

POLICY AND PERFORMANCE CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 2 July 2014

Present: Councillor M McLaughlin (Chair)

Councillors P Doughty C Blakeley
A Leech T Anderson
C Muspratt W Clements
W Smith M Hornby
M Sullivan S Williams
I Williams P Gilchrist
J Williamson

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P Brightmore.

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

No declarations of interest were received.

3 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 1 April 2014 be confirmed as a correct record.

4 FUTURE COUNCIL POSITION PAPERS

A report by the Chief Executive updated the Committee on progress in respect of the Future Council Project and provided an opportunity for Members to engage with and influence the emerging options which were being developed in order to transform the Council and achieve the savings required.

The Committee noted that the emerging options would be further developed and then published by the Chief Executive, as Officer's budget options, for full public, staff and service user consultation in September 2014.

Appended to the Chief Executive's report for Members' information were details of:

- Enabling Services (Appendix 1)
- Community and Neighbourhood Services (Appendix 2)
- Specialist and Targeted Services (Appendix 3)

The Strategic Director – Transformation and Resources was in attendance at the meeting and made a presentation on the Future Council Project with the assistance of the Marketing and Engagement Manager. They set the context by reminding Members of the major financial challenges that lay ahead and informing of the systematic, equitable, detailed review of all 81 Council Services, the information gathered to inform restructures and develop options to make savings and the whole Council approach that was linked to outcomes.

In terms of finance Members noted that:

- Significant savings (£57million) already agreed with phased impact during 2014-2017.
- A minimum of £45 million of new savings were required over the next two years to 2017.
- Current projections indicated a further £25 million in savings were required in 2018.
- Savings so far had been broadly equal across service areas on a pro-rata basis.

The Strategic Director made reference to the Corporate Plan and the three key priorities that the Council's budget would be set around:

1. Tackle health inequalities, poverty and disadvantage – narrow the gap between our richest and poorest communities
2. Protect the vulnerable, making sure people are safe and feel safe – and can remain independent as long as possible
3. Driving economic growth – investing in Wirral's future

The Strategic Director set out the budget principles, the future direction of Council Services, the Council's options and key project milestones. He then invited Members to consider their responses to the following questions:

- What are Members' views of the principles for the future direction of services, and the emerging budget options?
- Is anything missing? Are there key outcomes and areas of need that are not being addressed?
- Should anything be removed? Are there areas of Council activity that are not delivering valuable outcomes, or being delivered more effectively elsewhere?

- Members will see full budget options in September. Would the Committee prefer to consider these options via formal meetings or in workshop sessions?
- Would the committee like to invite other organisations or people to the detailed session to offer additional expertise?

The Chair informed the Committee that she considered the Future Council Project to be an important piece of work that required detailed scrutiny. It would completely redesign the Council ensuring it was able to achieve the outcomes residents needed with the resources available to it. The Chair asked Members to consider how this should be taken forward by all four Policy and Performance Committees.

Members thanked the Strategic Director and the Marketing and Engagement Manager for their informative presentation and asked a number of questions which were responded to appropriately. Matters raised included the following:

- The Corporate Plan was going to require some investment to achieve a return over time as long term gains were important. Officers had made no assumptions and set no targets for reductions across the 81 Service Areas. Political decisions would have to be made. The views of Members on this would be sought at the next Committee meeting scheduled for 3 September 2014.
- The Council was clearly facing major financial challenges; by 2017 the level of Government funding which it received would have been cut by over 50% and a further £25 million of savings would be required in 2018. In the light of the significant savings the Council had to make in future years, Members queried how much funding would be left for investment. They noted that this would depend on how the Council delivered its statutory responsibilities. It was not about whole scale reductions but about meeting the challenge of reductions. The Council was in difficult circumstances and facing the budget challenge head on. It wanted to be fair and equitable. Members would make the decisions. The difficulties would be acknowledged and dealt with in an appropriate and managed way.
- The Council had been complimented on its strategic approach to the delivery of its Services by a number of organisations over the last few weeks. Other local authorities were taking different approaches to the need to make savings but Wirral Council was taking a very sophisticated approach and Members were please to see this.
- A strategy to consult all stakeholders had been formulated. There would be two stages: a formal statutory staff consultation; and a Borough wide public consultation considering all budget options. This would be a detailed process and the Committee would receive a presentation on it in September 2014.
- The previous year's Budget consultation booklets were very general and would require considerable revision to bring them to an appropriate

standard for this year's exercise. They needed to be simplified but at the same time they needed to contain much more detail.

