

Support Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Thursday 3 June 2010

PRESENT:

Councillor James, in the Chair.

Councillor Lowry, Vice Chair.

Councillors Berrow, Browne, Murphy, Stark, Thompson and Williams.

Also in attendance:

Councillor Ian Bowyer, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property, People and Governance. Paul Chapman, Head of VFM and Efficiencies.

Giles Perritt, Head of Policy, Performance and Partnerships.

The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 12.05 pm.

Note: At a future meeting, the committee will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Agreed that –

- (1) Councillor James is appointed as Chair for the current municipal year;
- (2) Councillor Lowry is appointed as Vice-Chair for the current municipal year.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest in accordance with the code of conduct.

3. MINUTES

Agreed that the minutes of the 18 March 2010 are approved as a correct record.

With regard to minute 42 (x), it was noted that Councillor Sam Leaves was now unable to undertake her role as Champion of Accommodation, following her appointment as Cabinet Member for Performance and Transformation.

4. CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

5. **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Panel noted the terms of reference for the Support Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

6. **TRACKING RESOLUTIONS AND FEEDBACK FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**

The Panel received a copy of its tracking resolutions.

Agreed that –

- (1) with regard to Minute 18 (4) – Mark Grimley, Assistant Director for HR and Organisational Development be requested to attend the meeting of the panel scheduled for 2 September 2010;
- (2) with regard to Minute 18 (5) – a request be made to Richard Longford, Head of Communications to provide panel members with copies of the internal and external communications strategies and a copy of the presentation given at the previous meeting;
- (3) With regard to Minute 33 (1) and 33 (2) – Councillors' Lowry and Stark had liaised with Giles Perritt, Head of Policy, Performance and Partnerships to progress the working group.

7. **APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED REPRESENTATIVES**

The panel considered the appointment of co-opted representatives. It was discussed that –

- (a) an independent co-opted representative may benefit and add value when scrutinising policy areas such as ICT and Communications;
- (b) co-opting a representative from a community group may add value to the policy areas such as Governance and Democracy and Customer Services;
- (c) Member Support was being decommissioned without members being consulted.

Agreed that –

- (1) the Democratic Support Officer would seek to ascertain whether the University of Plymouth would be interested in co-opting a representative on to the panel and report back to the next meeting;
- (2) the Democratic Support Officer would arrange a meeting between

the Chair, Vice-Chair and Tim Howes, Assistant Director for Democracy and Governance to discuss what impact there may be on members following the decommissioning of Member Support.

8. **UPDATE ON CONSULTATION EVENTS**

The Panel received a presentation on consultation feedback for corporate planning from Giles Perritt, Head of Policy, Performance and Partnerships. It was reported that –

- (a) consultation on Corporate Improvement Priorities (CIPs) had taken place as part of the Place Survey, at Area Committees and at a stall in the Drake Circus Shopping Mall;
- (b) Area Committees were used as part of the consultation on CIPs to ensure that both councillors and members of the public were aware of the current CIPs as well as to gain peoples' views on areas for improvement;
- (c) the Drake Circus Shopping Mall consultation event during November 2009 received over 400 responses and provided other benefits including –
 - exposing senior management to members of the public;
 - demonstrating the council's interest in listening to the views of its residents;
- (d) the results gathered were relatively similar across the three consultation exercises with Value For Money (VFM) being seen as the area needing most improvement, whilst raising achievement in schools and colleges was being seen as delivering;
- (e) the Corporate Plan was influenced by and developed following the consultation and made reference to the results highlighting key points gathered from the Place Survey;
- (f) VFM had been identified to be at the centre of the council's planning framework and a number of key areas had also been targeted including –
 - Adult Social Care integration by 2011;
 - outsourcing of leisure management;
 - targeted anti-social behaviour work with the Police at a locality level;

- (g) there was a great deal of work being undertaken to improve consultation and engaging local communities with surveys. A system, called Limehouse, was used across the council to ensure that consultation and engagement processes were easy to monitor;
- (h) this system would be accessible to councillors by the end of August 2010 and it would alert councillors to any consultation that was happening in their wards or in a policy area that they indicated they were interested in;
- (i) Limehouse has been used in the Development Directorate and is utilised as a resource for the Local Development Framework and the Local Transport Plan.

