

Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
18 July 2016

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held on Monday, 18th July, 2016 at 7.30 pm in the Council Offices, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE

PRESENT: Councillors S Markiewicz (Chairman)  
M Levitt (Vice-Chairman)

T Bailey, M Birleson, H Bower, J Cragg, N Pace,  
S Roberts, M Spinks and D Bell

ALSO Councillors D Bell – Executive Member – Resources  
PRESENT:

OFFICIALS F Cantel – Client Support Services Manager  
PRESENT: J Cika – Finance Manager  
G Crawford – Senior Performance and Strategy Officer  
S Hulks – Governance Services Officer  
M Martinus – Head of Law and Administration  
J Pilbeam – Head of Human Resources  
D Williams – Financial and Technical Accountant  
S Jones – Sopra Steria

---

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

It was noted that at the Annual Council meeting held on 23 May, 2016, Councillors S Markiewicz and M Levitt were appointed as Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively of this Committee.

2. SUBSTITUTION OF MEMBERS

Councillor J Cragg substituted for Councillor J Boulton and Councillor M Spinks for Councillor G Michaelides.

3. APOLOGIES

Councillors J Boulton and G Michaelides submitted apologies for the meeting.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5. ACTIONS UPDATE

There were no actions requiring update.

Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
18 July 2016

6. NOTIFICATION OF URGENT BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED UNDER ITEM 20

There were no items of urgent business.

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS BY MEMBERS

There were no declarations of interest made.

8. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND PETITIONS

No public questions or petitions had been received.

9. SOPRA STERIA CONTRACT MONITORING 2015-2016

Members received a report which provided them with details of performance against target for Sopra Steria.

All targets had been met or exceeded.

Members asked whether there was Councillor involvement in setting the targets. They were informed that targets were set with the knowledge of the Portfolio Holder.

Members asked whether the reduction in the number of days to process new benefits claims impacted on overpayment of benefits. They were advised that there was no impact.

Members commented that they were pleased that targets were being exceeded.

NOTED the report.

10. PERFORMANCE INDICATOR ANNUAL REPORT

Members received a report which provided details of performance indicator data for the services that fell within the remit of the Committee.

One quarterly target had not been met, that being the number of employee working days lost to sickness absence. Three annual targets were not met.

Members asked the following questions:

Q How many people were surveyed for the satisfaction data?

A *350 people per quarter*

Q Why is the satisfaction score so low? Is there a particular area in which there is a problem?

A *There is no supplementary data available to answer this.*

Q Were some suppliers paid in less than 30 days of the invoice date?

Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
18 July 2016

- A *Yes, there were arrangements with some suppliers for payment to be made in a shorter time.*
- Q How much was paid to SOCITM for the data produced by them on user satisfaction of the website?
- A *Officers to provide this by email.*
- Q Was there an area of the Council which had a higher rate of sickness absence?
- A *No, there was no evidence of any area being worse than any other.*
- Q Did the Council use agency staff to cover periods of sickness absence?
- A *It would depend on the role to be covered. Generally other members of the team would provide cover.*
- Q Is there an Action Plan in place to address the low level of employees who are registered as disabled and the low level of ethnic minority employees?
- A *An Action Plan will be prepared once a data integrity check had been made of the current data. The Council will look at ways of encouraging applications from these groups and how support could be provided.*

11. NOTED the report.  
COMPLAINTS MONITORING REPORT 2015-2016

Members received a report which provided information on the number and type of complaints received during 2015-16.

There had been a reduction in the number of complaints received compared to 2014-15. During the same period there had been an increase in the number of compliments.

The report provided a breakdown on the access channels used, the types of complaint and whether or not the complaint was justified.

Members asked whether, when a complainant was not happy with the outcome of their complaint, this would count as another complaint. They were informed that it would not.

Members were advised that not all complaints were entered on Lagan and that some services had their own system. This would be addressed during the Customer Services Review.

Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
18 July 2016

Members commented that the number of surveys returned was very small. Officers said that it was possible that, if they were happy with the outcome, they might not feel the need to complete a survey saying that.

Members requested a copy of the survey that was sent out. Officers to supply.

Members asked whether it was possible for them to be provided with details of complaints at Ward level. Officers agreed that this could be considered as part of the Customer Services Review.

Members requested that they were kept informed about the Customer Services Review and they noted that the Portfolio Holder was a member of the working group.

Members requested that benchmarking data should be circulated so that they could see how this Council compares to others. Officers to circulate.

NOTED the report.

## 12. FINANCIAL OUTTURN REPORT 2015-2016

Members received a report which provided final outturn figures for 2015-16.

Members asked why the report compared to the current figures and not the original figures. They were informed that the figures were monitored throughout the year and variances were adjusted at these times.

Members asked why there had been an increase in income for Law and Administration. It was explained that there had been an unexpected grant from the government towards the cost of the legal case in respect of Land Charges.

It was noted that finance officers were working closely with Campus West staff to address some of the issues that had happened during the year, such as the late accounting for the expense of hiring films, particularly in quarter 4.

The Campus West Cabinet Panel was to be revived so that closer attention could be paid to issues that had arisen in order to prevent them being repeated.

Members asked where the Performance Indicators for Campus West were monitored. It was noted that these would fall within the remit of the Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Officers advised that the £45k outstanding over 90 days was collectable and legal process would be followed if required.

Members asked why there had been a big difference in the recycling waste subsidy. Officers advised that Herts County Council had advised the District

Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
18 July 2016

Councils that they would be making savings so this was taken into account within the budget. However, the subsidy was not reduced which resulted in a saving of £147k.

It was noted that the provision for support for significant rent increases to tenants of properties acquired from St Modwen in Hatfield had not been used. The amount for this had been reduced in the 2016-17 budget.

Members asked for more information about the KGV pitches. They were advised that two of the pitches were to be relocated to Hatfield and the other two would remain in situ subject to the outcome of the consultation with residents regarding sound-proofing. More information would be provided at the Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

NOTED the report.

13. COMMITTEE OVERVIEW WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17

The work programme for the year was agreed.

NOTED the work programme.

14. RESPONSE FROM CABINET/COUNCIL TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

None.

15. CONSIDERATION OF ITEMS FOR SCRUTINY

Members commented that they felt that they should identify decisions made by Cabinet which would be suitable for scrutiny.

It was felt that it was quite difficult to identify topics for this committee.

16. SUCH OTHER BUSINESS AS, IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIRMAN, IS OF SUFFICIENT URGENCY TO WARRANT IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION

None.

Meeting ended at 9.10 pm