

POLICY AND PERFORMANCE CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

Monday, 23 February 2015

Present: Councillor M McLaughlin (Chair)

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

41 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Ms H Shoebridge.

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

No declarations of interest were received.

43 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on the following dates be confirmed as a correct record:

- **3 September 2014;**
- **18 September 2014;**
- **23 September 2014;**
- **2 October 2014;**
- **15 October 2014;**
- **12 November 2014; and**
- **12 February 2015.**

44 **CORPORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT 2014/15**

The Committee received a report by the Director of Public Health and Head of Policy and Performance which updated it on the current performance of the

Council against the delivery of the Corporate Plan (as at 30 November 2014). The report translated the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan into a coherent and measurable set of performance outcome measures and targets.

The Committee was aware that Corporate Plan performance was monitored on a monthly basis against the parameters agreed as part of the business planning process (e.g. RAG tolerance levels). Some indicators were only available on a quarterly basis, in line with the availability of data. Heads of Service responsible for the delivery of targets had to complete an exception report and delivery plan for all indicators which were under performing (e.g. red RAG rated indicators).

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 report was the Corporate Plan Performance Report as at 30 November 2014 (Appendix 1) which set out performance against 20 outcome measures. It was noted that of the twenty measures that were RAG rated, 16 were rated green, one was rated amber and three were rated red. The three measures rated red had action plans (including Appendices 2, 3 and 4) which referred to:

- NHS Health Checks – Take up.
- Rate of Children in Need (per 10,000 population 0-17).
- Performance Appraisals that had been completed.

Members asked a number of questions and where it was not possible to provide an answer at the meeting because no Officers from the Children and Young Peoples' Department were in attendance, it was agreed that Officers would be requested to provide all Members of the Committee with written answers. It was noted that:

- An Officer from the Children and Young Peoples' Department would provide the definition of a looked after child, the various categories when a service was required and what triggers this.
- The actual number of Children in Need in the Borough was currently not available, estimation had been provided but Members wanted to know when the definitive figure would be provided. An Officer from the Children and Young Peoples' Department would be requested to supply all Members of the Committee with this information.

- Take up of Health Checks could vary from quarter to quarter because GP Practises could spread their Health Check invitations to best suit themselves.
- There was an element of fatalism and attitudes to health that stopped people going for Health Checks. Going for a Health Check could mean that life styles would have to change.
- There was low up take of Health Checks in the deprived wards.
- The opportunity to undergo a Health Check was well publicised. There were videos and posters in community settings including GP Surgeries.
- Some GP Surgeries did not send out letters inviting patients to undergo Health Checks and it was considered that they should do this. The Head of Public Health agreed to look into this.
- The Council provided Public Health grants (letter sent and then take up – two stage payments) and the Head of Public Health agreed to provide the detail for all Members of the Committee. There were other incentives aimed at increasing the take up of Health Checks. The Head of Public Health agreed to provide all Members of the Committee with the detail of these.
- By 31 January 2015 the take up of Health Checks had in fact risen to 42% and the Head of Public Health was confident that the annual target would be met by 31 March 2015.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the contents of the report be noted; and**
- (2) the written responses agreed as detailed above be made available to all Members of the Committee by the appropriate Council Officers.**

45 **FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORTS (MONTH 9) 2014/15**

The Chief Accountant introduced both the Revenue and Capital Monitoring Reports 2014/15 Month 9 (December 2014) which had already been considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 10 February 2015.

Particular reference was made by a Member to a potential overspend of £2.77 million that had been forecasted at Month 9. This had been made up of £2.4 million slippage against current year savings and £0.4 million demand pressures. It was noted that the level of management actions required to contain budget issues was £3.0 million. Following implementation of the new care management system, financial data had been transferred and an in year reconciliation between old and new systems had been undertaken which would provide information to monitor future progress. At the request of the Member the Chief Accountant explained the reconciliation process in depth.

Reference was also made to savings that had not been delivered in year in Day Nursery provision. It was noted that this would be compensated for from savings within the service and use of the early learning reserve. A Member reminded the Committee that savings would be expected to be made next year and asked if Officers were confident that this could be achieved. The Chief Accountant informed that there was a risk that the savings would not be made. It was agreed that an Officer from the Children and Young Persons' Department would be required to address these issues and the Policy and Performance Families and Wellbeing Committee would also consider this matter in detail.