Other issues discussed during this item were that –

- (j) as part of the Queens Speech a number of bills had been drafted that could greatly impact on the way the council conducts its business and delivers services;
- (k) 14 schools across Plymouth had been awarded an “outstanding” rating from their last OFSTED inspection; these schools included 10 primaries and four secondaries, and were now able to apply for academy status.

Members of the panel put forward questions, the following responses were provided –

- (l) Bills were yet to become law and local authorities would be consulted on them before they were implemented into legislation;
- (m) in 2009 the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) signed a Compact which contained codes of conduct on how the council and other bodies should consult with residents;
- (n) ward boundaries would be reflected on the Limehouse system and it was hoped that members would involve themselves in locality working, which provided an opportunity to get all partner organisations together in one forum;
- (o) locality working would be reviewed in one year’s time.

The Chair thanked Giles Perritt, Head of Policy, Performance and Partnerships for attending.

Recommended that the Support Services OSP be formally involved in any consultation on the bills recently announced during the Queens speech relating to policy areas within the panel’s Terms of Reference.

Agreed that the Head of Policy, Performance and Partnerships would distribute to all panel members a copy of the presentation and a list of the 14 schools awarded with an outstanding rating.

9. **AN UPDATE ON CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PRIORITY 14 - PROVIDING BETTER VALUE FOR MONEY**

Councillor Ian Bowyer, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property, People and Governance and Paul Chapman, Head of Value for Money (VFM) and Efficiencies gave a presentation on CIP 14, providing better value for money. Councillors were informed that –

- (a) in achieving better value for money the council were working towards National Indicator 179 – Efficiencies;
- (b) the three year efficiency target, set in 2008, of 27.2m had 14.3m achieved to date with a projected figure of 23.8m being achieved by March 2011;
- (c) there had been an increase in both in year efficiencies and in efficiency targets;
- (d) the increase in the in year efficiencies had come as a result of improved practices for collecting data on finance and budgets, the in year efficiencies for 2010/2011 would be updated in July 2010 following the release of changes in the Director's budgets;
- (e) VFM was the relationship between the economy, efficiency and effectiveness also known as the 3 E's. The 3 E's were being attacked from a Directorate basis with a VFM Champion being identified in each area in order to move the council forward with achieving efficiency targets;
- (f) areas that were being targeted to improve VFM included;
 - improving collection rates;
 - re-negotiating contracts;
 - controlling purchase to pay initiatives;
- (g) improving VFM will have many benefits to Plymouth City Council including effective and economic procurement, approved suppliers, better quality financial information and a clearer focus on frontline services.

In response to questions raised, it was reported that –

- (h) action plans had been formalised and were in place to help realise the efficiency targets and to promote the VFM message

across the whole of the authority;

- (i) CIPFA benchmarking data was being collected and used to benchmark the council's efficiencies and services against other councils;
- (j) a VFM web page had been created giving an opportunity for any staff member to submit a VFM idea;
- (k) In order to keep contracts as local as possible a target for the procurement team was to ensure that there was to be at least one local tenderer for each procurement, although, it was recognised that getting the best VFM was most important;
- (l) VFM Champions were top-down in order to imbed a culture of efficiency at the senior end of the council's management structure.

The Chair thanked Councillor Ian Bowyer, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property, People and Governance and Paul Chapman, Head of Value for Money (VFM) and Efficiencies for their attendance.

Agreed that the Support Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel would receive VFM quarterly reports demonstrating how the VFM ethos is being embedded across the council; the next presentation would be at the panel's meeting due to be held on 2 September 2010.

10. **FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE SCORECARD**

The finance and performance scorecards were noted.

11. **DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2010/2011**

The Panel received their draft work programme for 2010/2011.

Agreed that -

- (1) a request that the Accommodation, ICT and People strategies are provided as progress reports highlighting their delivery outcomes against their targets;
- (2) the work programme be noted.

12. **FUTURE MEETING DATES**

The panel noted the dates of future meetings.

13. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.

