

# TRANSFORMATION AND RESOURCES POLICY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

Monday, 23 September 2013

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	S Whittingham (Chair)	
	Councillors	P Gilchrist C Blakeley P Glasman R Gregson M Johnston	C Muspratt L Rowlands J Salter A Sykes
<u>Deputies:</u>	Councillors	B Mooney (In place of RL Abbey) M Sullivan (In place of J Williamson) W Clements (In place of A Hodson) C Povall (In place of J Hale)	
<u>In attendance</u>	Councillor	A Jones	

## 11 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST / PARTY WHIP

Members were asked to consider whether they had any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interest in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest.

Members were reminded that they should also declare whether they were subject to a party whip in connection with any item(s) to be considered and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of the whipping arrangement.

Councillor P Glasman declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 4 – Directorate Plan Performance Management Report (see minute 14 post), by virtue of her being Chair of the Pensions Committee.

Councillor C Povall declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 4 – Directorate Plan Performance Management Report (see minute 14 post), by virtue of her being a member of the Pensions Committee.

## 12 MINUTES

**Resolved – That the minutes of the Transformation and Resources Policy and Performance Committee of 30 July, 2013 be approved.**

## 13 ICT STRATEGY

The Committee received the report of the Interim Head of ICT, and a presentation on the Council's ICT Strategy and Strategic Implementation Plan. The report provided the Committee with an opportunity to undertake some pre-decision scrutiny in advance of the Strategy being submitted to Cabinet for approval. The ICT Strategy, appended to the report included sections giving an overview, the vision of the IT Service and Key Drivers. However, the main elements of the strategy were developed around providing overall ICT leadership across four key themes:

Transforming the Council  
Core Business Systems  
Infrastructure  
ICT Governance

An ICT Strategic Implementation Plan had been developed and was also appended to the report. This highlighted the key projects that delivered the ICT Strategy and prioritised these as well as highlighting the outcome being sought, the cost of the work, the associated savings and the key milestones of the work involved.

All aspects of the IT strategy were financially covered. The £675,000 pa refresh budget for all new equipment and software was available to IT and special capital budgets for the Swift replacement project had been made available. The refresh budget could be released when necessary to deliver more replacement hardware and software.

Responding to comments from Members, the Interim Head of ICT explained how the WRap2 system worked in connecting securely Council computers in Members' homes to the Local Authority's services. The Government had issued firm advice warning Council's not to run software that couldn't be secured, it had also warned recently against the use of personal devices to access Local Authority computer systems. With data now also been shared across services from the Departments of Adult Social Services and Children and Young People with partners in health there was a need to ensure security of the Council's IT systems were as up to date as those in the National Health Service.

A Member suggested that as with other Councils, Members should be able to provide their own devices and access the Council's email. The special software required for encryption could be put on Members' own devices to ensure it met the Government's security requirements.

In response to further comments, he elaborated on the improvements to be made in the event of future power loss, the backup available and the refresh budget for new equipment and software.

With regard to the Government's recommendations on IT security requirements for Local Authorities, he agreed that it would be useful for Members to see this information. He was not aware of any Government grants to cover the increased IT security arrangements required.

He assured Members of the security of the WRap2 connection and would provide this assurance in writing. It was also confirmed that the broadband connection did not have to remain switched on and could be switched off.

A Member suggested the need to build into the strategy an acknowledgement of those members of the community who did not have access to the internet.

On a motion by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Glasman and incorporating the suggestion made by Councillor Johnston, it was –

**Resolved –**

- (1) In terms of the ICT governance proposals, it is recommended there is Member involvement in the proposed Senior Board, to be determined by Cabinet.**
- (2) It is recommended that part of the Senior Board's remit is horizon-scanning to identify new technologies that improve service quality and deliver efficiencies.**
- (3) In terms of implementing the Strategy, it is recommended that a management dashboard approach is taken to monitoring performance and that this is reviewed by this committee.**
- (4) An Equalities Impact Assessment is carried out.**
- (5) It is recommended that the Strategy includes a statement recognising that there is a vulnerable section of the community with limited or no access to the internet and that the Council needs to remain mindful of this in seeking to engage with all residents.**

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## **DIRECTORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT**

The Strategic Director presented a report which outlined the current performance of the Transformation and Resources Department (as at 31st July 2013) against its Directorate Plan for 2013/14 in a Performance Dashboard. It translated the priorities set out in the Plan into a coherent set of

performance outcome measures and targets that would be used to evaluate the achievement of the priorities outlined in the Plan over the next year.

