

Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
21 November 2018

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held on Wednesday 21 November 2018 at 7.30pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE

PRESENT: Councillors G.Michaelides (Vice-Chairman)  
M.Cowan (substituting for H.Quenet), C.Gillett,  
S.Kasumu, R.Lass (substituting for S.Thusu), T.Lyons,  
S.Roberts, J.Skoczylas, S.Wrenn

ALSO PRESENT: D.Bell (Executive Member, Resources)

CO-OPTED MEMBERS: R.Read (Tenants' Panel Representative)

OFFICIALS PRESENT: Corporate Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) (K.Ng)  
Head of Resources (R.Baker)  
Finance Manager (J.Cika)  
Client Support Services Manager (F.Cantel)  
Senior Performance & Strategy Officer (G.Crawford)  
Governance Services Manager (G.Paddan)

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61. SUBSTITUTION OF MEMBERS

The following substitution of Committee Member had been made in accordance with Council Procedure Rules 19-22:

Councillor M.Cowan for H.Quenet.  
Councillor R.Lass for S.Thusu.

62. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M.Birleson, H.Quenet and S.Thusu.

63. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

64. ACTIONS UPDATE

The status of actions agreed at the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 12 September 2018 in the report of the Corporate Director (Resources Environment and Cultural Services) was noted.

65. SOPRA STERIA CONTRACT PERFORMANCE - 2018/19

Report of the Corporate Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services), which provided Members with an analysis of the service performance for Sopra Steria against contractual key performance indicators and service level targets for benefits, council tax, business rates, Information Communication Technology (ICT), contract centre, reception and switchboard.

The report noted that the overall performance had been good since the commencement of the partnership despite the period of economic uncertainty that the Council had gone through and the welfare reform changes which had impacted on performance.

Performance for some of the key performance indicators for Quarter 2, July 2018 to September 2018 was shown in Appendix A.

Officers explained that eight out of twelve Performance Indicators had been met and clarified that one benefit PI on new claims and changes in circumstances was missed due to the volume of correspondence received. Members were advised that an action plan had been being drawn up and improvements had been made with the level of outstanding correspondence reducing.

A Member requested that the 'Days taken to process new benefits claims and change events' headed under Revenues and Benefits should be separated for ease of reading within the report for the next meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted.

66. PERFORMANCE INDICATOR REPORT

Members received a report of the Corporate Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) and a presentation which provided the Committee with Quarter 2 performance indicator data collected for those services that fell within its remit. Taken together the report and the presentation enabled the Committee to identify which of the services were improving, not improving or remaining the same in their key performance areas. Service comments were also included to explain the performance shown, along with any further action needed.

Members were advised that all of the KPIs had met their targets and two KPIs 4 and 5 had performed exceedingly well. The result of KPI 10 (the percentage of residents who felt well informed about council services), which was part of the

customer satisfaction survey achieved 75%; indicating that the Council provided adequate information to the public.

The following points were raised and discussed:

**Performance Indicator 60** – clarification was sought on the empty properties and Officers advised that these were not included if they are part of the regeneration work in Hatfield.

**Performance Indicator 5** (from the previous meeting) – a comparison of staff sickness levels had been requested; data to include sickness levels in other public sector bodies to be included in the KPI report. The information to be provided to Committee Members.

**Garages** – occupancies and costs: Officers explained that there are approximately 5,000 Council garages but due to a recent housing development there has been a reduction.

RESOLVED:

The Committee note the performance indicator data collected and reported.

67. REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2018

Report of the Corporate Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services), which presented the revenue, capital and HRA budget monitoring position as at the end of September 2018 (Month 6) for the financial year 2018/19. These reports were presented and discussed at the Cabinet meeting on the 6 November 2018 and were attached to the report. The Cabinet reports analysed the reasons for changes between the current budget and projected outturn.

Officers clarified the situation regarding outstanding debts on debtors system; performance was measured using a rolling debtor day ratio with a target of 38 days. It was noted that at the end of Quarter 2 the rolling debtor days had improved to 35.85 days compared to 37.79 reported at Quarter 1. Members were advised that detailed information on outstanding debts was discussed at the regular budget monitoring meetings with Corporate Directors and Heads of Service and action taken as appropriate.

The Officers explained that garages' debts which were outstanding as the invoices had not been included. Also debts were being pursued by the Team using direct customer contact and legal action taken where appropriate. Commercial rental income was also discussed.

Members questioned the £50,000 favourable variance in relation to the Alternative Financial Model used for the Landfill recycling. The report noted that in order to incentivise Councils to recycle, central Government issued a subsidy

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to Hertfordshire County Council which was then apportioned out across the ten Districts/Boroughs using an agreed method called the Alternative Financial Model. A question was raised as to whether the price was fixed or would fluctuate according to market value? Officers explained that based on the recycling rates performance, there would be an additional £50,000 subsidy to that budgeted. Further consideration was given to funds available and the mathematical model used to work out the monies distributed between the ten District/Borough Councils within the County.

Clarification was sought on the budget priority and transformation reserves in terms of the balances and their use. It was noted that further information would be provided to the Committee in detail once the budget papers were produced.

A Member enquired about the Splashlands project and it was noted that a recent meeting of the Splashlands Procurement Board was positive and the project was moving forward. The Committee could potentially see movement of funds within Quarter 3 Committee reports.

The Capital Scheme progress to date was considered and a question was raised in respect of grant funding utilisation. The Committee noted that such funding had been used for developments such as Hatfield regeneration projects. Other schemes would be considered in the future.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee note the Quarter 2 budget monitoring reports.

68. COMMITTEE OVERVIEW WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19

The work programme for 2018/2019 was noted.

Meeting ended 8.20pm  
GP