- The information provided needed to be accessible and easy to navigate. The right balance must be struck and enough detail included so that it was very clear on implications and impacts.
- Officers were advised to have regard to the Committee Calendar so that all the Constituency Committees who were meeting in October, this Committee that would meet in September and the other three Policy and Performance Committees who would meet in October were able to input into the consultation process before the Cabinet considered its report. The Strategic Director agreed to ensure that the sequencing of the Committee meetings was appropriate and that it assisted the decision-making process.
- Factoring timescales in was important particularly in respect of Council buildings and asset management. It was acknowledged that asset management had been slow in the past and the Council had made some small sales. It required some investment as the changing Council required less of some of its assets and more of others.
- It was noted that the rules changed in respect of capital assets next year and the Council would be able to invest capital raised through selling off its assets elsewhere. The Strategic Director informed that progress had been slow but in terms of sales the Council would be able to make best use of receipts from asset sales next year.
- It was important to encourage businesses to move to Wirral as this would increase the Business Rate base. The Strategic Director agreed that in terms of business development, improving business rate opportunities was critical to the Council.
- Members had regard to Economic Regeneration and Tourism noting that foreign tourism in Liverpool injected large amounts of money into the local economy. The Strategic Director agreed that Wirral's Tourism and Heritage possibilities would be taken into account.
- Some Members considered that the Council should not act like a bank and lend money to other Councils. They queried how much was tied up in investments and asked if the Council was going to continue to cut services whilst lending money to other local authorities. They wanted to know how much the Council paid out and how much it got in. The Strategic Director informed that budget management and treasury management would be carried out effectively and would involve short term loans and investments to offset cuts elsewhere. The Council needed to maximise its opportunities.

The Chair requested that Officers provide the Committee with a summary of the discussion just held in more detail than what would be in the Minutes, as a starting point. She proposed that a meeting of Policy and Performance Committee Chairs, Vice-Chairs and Spokespersons or their nominees be convened before September 2014 to discuss how to deal with the Future Council scrutiny process and to determine the way

forward/mechanism to be used to best scrutinise the Project. Members agreed that this was a good idea and that it was crucial that good scrutiny was seen to be carried out this year. The Committee wanted to be as inclusive as possible so it was also proposed that those best placed to assist in different areas of scrutiny be called upon to do so.

RESOLVED:

That the scrutiny of the Future Council Project be taken forward as proposed in the paragraph above.

5 BRIEFING PACK

A report by the Strategic Director – Transformation and Resources informed of the Briefing Pack for Members of the Committee for the new Municipal Year. The Pack was intended to ensure continuity as the Committee moved forward into the new year and highlighted some of the key policy drivers. It was also intended to provide new Committee Members with an understanding of the role of the Committee and the Scrutiny Function.

Briefing Packs had been produced at the beginning of the last municipal year for each of the four Policy and Performance Committee and had been well received by Members.

Appended to the Strategic Director's report was a copy of the Briefing Pack. It set out the responsibilities of the Committee, outstanding Work Programme items from the previous year and the key policy drivers going forward. Members noted that it was the intention for policy updates to be provided throughout the year at Committee meetings.

RESOLVED:

That the content of the Briefing Pack be noted.

6 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE 2013/14 OUTTURN

A report by the Director of Public Health and Head of Policy and Performance served to update the Committee on the current performance of the Council against the delivery of the Corporate Plan (as at 31 March 2014). The report translated the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan into a coherent and measurable set of performance outcome measures and targets. Members were requested to consider the details of the report and highlight any issues.

The Strategic Director – Transformation and Resources informed the Committee that the Council's Corporate Plan outlined its business planning processes that ensured its vision, priorities and resource allocation were based on sound evidence and an understanding of the communities' needs.

The Council's 'gold thread' approach would ensure that all its activities were suitably aligned to the achievement of its stated priorities and outcomes.

As part of the development of the Corporate Plan, a set of SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time related) outcome measures had been developed. The Council's Senior Management Team had determined the outcome indicators contained within the report and signed off the following parameters which underpinned its on-going performance management:

- 2013/14 Plan
- 2013/14 Plan trajectory
- 2013/14 Performance tolerance levels (determine RAG [Red, Amber, Green] status)
- Head of Service responsible for delivery of target

The Committee noted that monthly Corporate Plan Performance Reports were produced and made available to support corporate challenge via:

- Monthly DMTs
- Monthly Portfolio Lead briefings
- Quarterly Audit, Risk, Governance and Performance meetings
- Quarterly Policy and Performance Committees

Attached to the Director's report at Appendix 1 was the Corporate Plan Performance Report that set out performance against 29 outcome measures. Of these there were five measures where the outcome metric was under design or due to report at the end of the year. A commentary was provided against these.

