted the indicators set out in the Annex and flagged that on property they wanted to work with the localities to see what information would be useful.

- (1) The Chairman referred to the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) going to Cabinet and urged all members to read it. Sue Scane added that flooding was a key priority in the SEP.
- (2) The Chairman raised the issue of getting the best skilled people and in particular the issues around skills and adult social care workers.
- (3) Members recognised the complexity of the challenge around property management.

- (4) There was some discussion around the target in relation to customer satisfaction and whether it was sufficiently stretching. The Committee was advised that the target was realistic based on where they currently were.

Children, Education & Families

Frances Craven, Deputy Director Education & Early Intervention, highlighted key issues in the Plan and the range of targets aimed at keeping children safe. There was more detailed information available behind the indicators.

During discussion the following points were made:

- (5) Following a number of comments relating to indicators on the work load of social workers and the complexity of this area it was AGREED that this be included for discussion at the next meeting.
- (6) In relation to comments about the lack of information about the good work done in local areas by voluntary groups it was explained that the figures focussed on the Council's statutory responsibilities. It was suggested that information on voluntary groups could be considered at locality meetings.
- (7) In relation to education targets it was explained that the position was changing and councillors would need to be briefed.
- (8) A member highlighted the issue of ethnicity and gender and narrowing the gap. Frances Craven replied that it was something that could be looked at if identified by the Committee.

Adult Social Care

Sara Livadeas and John Dixon attended to respond to questions.

During discussion the following points were made:

- (9) Sara Livadeas responding to comments on the growth in safeguarding issues commented that a very high proportion of safeguarding issues were related to friends and family. It was rare for there to be deliberate abuse linked to a care environment. The issue was part of the overall contract monitoring and a huge amount of work went on. Asked how the Committee could be assured about individual contracts the Chairman highlighted the work of the Adult Safeguarding Board. She suggested that looking at the outcomes of that Board might be a way to give Members the assurance they sought.
- (10) There was discussion around the indicators relating to home care placements.
- (11) Members discussed extra care housing and the point was made that some control was needed as to where it was placed. Sarah Livadeas referred to the basis of need on which the housing was developed and expressed the authorities pride at the work done.
- (12) It was suggested that the word inappropriately be added to item 2.

Public Health

Val Messenger attended.

During discussion the following points were made:

- (13) Val Messenger explained how Public Health was pioneering the healthy weight strategy. She referred to the work of school nurses which was to incorporate height/weight of primary school children. The scheme did not extend to secondary school pupils but school nurses would work proactively with the secondary age students.
- (14) In response to concern that smoking cessation had been removed as a target Val Messenger replied that she would be happy to add it back in.

Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service

Dave Etheridge Chief Fire Officer attended and highlighted the unique role for the fire service in Oxfordshire compared to other areas which came through in the plan. As part of the County Council they were able to add value through work in areas such as road safety.

He added that there was an annual report that provided detailed performance information and the quarterly reporting focussed on specific outcomes.

Responding to comments on targets Dave Etheridge explained the way in which the 365 Alive targets had been developed.

9/14 BUSINESS MANAGEMENT MONITORING REPORT FOR THE THIRD QUARTER 2013/14 (Agenda No. 6)

The Committee had before them the business monitoring report for the third quarter 2013/14.

Directorate officers attended to answer questions on the performance information.

Environment & Economy

Responding to a request for information about S81 work, Sue Scane undertook that such information would be provided through the localities meetings.

There was some discussion over the target of 50% set for the level of satisfaction with highways noting that the current level achieved was 50.2%.

Children, Education & Families

Responding to a query on how Oxfordshire fared nationally in terms of narrowing the gap on those areas that were red, Frances Craven suggested that more detailed figures could come to a future meeting. A Councillor highlighted the low target figure

for looked after children achieving GCSEs and Frances Craven indicated it was in line with the national average. The position was monitored monthly looking at interventions and their impact. Information could be provided to councillors on what was being done.

Adult Social Care

Sara Livadeas, referring to re-ablement services stated that the overall performance continued to improve although not to the levels set when the contract was negotiated.

10/14 CONTRACT QUALITY ASSURANCE - ADULT SOCIAL CARE

(Agenda No. 7)

Sara Livadeas and Andrew Colling attended for this item highlighting two aspects of contract work: contract monitoring and contract assurance. They referred to the report that set out the approach taken with a move to a systematic approach based on risk. It was possible to RAG rate contracts in order to better target resources. All contracts were monitored annually and some much more frequently.

A Member highlighted a contract where the outcomes had been disappointing and asked what could be done to improve matters. Sara Livadeas, indicated that the provider acknowledged the problem and that so long as people were being safeguarded the Council was willing to work with providers.

Councillor Stratford highlighted the Adopt a Care Home scheme for councillors, queried how many councillors had been accepted or refused by a care home and suggested that the scheme's profile be raised.

Following discussion of the extent to which councillors could influence what went in to contracts Peter Clark commented that if there were concerns about individual contracts that this was a matter for this Committee. However if there were more general concerns this was for the Audit & Governance Committee to investigate. It was AGREED that the Chairman consider what information could usefully be included in a joint briefing for this Committee and members of the Audit & Governance Committee.

11/14 REVIEW OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL'S GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

(Agenda No. 8)

The Committee noted the update on the review of the County Council's governance arrangements.

12/14 SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14

(Agenda No. 9)

The Committee supported the approach outlined and the Chairman welcomed any input from Members. It was suggested that the report should focus on the change that had been brought about, in the pooling of information across previously separated areas. It was AGREED to circulate what had been done so far.

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13/14 FORWARD PLAN
(Agenda No. 10)

The Chairman indicated that she felt more meetings were needed, with some of them being seminars rather than formal meetings. There was general agreement and Councillor Fawcett suggested that there be a session on highway maintenance as it was a general concern. The Chairman indicated that Skanska was in any case coming back to Committee. It was suggested that the Audit & Governance Committee model with the hour before the meeting used for briefings could be useful.

It was AGREED that officers would work with the Chairman to bring a plan to the next meeting.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing

2014