A Member referred to the timescales set for financial reporting, the delays in receiving the necessary information and the resulting implications. A Member considered that the Strategic Leadership Team should be requested to explain its financial monitoring system. The Chair informed that consideration would be given to that when the Work Programme was drawn up and agreed for the next Municipal Year and that the Chairs, Deputy Chairs and Spokespersons would have regard to this when they met to give initial consideration to the Committees' Work Programmes.

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet Financial Monitoring Reports (Month 9) 2014/15 be noted.

46 **REVIEW OF THE FUTURE COUNCIL BUDGET OPTIONS SCRUTINY PROCESS**

The Chair introduced a report that documented the pre-decision scrutiny process undertaken to review the Chief Executive's budget options arising from the Future Council process during September/October 2014. Members were requested to review the approach taken and consider any learning points for scrutinising future budget proposals.

Early in 2014, the Council had developed the Future Council programme as the vehicle for driving forward this work. The programme had been designed to deliver the remodelling process to streamline the back office function as well as developing new proposals to achieve the forecast budget shortfall as set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The Committee noted that the Cabinet at its meeting 10 April 2014 had resolved:

'That this report and the engagement process for the Future Council Programme be referred as a priority for inclusion in the Work Programmes of each of the Policy and Performance Committees commencing in July 2014.'

The Committee was reminded that during the first cycle of Policy and Performance Committee meetings in 2014, a series of 'Position Papers' had been presented that had set out the principles for change and a series of outline themes for identifying savings. This had provided Members with the opportunity to comment on the framework and rationale for the emerging proposals.

It was reported that prior to the detailed proposals being published, the Chair of the Committee had convened a meeting of all Policy and Performance Committee Chairs, Deputy Chairs and Spokespersons with the aim of developing a consistent approach to scrutinising the budget options. This meeting had been held on 3 September 2014 and consideration had been given to a piece of work undertaken in the autumn of 2013 by the Policy and Performance Committee - Regeneration and Environment who had reviewed the previous years' budget options. This had been well received and had led to a number of recommendations including a scrutiny review into the Council's Car Parking Strategy, completed during 2014.

At the meeting referred to above Members had acknowledged the success of the approach adopted which had followed the standard task and finish format over a series of meetings with a final report being presented to the Committee. Consequently, it had been agreed that the format should be adopted for the Future Council budget options.

A briefing note had then been developed to this effect and presented to the second cycle of Policy and Performance Committee meetings. It had set out the following:

- A task and finish approach is adopted with the three Policy and Performance Committees setting up a scrutiny panel to review the options that fall under their remit.
- Each committee to determine the number of Members on its panel and the number of sessions required.
- The panel should have an initial scoping meeting once the budget options are published to agree which options they wish to scrutinise and who they want to speak to i.e. Council Officers / external advisors.
- The panel should determine the preferred days/times for the Q and A sessions i.e. full evidence day, or a number of workshop sessions.
- Cabinet leads should be invited to observe sessions.
- In line with all task and finish scrutiny work, notes will be taken and a report with recommendations will be taken back to full committee for discussion and approval.

Scoping meetings had then been convened and a series of detailed question and answer sessions scheduled with relevant Officers. A number of these

sessions had been accompanied by site visits to locations that would be impacted by the proposals. At the end of these sessions, a report had been prepared for each of the Policy and Performance Committees detailing the findings for each of the budget options scrutinised, with recommendations where they considered it appropriate.

The reports of the scrutiny review process had been considered during the third cycle of Committee meetings coinciding with the report on the outcome of the public and stakeholder consultation process. Both sources of information had been considered by the Committees as part of their final deliberations. The three reports and the subsequent minutes were then referred to the Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 9 December 2014.

The Chair invited the Chair of each of the Policy and Performance Committees to report on the work that had been carried out by their Committees, the approaches taken, the topics scrutinised and the resulting outcomes, which they duly did.