The report also included appendices with exception reports on those three items which had been 'red' rated for non-compliance against the specified target.

Responding to comments from Members, the Head of Business Processes stated in respect of indicators, DP11 and DP11a, that there were a number of initiatives to recover debt and that as with all debts the first twelve months were the key time to recover them. He outlined the work of the Collection and Recovery Team (CaRT) and the need for staff training so that people from whom the debts were being claimed were fully aware of what they were paying for and their responsibilities. The two software systems being used in the processing and recovery of debt, civica and oracle were capable of running together and no data was lost between the two.

The Chair suggested that it might be useful to have a separate indicator to measure performance in the recovery of historic debt.

In respect of further comments on other indicators, the Strategic Director acknowledged the gap in information from Human Resources in respect of CP3. HR were involved in all of the establishment restructures which would conclude in November and he would make sure that more information was provided in the next report. With regard to indicator CP5 there had been a significant reduction in the use of agency staff and the use of consultants and he would provide further information on this to the committee.

With regard to indicator P7, Head of Legal and Member Services, informed the committee that the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee had been cancelled in September due to the unavailability of the Chair, and items for that Committee could be dealt with at the meeting in November.

The Interim Director of Resources, in respect of indicator P3, stated that once the 'no purchase order no pay policy' had been introduced, SME's would be guaranteed payments of invoices within 10 days if they had a purchase order 10 days in advance.

A Member commented upon the need to ensure all officers were present to respond to questions which might be raised. The Strategic Director appreciated the point made and explained that the focus of the 'performance dashboard' was on exception reporting.

Members expressed congratulations to all those responsible for the improved dashboard and a Member suggested that it would be helpful to have exception reports not just on those indicators which were 'red' but also those moving in the wrong direction.

**Resolved - That the Performance Dashboard be noted and the information contained within it be used to inform the Committee's future work programme.**

**15 TRANSFORMATION AND RESOURCES FINANCIAL MONITORING 2013/14 (MONTH 3)**

The Interim Director of Resources presented a report which proposed an approach to future financial monitoring arrangements for this Committee to ensure consistency across the Policy and Performance Committees and that Members had sufficient information to scrutinise budget performance for the Directorate. With this Committee being the first to 'pilot' the new arrangements the financial information for Month 3 (June 2013) reported to Cabinet on 19 September was included.

The report gave details of performance against revenue and capital budgets and in year efficiency savings for 2013/14. The Strategic Director drew the Committee's attention to the currently forecast underspend of £246,000 and assured the Committee of continued monitoring to make sure that this became a reality.

In response to comments from Members, the Head of Business Processes assured the committee that the Council only used accredited bailiffs and there was a policy on dealing with vulnerable clients. In respect of Discretionary Housing Payments, it was expected that the Council would use up the full Government contribution of £917,214 by the year end and any additional contributions which would be given, once the Department of Work and Pensions had released information on the procedure to apply for these. He also stated that in respect of the Under Occupancy Regulations, he would include in a future report to the Committee what movement there had been in the numbers moving from the social to the private sector.

**Resolved –**

**(1) That this Committee approves the proposed approach for future financial monitoring arrangements.**

**(2) That the comments of the Committee be noted.**

**16 POLICY UPDATE**

The Director of Public Health / Head of Policy and Performance submitted a Policy Briefing report which provided the Committee with the opportunity to review new areas of policy and government initiatives that would impact on local government in the short to medium term.

**Resolved – That the report be noted.**

17 **WORK PROGRAMME**

Further to minute 9 (30 July 2013), the Chair presented an update upon the outcome of discussions with party spokespersons upon the formulation and development of the work programme for the ensuing municipal year. He presented a detailed work programme in the form of a schedule for the municipal year, highlighting proposed activity against the following headings –

- Scheduled Reviews
- Potential Reviews
- Reports Requested
- Standing Items

The Chair asked for Members to volunteer to sit on the task and finish groups.

**Resolved – That the Transformation and Resources Policy and Performance Committee work programme, set out in Appendix 1 to the report now submitted, be approved.**