

POLICY AND PERFORMANCE - TRANSFORMATION AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Monday, 1 February 2016

Present: Councillor J Williamson (Chair)

Councillors P Doughty A Sykes
S Foulkes T Anderson
R Gregson L Fraser
M Patrick T Pilgrim
J Salter C Carubia
J Walsh

Deputies: Councillors I Williams (In place of B Kenny)
G Ellis (In place of B Berry)

Apologies Councillor C Muspratt

30 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.

No such declarations were made.

31 MINUTES

Members were requested to receive the minutes of the Transformation and Resources Policy and Performance Committee meeting held on 3 December, 2015.

Resolved –That the minutes of the meeting of 3 December, 2015 be approved.

32 PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

The Strategic Director of Transformation and Resources presented a report on the current position regarding the completion of Performance Appraisals

(PAs). The current outturn figure at January 2016 for Performance Appraisal 2015 -16 was 72.8%. There had been regular communication to Managers from the HR/OD function with the Chief Executive outlining the requirements to undertake performance appraisals. However, four months after the completion deadline there were a number of service areas where large numbers of performance appraisals had still not been completed.

The report gave details of the Performance Appraisal process, the timetable, the support in place for the process, the key issues preventing service areas achieving the target and the next steps. A table of the latest figures on PAs was circulated to the Committee which showed that 75.3% were now complete with just one Directorate not hitting the target of 80%.

In response to comments from Members, the Strategic Director of Transformation and Resources stated that 'appropriate action' against managers would include holding them to account in their performance management and may lead to formal or informal action being taken against them.

The Director of Children's Services stated that there was no way to excuse the figures for her department. With over 300 social workers Social Work Managers carried out regular 'supervision', for those newly qualified this was fortnightly and with hindsight the PAs should have been added on to this regular supervision.

With regard to the number of employees and the discrepancy in the figures of those employed by the Council between the figures circulated at the meeting and those attached originally to the report, now showing 68 more, the Acting Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development informed the Committee that there were would be a number of reasons for this including casual and concessional staff, a number of new starters and staff who were multiple job holders. The Council establishment did vary from week to week. With regard to the manager to staff ratio this did vary from service to service between 1:6 and 1:12.

Responding to further comments the Strategic Director expressed his disappointment with the figures. Over 1,000 staff in his directorate had now had their PA and this included some areas of dispersed workers, such as libraries, where there would be staff who just worked on a Saturday and in One Stop Shops. He acknowledged that the process had got off to a really slow start but over 3,000 staff had now received their PA and this was a significant improvement over the situation just a few months ago. The Chief Executive did continue to enforce the message. He accepted the challenge to improve performance next year and that next year the same reasons for poor performance would be unacceptable. There was no reason for those staff who were building based not to have had their PAs completed on time. The target for next year was yet to be determined. No action had been taken against a

manager solely on the issue of failing to complete a PA but April 2016 would see the start of a new PA cycle and all managers would be signing an accountability statement. The suggestion of targeting those people missed this year and ensuring they were at the start of the process in the new municipal year could be explored.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

33 **LOCAL WELFARE ASSISTANCE SCHEME**

The Committee considered a report from the Strategic Director of Transformation and Resources which set out the changes to the operation of Wirral's Local Welfare Assistance scheme and associated financial position to date, following the implementation of a number of the recommendations made by Cabinet on 29 June 2015 (minute 14 refers) following the Scrutiny Review.

Responding to comments from Members, Nicky Dixon's, Senior Benefits Manager, and Lisa Jamieson's, Transaction Centre Senior Manager, comments included, there were now far fewer applications for multiple items and the award of 'white goods' had reduced considerably. The projected residual funding of £414,820 might come in a little short of the projected spend, with one option being to review the scheme further and tighten up on awards. With regard to the Wirral Foodbank the possible donation of £65,000 was very much an estimate which would cover 3 days of food for 9,500 awards, with this being a one off donation. They explained the scheme administration costs and the reasons why payment cards for banks were more costly to use than card transactions.

The Chair suggested that the Task and Finish Group should be reconvened in the next six months to look beyond April 2017 when the current funding was expected to run out and to look at alternative strategies that might be put in place.

Resolved –

- (1) That this Committee acknowledges the progress made and recommends to Cabinet that the actions introduced in respect of 2015/2016 are continued and that Wirral's Local Welfare Assistance Support Scheme is therefore maintained, albeit on a moderated basis during 2016/2017 utilising the projected residual funding of £414,820.**
- (2) That the Task and Finish Group be reconvened in the next six months to look beyond April 2017 at alternative strategies that might be put in place when the current funding was expected to run out.**

34 **POLICY INFORM BRIEFING PAPER**

The Strategic Director of Transformation and Resources introduced a report on the January Policy Inform Briefing paper which outlined the key features of the Autumn Statement and the Spending Review, which was announced on 25th November 2015.

The Briefing paper also alluded to any potential implications for Wirral Council, and elaborated on any legislation or policy updates that had been implemented, or developed since the last policy briefing in September. It was expected that the March Briefing Paper would focus on the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Budget, which would be published on 16 March 2016. Due to Policy and Performance Committees taking place at the beginning of March it would not be possible to take the next Policy Inform papers to Committees, however, these papers would be circulated to Members for their reference.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

35 **WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE REPORT**

The Committee considered a report from the Chair which updated Members on the current position regarding the Committee's work programme.

Councillor Sykes gave an update on the Disaster Recovery Task and Finish Scrutiny Review for which a date had been agreed for the evidence session.

Three Members, Councillors Foulkes, Fraser and Patrick had volunteered to sit on the Freedom of Information Task and Finish Scrutiny Review.

Resolved –That with the addition of a Task and Finish Review on the Local Welfare Assistance Scheme, the work programme for 2015/16 be approved.