It was noted that on the whole, through this process, Members had developed a good understanding of the topics scrutinised. The process adopted had been valuable, educational and informative. Each Chair was pleased with the quality of the work produced and that their comments and recommendations had been taken on board by the Cabinet and the electorate was aware of this. However, it was also noted that a lot of the work undertaken had been time intensive and there had been difficulties in getting Members involved because of other conflicting commitments.

The Committee was aware that more pre decision scrutiny could be carried out. It was its intention to take this into consideration when the Scrutiny Work Programme was drawn up for the 2015/16 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED:

That the reports on the Future Council Budget Options Scrutiny Process be noted.

47 **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

A report by the Chair of the Committee updated Members on progress made in delivering and implementing the Scrutiny Work Programme and the wider Scrutiny Work Programme including the activities of the other three Policy and Performance Committees. Members were requested to consider the proposals for the Work Programme detailed in the report.

At the last ordinary meeting of the Committee held on 3 September 2014, a number of items had been considered for inclusion in the Committee's Work Programme including decision-making by Constituency Committees and

Cumulative Impact Policy. (Minute No. 21 refers.) Since then there had been six Special meetings held to deal with a number of decisions that had been subject to call-in. Due to this additional activity, there has been limited capacity to progress any of the proposed review items in the Work Programme and no task and finish work had been progressed.

A further item of work had been proposed for inclusion in the Committee's Work Programme. This was for Members to explore ways in which pre-decision scrutiny could be more widely promoted and channelled through the Policy and Performance Committees in support of the Council's on-going improvement agenda.

An updated Work Programme was included with the report as Appendix 1. It highlighted the additional meetings scheduled to deal with call-ins. It also detailed the potential review topics. Members were requested to consider initiating a task and finish group in relation to one of the potential review items highlighted.

The most up to date Work Programmes of the other three Policy and Performance Committees were attached to the report as Appendix 2 – 4. They followed the standard format setting out scheduled and potential review items, Officer reports and standard agenda items. In reviewing these Programmes, Members noted that the varying scope and levels of activity across the Committees was evident.

The Committee was asked to give consideration to its constitutional function to:

‘Determine the overall work programme of the Policy and Performance Committees, including ensuring there is an overall planned approach to in depth reviews.’

Also, included in the report was the progress made against the recommendations arising from the Individual Electoral Registration Scrutiny Review for Members' information.

The Chair reminded the Committee that it had rescheduled its meetings so that they were held last in each committee cycle and it was able to reflect on the work that had been carried out by the other three Policy and Performance Committees. She queried whether regular reports on performance were enough but at the same time accepted that because the work of the Committee had been dominated by reviewing key decisions that had been called in, there had been little time left to complete other work.

However, on a positive note, the Chair drew attention to Rochdale Council being put into 'special measures' and that it had been identified that it had a culture of no challenge. She informed that this was not something that Wirral

Council could be accused of, in the light of the number of Call-in meetings that had been held during this Municipal Year.

Members identified that more co-ordination was needed e.g. alcohol consumption and ill health.

The Chair referred to the wide remit of the Policy and Performance Committee – Families and Wellbeing and to concerns about it being able to adequately scrutinise it all. It was noted that some remodelling had been carried out in order to redress this but capacity was still an issue. The Panels established did receive regular reports on various different aspects of policy. Three major pieces of work had been scoped and another piece would be scoped soon. It was noted that the Spotlight Sessions had been successful and it was hoped that the Committee would carry out more pre decision scrutiny.

In respect of the Policy and Performance Committee – Transformation and Resources its Chair reported that, its Terms of Reference and resulting workload was considered manageable. The Committee had completed some interesting work and a further scoping meeting was scheduled for later in the week.

In respect of the Policy and Performance Committee – Regeneration and Environment the Chair reported that it had carried out more work on pre decision scrutiny last year. There were time constraints but there was more work that could be undertaken. It was difficult but it was recognised that the process was still evolving.

A Member asked for the definition of pre scrutiny.

A Member drew attention to the fact that so much of the Work Programme related to health matters and that some Councils now had a Committee that focused entirely on health overview and scrutiny. If the Council wanted to be more robust, perhaps it should consider doing the same.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted.