

COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 15 January 2014

Present: Councillor S Whittingham (Chair)

Councillors S Foulkes B Mooney
A Hodson D Roberts
A Brighthouse J Stapleton
RL Abbey D Elderton
P Doughty L Fraser
P Glasman A Sykes
M McLaughlin S Williams

27 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies received

28 CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST RELEVANT AUTHORITIES (DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS) REGULATIONS 2012, INCLUDING PARTY WHIP DECLARATIONS

Councillor McLaughlin declared a non pecuniary interest by virtue of her daughters placement at a Wirral Care Home.

29 MINUTES

A Member referred to the length of the agenda with reference to comments made during the previous Committee Meeting whereby concerns were raised over the amounts of paperwork assimilated. Further concerns were raised due to length of the current agenda (126 pages)

The Head of Commissioning, Performance and Business Intelligence suggested that as a solution key issues could be highlighted in a cover sheet.

Members emphasised that they would welcome any alternative as a means to would simplify and highlight key issues.

Resolved – That the minutes be approved.

30 INDIVIDUAL ELECTORAL REGISTRATION SCRUTINY REVIEW REPORT

A Report by the Director of Public Health/ Head of Policy and Performance provided a detailed account of a Scrutiny Review which considered Wirral's preparations for the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration (IER) in

2014. Members heard how the introduction of IER was a government initiative to transfer the existing property- based electoral register to a new register which would rely on individuals registering themselves.

The Chair of the IER Scrutiny Review Panel addressed the Committee. A vote of thanks was expressed to all that had been involved with the piece of work. It was identified that while the accuracy of Wirral's Electoral Register was above the national average, some trends had been identified, particularly in the more deprived areas of the Borough in relation to inaccuracies. The positive aspects of cross party working was then highlighted.

Other Members of the IER Scrutiny Review Panel present endorsed comments made by Councillor Stapleton.

A Member highlighted concerns with paragraph 3.3 of the report whereby it was reported that in some wards, notably those with higher levels of known deprivation, there would be a higher proportion of voters not automatically transferred onto the register. The question was raised as to what could be put in place to alleviate this problem.

The Project Coordinator Policy and Performance Manager clarified that work will be undertaken to canvass targeted areas. A test run had been conducted that had proved successful. The Head of Legal and Member Services commented that the Cabinet Office and Electoral Commission will be co-ordinating and launching a national campaign and the Council will look to undertake a targeted awareness campaign aimed at specific areas within electoral wards as required.

A Member suggested that a campaign on local radio be launched to encourage the public to ensure they are on the electoral register. It was suggested that the campaign should include information about the negative effect on personal credit ratings and the ability to gain credit if an individual is not on the electoral register.

A Member raised concerns about members of the public who will continue to be excluded. It was stated that this should be raised at Cabinet level. It was then suggested that any costs involved for radio campaigns could be shared with neighbouring authorities.

Another Member suggested that the Council's current IT systems continue to be looked at so data can correspond with gaps on the register.

RESOLVED:

That Members of the Committee note the contents and recommendations of the report.

That Members agree that the report be referred to Cabinet.

31 **SCRUTINY REVIEW GUIDANCE**

A Report by the Director of Public Health/ Head of Policy and Performance set out draft guidance for the setting up and operation of Scrutiny Review Panels to ensure there is a consistency of approach to task and finish work across the four Policy and Performance Committees.

Members considered the guidance and welcomed that there are significantly more scrutiny reviews being undertaken thus further demonstrating the direction of travel in the Council's improvement journey.

RESOLVED:

All Members welcomed that there are significantly more scrutiny reviews being undertaken which the Committee believes further demonstrate the direction of travel in the Council's improvement journey.

32 **CORPORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE REPORT**

A Report by the Director of Public Health/Head of Policy and Performance updated Members of the Committee on the current performance of the Council (as at 30th November 2013) against the delivery of the Corporate Plan for 2013/14. Appended to the report was the Corporate Plan Performance, Finance and Risk Report demonstrating overall status of actions across departments.

The Head of Commissioning, Performance and Business Intelligence identified to Members that items 7 and 17 on the Corporate Performance Plan have progressed to Green Status, both of which had previously been red.

The Head of Commissioning, Performance and Business Intelligence then informed Members that an error had been identified on the Corporate Plan Statistical Report. He advised that he would arrange for Members to receive the correct version electronically following the meeting.

Members were then advised that Performance Reviews would be made available on the website on a monthly basis.

Members proceeded to discuss items on the Plan that had a 'red' status.

