

Minutes of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 25 October 2022

Present: Colin Greatorex (Chair)

Attendance

Charlotte Atkins	Bernard Peters
Mike Davies	Bob Spencer
John Francis	Samantha Thompson (Vice-Chair (Overview))
Gill Heath (Vice-Chair (Scrutiny))	Mike Worthington
Jeremy Pert	

Also in attendance: Councillors Alan White, and Simon Tagg

Officers: Kerry Dove, Kate Bullivant, Clive Thomson, James Cartwright, Ian Turner and John Tradewell.

Apologies: Tina Clements and Kath Perry, MBE

PART ONE

33. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

34. Minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2022

Resolved: – That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

35. Complaints Annual Report – Corporate Services

The Customer Feedback and Complaints Manager introduced the Customer Feedback and Complaints Service, Corporate Services Annual Report 2021-22.

It was noted that the Statutory report for the Children and Adult Social Care Services had been reported to the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

It was explained that the Corporate Complaints procedure is a formal complaints procedure which is based on 'do it once, do it right'. Service departments are expected to support the corporate complaints team through the various stages of the complaint. Information was also collected on duty issues and public and MP issues raised, which weren't classed as complaints, but requests for service. This information was used to highlight areas of concern or areas for improvement.

During the debate the following points were raised:

- Digital communication and reporting of faults was encouraged, but the council still operated a customer call centre for those who found it easier or felt more comfortable to speak to a person.
- It was noted that complaint numbers were very low but elected members dealt with a number of issues which prevented complaints being raised. Refresh training on the complaints process was requested by members.
- Lessons were learnt from each complaint and processes reviewed where necessary.
- Communication had been highlighted throughout the complaints.
- Where English was not a first language, translators were employed and support offered where needed. When language was known to be an issue in advance of service provision, for example in Children's Services, additional support was provided early so that communication was not an issue.
- Outcomes often determine satisfaction and expectations need to be made clear at the start of the process.
- The customer survey also helped to highlight areas which needed to be reviewed.

Members expressed their thanks to the Complaints team for their care and support provided to customers when they raised issues against departments.

Resolved: That the report be noted and that Complaints process training be re-offered to all Councillors through the Members Training Programme.

36. Integrated Performance Report – Quarter 2, 2022/23

The Leader of the Council introduced the Integrated Performance Report for Quarter 2 2022/23 which summarised the Council's performance and financial position against the Strategic and Delivery Plans.

The report detailed the main challenges facing each of the four service areas, notably the cost-of-living crisis, the situation with the global economy and the impact this was having on Council Budgets; and the transformation of Children's services which had not achieved expected savings during the quarter. It was also reported that there was a forecast overspend of £10.908m (1.9%), prior to additional funding for inflationary pressures being taken into account.

The main issues discussed by members were:

- The number of children in care which was continuing to increase. It was reported that the portfolio of the Director had now been split in order to allow a more focused approach. Robust monitoring of the transformation programme was continuing and being reviewed.
- The number of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) issued within (20 day target) had seen some improvement but the demand for Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND) support had continued to rise. It was reported that there was a Special Cabinet event to focus on this issue and revise targets and budgets. The result of this event would be fed into the MTFs programme which was reported to this Committee. It was suggested that a special meeting to look at the MTFs and the revised Transformation Programme could be arranged to enable detailed scrutiny.

- A member suggested that some parents felt that a EHCP was the only way to get funding for the school to support their child.
- A question was asked on the number of Child Protection Plans (CPP) which showed that one fifth were subject to a CPP more than once and why was this happening. The Leader didn't have the information at the meeting and would provide the Committee with it after the meeting.
- A discussion on the funding challenges for category 3 highway defects took place and the need to maintain gullies and drains to help prevent potholes through the programme of works.
- Recovery of historical debt was continuing, and systems had been revised to ensure that in future people were able to pay for services at time of delivery rather than debt occurring.

Resolved:

- a) That the Quarter 2 2022/23 Integrated Performance Report be noted.
- b) That the Committee be provided with information on why 1/5 of Children with a Child Protection Plans had received more than one plan.
- c) That a special meeting to look at the MTFs and the revised Transformation Programme be arranged.

37. Entrust - Review of changes

The Cabinet Member for Commercial Matters had sent his apologies due to illness. The Leader and the Assistant Director for Commercial and Assets presented the report.

The Committee was informed that the Entrust contract was approximately half way through and this had provided an opportunity to review of the services needed and how they were provided. The report contained a list of the proposed changes.

The Committee felt that the way the report listed the changes made it difficult to challenge and hold the executive to account. A monitoring report in 12 months was requested to ensure that that there were no budget implications or performance changes.

Resolved:

- a) That the update be noted.
- b) That the Cabinet member provide a monitoring report to the Committee in 12 months time.

38. Climate Change Annual Report and Draft Action Plan

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change introduced the Climate Change Annual Report and Action Plan. The documents would be considered by the Cabinet in November 2022.

A short presentation was provided to the Committee.

The following comments were made by the Committee on the Annual Report:

1. The document and template used was clear, easy to read, positive and a through report of the current position and Councils aims.

2. The Council should use its power/ persuasion and networking capacity to circulate the document to other partners e.g.: Parish Councils; MP's; Voluntary sector; and local Business to encourage them to develop their own action plans.
3. Wider explanation of the term 'wider Counties' was need when discussing tonnes of waste.
4. The roadmap needed to be supported by delivery plans in order to effect change.

It was noted that working with District Councils was essential for areas such as electric charging points and usage of footpaths and cycleways to develop. Members felt that there would be more public changing over to electric vehicles when the facilities to charge vehicles was in place. It was acknowledged that some technology development/changes were required before change at a local level could occur.

The Committee currently had a working group which was looking at Climate Change. To ensure that duplication did not take place with the Climate Change Sustainability Board, the Committee was encouraged to concentrate on internally focused areas of possible development, such as District Heating Networks and suggest ways in which the Executive could continue to progress ideas.

Resolved:

- a) That the update be noted.
- b) That the Committee receive an update in 12 months time.
- c) That the comments made by the Committee, listed above, be reported to the Cabinet in November 2022.

39. Climate Change Working Group Update Report

The Committee considered the summary report of the member working group detailing the work undertaken to date.

It was acknowledged that the Sustainability Board had a wider remit than the Committee Working Group. It was felt that the Working Group should concentrate on the internal workings of the Council and challenges the Council faced. Issues concerning the wider partnership or external to the Council could be fed into the Sustainability Board.

Resolved:

- a) That the update report be noted.
- b) That the Working Group look at the internal challenges facing the Council, particularly those that would have an effect on budgets.
- c) That a member of the Working Group attends the Sustainability Board as an observer, to ensure there is no duplication.
- d) Public participation in the working groups evidence gathering would be considered when appropriate.

40. Work Programme

Resolved: That the Work Programme be noted.

Chairman