

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (SBDC)

Meeting - 16 October 2017

Present: M Bradford (Chairman)
P Bastiman, P Hogan and J Read

Also Present: M. Bezzant

Apologies for absence: D Dhillon and M Lewis

15. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of held on 22 June 2017 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (IF ANY)

There were no declarations of interest

17. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND RIPA ANNUAL REPORT

Members were provided with an update on the public engagement with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI), Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR), the Data Protection Act 1998, the Transparency Code of Practice, the INSPIRE Regulations, RIPA, Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. The report provided a reflexive analysis of the past year's FOI and EIR progress and activities in response to requests processed by the Council.

Members were advised that that the % of FOI requests responded to within 20 working days in June 2015 was 87% and that the 2015-2016 average year total was 85%.

It was noted that the service areas which received the most FOI requests were Healthy Communities, Business Support and Customer Services and that the majority of these requests were for commercial information that would be useful for businesses, or from journalists and lobbying organisations .

In the discussion which followed, the Committee were advised of the process for refusing FOI requests, including the criteria for refusal and the internal review process.

The Committee were pleased to note the work which had been carried out to reduce the number of FOI requests by making information readily available on the website. However, Members were concerned that recent changes made to the Council's website were making it harder for residents and councillors to find some information. They felt that how information is organised, managed and kept up to date on the website was very important, and asked for a report on this topic to be added to the Committee's work programme.

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The Committee were advised of the implications for the Council of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which would apply in the UK from 25 May 2018, and what it would mean for the storing and sharing of information. Members noted that this would have implications in the future for the way services and information is provided to residents and customers.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Note: Councillor John Read entered the meeting at 6.09pm.

Note: Councillor Philip Bastiman entered the meeting at 6.18pm.

18. **REVIEW OF HOMELESSNESS MANAGEMENT REPORT**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a presentation by Councillor Philip Bastiman, Chairman of the Review of Homelessness Management Task and Finish Group, which set out the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group following the review of Homelessness Management.

The inquiry was set up to review the function of assessing clients for temporary accommodation and the subsequent management of placements, including the interaction with the Benefits Service and Finance specifically looking at:-

- Process for homelessness assessment
- Process for actual placement and obligations on the client
- Process for housing benefit
- Management of placements
- Process between Housing and Finance for receiving client contributions

The Strategy and demand for temporary or affordable housing was out of scope.

Having gone through each of the recommendations in turn, Councillor Bastiman concluded by thanking, on behalf of the Task and Finish Group, all the councillors and officers who gave up their valuable time to talk to the Task and Finish Group and provide evidence. He also personally thanked all those Members of the Task and Finish Group and Clare Gray (Scrutiny Officer) for taking the time to address the important issues raised in the review.

In the discussion which followed, the Committee requested that the following changes be made to the report before it was submitted to Cabinet:

- Management recommendations (page 22 of the agenda) - to remove reference to Access database as Microsoft Access would soon cease to be supported and to just make reference to a database.
- Homelessness Provision recommendations (page 26 of the agenda) - to make reference to the use of self-contained units by other local authorities e.g. Worcester

The Committee requested that the Cabinet response to the recommendations be received by the end of November and that the response be circulated to Overview and Committee Members. Furthermore, that where recommendations are not to be implemented that a detailed written explanation be given to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee by the Cabinet on the reasons why.

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In addition, the Committee requested that Cabinet be asked to agree to develop a Homelessness Strategy Action Plan to address the issue of supply and demand for temporary accommodation. In respect of the implementation of the recommendations of this report it was requested that an update on the action plan be provided to the January meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, including an update from the Head of Healthy Communities on the new legislation and supply of temporary accommodation.

The Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny thanked Members of the Task and Finish Group and all the officers involved for their help with this important piece of work.

RESOLVED that

- 1) Cabinet be asked to respond in writing, by the end of November, to each of the recommendations made by the Task and Finish Group;
- 2) where recommendations are not to be implemented that a detailed written explanation be given to Overview and Scrutiny Committee by the Cabinet on the reasons why; and
- 3) Cabinet be asked agree to develop a Homelessness Strategy Action Plan to manage and monitor the implementation of the recommendations of this report.

19. **PERFORMANCE REPORT Q1 2017-18**

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report outlining the performance of council services against indicators and service objectives during Quarter 1 of 2017-18.

Members noted from the report that of the total 48 PIs, 2 were seen to be off-target (1 of these were a priority PI) with further detail of these within the two detailed performance tables accompanying the report:

- Appendix A – Priority indicators Q1 2017-18
- Appendix B – Quarterly corporate performance indicators Q1 2017-18

With regards to long term sickness absence being over target, the Committee were advised that the long term sickness absence figure would improve as two of the employees who were off on long term sick had now retired on ill health grounds.

The Committee noted that with regards to household refuse collection, the number of containers missed per month was over target due to some collections being incorrectly coded. The Committee were assured that staff would be retrained on coding before the next quarter.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

20. **BUCKS HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE SELECT COMMITTEE**

Members received the Minutes of the meetings of the Buckinghamshire County Council Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee held on 13 June and 25 July 2017.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Buckinghamshire County Council Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee be noted.

21. **BUCKS CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE AND LEARNING SELECT COMMITTEE**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Buckinghamshire County Council Children's Social Care and Learning Select Committee held on 18 July and 5 September 2017.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Buckinghamshire County Council Children's Social Care and Learning Select Committee be noted.

22. **MEMBERS QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

There were no questions.

23. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme and noted that the Chief Executive of NHS Frimley Health Foundation Trust would be doing a presentation to the next meeting on the work of the Trust, in particular focusing on the performance of Wexham Park Hospital and the issues going forward.

The following areas were raised for inclusion on the Work Programme:

- The management of the Council's website – in particular how it is structured and organised, and how information is kept up to date.
- Planning Policy - information to be provided on how affordability calculation assessments and section 106 assessments are carried out.

RESOLVED that the work programme, with the above additions, be agreed.

24. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None

The meeting terminated at 7.28 pm