The Director of Adult Social Services addressed the Committee and referred to item 4 on the plan entitled 'permanent admissions of older people (aged 65

and over) to residential and nursing care homes, per 100, 000 population'. Members heard that placement to care home levels have started to reduce since July 2013 with the exception of October. The Performance Action Template set out the focus of activity to improve performance including: maximising community based options, focus on promoting independence and current commissioning activity that will deliver more capacity and a greater range of domiciliary care. It was stated that the issue will remain a 'red' indicator for the foreseeable future due to the complexity of the situation..

A Member reinforced the complexity of the issue and advised that this area is being examined through a task and finish group.

A Member queried the reasoning behind the drop in admissions in June 2013.

The Director of Adult Social Services informed Members that levels tend to vary considerably and drew Members attention to the relatively small scale of the graph.

A Member sought clarification on the process of 'placing' an individual.

The Director of Adult Social Services explained that legislation introducing detailed but a time consuming process. From an NHS perspective an assessment is undertaken as to whether clinical support is needed. Members heard that the decision is based upon individual needs.

A Member stated that it is a reasonable assumption that the NHS focus on discharging people from hospital and asked what assumptions can be made for Adult Social Services for next year?

The Director of Adult Social Services stated that investments should be made in cultural change. Members heard that there will continue to be challenges in forthcoming years.

A Member sought clarification on the assessment process and queried whether this was undertaken by telephone or through visiting the individual involved.

It was explained that other than hospital referrals all people referred will be visited by a Social Worker in their own home. Initial referrals are through the Council's Central Advice and Duty Team, a risk assessment is then conducted to decipher whether the matter is a safeguarding issue. The CADT referral will involve a conversation with the individual involved.

A Member requested figures be provided for outstanding costs owed to the Council.

The Director of Adult Social Services informed Members that he did not have the information at that present time but he would circulate to Members after this meeting

The Head of Financial Services addressed the Committee in relation to item 16 on the Corporate Plan Performance entitled 'Adult Care Packages' supported by Direct Debit. Members were advised that this target will be reviewed by the end of the year.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee utilises the information contained in the report to inform its future work plan.

33 BUDGET MONITOR REPORT INCLUDING REVENUE SAVINGS AND CAPITAL (MONTH 7 MONITOR REPORT FROM THE CABINET - 10 DECEMBER 2013

A Report by the Director of Resources detailed the Monitoring position for month 7 (ending 31 October 2013). Appended to the report was the Revenue Monitoring Report for the same period.

The Head of Financial Services advised Members that month 8 is now available. The position has improved during this time period, however, £250,000 was required to be spent in repairs after flooding in New Brighton.

A Member enquired how much had been spent on the Council's restructure programme.

It was reported that work is ongoing with Cheshire West and funding has been set aside following the EVR programme. Exact Figures were not available.

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet's recommendations as set out in the two reports be noted.

34 POLICY UPDATE

A Report by the Director of Public Health/ Head of Policy and Performance provided a policy briefing to Members. The purpose of the report was to enable Members to review new areas of policy and the government initiatives that will impact on local government in the short to medium term.

A Member requested that Work Place Community budgets be included in the work programme and the report be received at the next meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That Members note the contents of the report.

35 **WORK PROGRAMME**

A Report by the Director of Public Health and Head of Policy and Performance updated Members on progress delivering the Scrutiny Work Programme for this Committee as agreed at the last scheduled meeting in September 2013. The report also provided an overview of the wider Work Programme including the other Policy and Performance Committees.

A Member expressed thanks to Mike Callon, Project Co-ordinator for the work he had undertaken.

The Project Coordinator advised Members that a meeting will be held for Chairs and Vice Chairs to review progress on how recommendations are tracked.

A Member expressed concerns regarding the Budget Options Scrutiny Review in that a proposal to review Council Tax was discussed at the first meeting but was not progressed at the second meeting.

The Chair of the Review Panel advised that following discussion at the second meeting, the unanimous view of those present was to recommend the Budget Options review is not progressed at this time as there had been uncertainty about the objectives it was seeking to achieve. A series of alternative proposals for task and finish work were recommended by the panel Members for the Committee to consider.

Another Member commented that with so many more scrutiny reviews taking place, we are on a learning curve and the most important aspect is having clear and strong recommendations from this Committee.

A Member then suggested that further information be provided on the proposals for task and finish work as put forward by the Budget Options Review Panel in the form of an officer report to the next meeting of this committee.

RESOLVED:

That the feedback from the Budget Options Scrutiny Review be noted.

That the proposals for alternative pieces of Task and Finish work arising from the Impact of Budget Options Panel discussions be noted.