The Committee also noted that of the 24 measures that were RAG rated, 19 were rated green, one was rated amber and four were rated red. The four measures rated red had action plans (appended to the report as Appendix 2, 3, 4 and 5) which referred to:

- Permanent admissions of older people (aged 65 and over) to residential and nursing care homes, per 100,000 population
- Apprenticeships supported (Wirral Apprentice Programme)
- % Adult care packages supported by direct debit
- Smoking quitters (4 weeks)

The Chair informed that in order to obtain a better understanding of the four areas that were under performing, Officers under whose remits they fell had been invited to the meeting to explain the circumstances behind them. Unfortunately, it was noted that no one was able to attend in respect of permanent admissions of older people to residential and nursing care homes

The Work Related Learning Co-ordinator was in attendance at the meeting to report on the Wirral Apprentice Programme and informed that the authorisation notice from Knowsley MBC, who administered Liverpool City Region grant, required as match funding, had been received late. The 14 places that had not been filled last year had been rolled over into this year's round of Wirral Apprentices. No problems were envisaged this year as there had been a massive take up already.

The Head of Business Processes was in attendance at the meeting to report on the percentage of adult care packages supported by direct debit. He informed that previously direct debit had not been available but that the system was now in place and people were being encouraged to pay their bills by this method. There had been a slow and gradual improvement of take up of this method of payment. Members noted that when the Head of Business Processes' staff were able to access the Department of Adult Social Services' system he would be able to look at direct debit being used for domiciliary care payments as well.

The Head of Public Health was in attendance at the meeting to report on Smoking quitters. She reported that it was a disappointing result from the Stop Smoking Service. There had been a drop in the number of people accessing the Service and this was being put down to the use of E-cigarettes. It was a real challenge and she was looking at 'smoke free areas' in an attempt to de-normalise smoking but she was not in a position to introduce them yet.

The Head of Public Health also informed that the Community Trust would be able to provide a fuller picture but her Service was now working with dedicated smokers.

It was noted that e cigarettes could be useful in reducing smoking but they were not covered by smoking regulations. It was also noted that a lot of young people smoked. The Head of Public Health reported that she was working with young people on smoking, drugs and alcohol. Young people had risk taking behaviour as part of growing up.

A Member requested a break down on No. 19 – Agency/Consultancy Costs. The Strategic Director – Transformation and Resources informed that a 'corporate eye' was being kept on this and the break down requested would be provided on a quarterly basis.

RESOLVED:

That the information contained in the report be used to inform the Committee's future Work Programme.

2013/14 FAMILIES AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE

A report by the Chair of the Committee set out a proposed approach for developing the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2014/15. It included a summary of the work undertaken during 2013/14 and listed those items outstanding so Members could decide whether they should remain on the Work Programme going forward. Members were asked to have regard for some flexibility in the Work Programme, particularly in terms of scrutinising the options arising from the Future Council Programme in September.

The Committee noted that in line with the Council's Constitution, it was responsible for determining the Scrutiny Work Programme across all four Policy and Performance Committees. The Work Programme should align with the corporate priorities of the Council and should be informed by:

- Service Performance information
- Risk management information
- Service priorities including any planned service changes
- Public or service user feedback
- Referrals from the Executive

The Committee also noted that in determining items for the Scrutiny Work Programme, good practice recommended the following criteria should be applied:

- **Public Interest** – topics should resonate with the local community
- **Impact** – there should be clear objectives and outcomes that make the work worthwhile
- **Council Performance** – the focus should be on improving performance
- **Keeping in Context** – should ensure best use of time and resources

Appended to the report for Members' information was:

- The 2013/14 Work Programme (Appendix 1).
- The 2013/14 Policy and Performance Families and Wellbeing Committee's Work Programme (Appendix 2).
- The 2013/14 Policy and Performance Transformation and Resources Committee's Work Programme (Appendix 3).
- The 2013/14 Policy and Performance Regeneration and Environment Committee's Work Programme (Appendix 4).

In line with feedback from the 2013/14 Municipal Year, it was proposed that each Committee established a Working Group to review items carried forward from last year and consider new items for the Work Programme for 2014/15. Each Working Group should propose a list of topics with a clear order of

priority, in order that capacity could effectively be apportioned and managed across the whole Scrutiny Programme.

Proposals would be reviewed by the Committee at its meeting in September to ensure the overall Scrutiny Programme was appropriately balanced, avoided duplication and fulfilled the criteria set out above.

The Chair also proposed that a meeting of Policy and Performance Committee Chairs, Vice-Chairs and Spokespersons or their nominees be convened to reprioritise the Work Programme. She asked Members to consider if the Committee was a driver or a reflector. If it was a driver she considered that the Committee should meet at the beginning of each Committee cycle but if it was a reflector it should meet at the end.

A Member made reference to the extremely heavy work load of the Policy and Performance – Families and Wellbeing Committee and that because some Members were not available during the day time, it fell to those who were available to carry a lot of the burden. The Chair considered that the possibilities of meeting in the evening should be discussed at the meeting to be convened for Chairs, Vice-Chairs and Spokespersons etc referred to above.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the completed and outstanding items from the 2013/14 Work Programme be noted; and**
- (2) the approach set out above to develop the 2014/15 Work Programme be agreed.**