



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING : Monday, 10th July 2017

PRESENT : Cllrs. Coole (Chair), Ryall (Vice-Chair), Finnegan (Spokesperson), Pearsall, Hilton, Lewis, Wilson, Dee, Hampson, Hawthorne, Smith, Patel, Pullen and Taylor

Others in Attendance

Councillor David Norman MBE, Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

Councillor Richard Cook, Cabinet Member for Environment

Malcolm Cox, Amey

Jo Styles, Civica

Sadie Neal, Civica

Glenn Morgan, Civica

Jonathan Lund, Corporate Director

Lloyd Griffiths, Head of Communities

Stacey Jellyman, Intelligent Client Officer

Atika Tarajiya, Team Leader: Democratic and Electoral Services

APOLOGIES : Cllr. Melvin

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

12.1 There were no declarations of interest.

13. DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIPPING

13.1 There were no declarations of an existence of a party whip.

14. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

14.1 That the minutes of the meeting held on 12th June 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

15. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

15.1 There were no public questions.

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16. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)

16.1 There were no petitions or deputations.

17. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME AND COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

17.1 The Chair advised Members that a special meeting had been scheduled for the 26th July 2017 to discuss the emerging Council Plan and related performance measures. He went on further to explain that the Committee meeting scheduled for the 4th September 2017 had now been re-arranged for the 7th September 2017. He noted that electronic invites would be sent out for both these meetings by the Democratic and Electoral Services Team.

17.2 RESOLVED: That the Work Programme and Forward Plan be noted.

18. GREEN TRAVEL PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE

18.1 The Chair agreed to revise the order of the agenda to consider agenda item 11 ahead of agenda items 8, 9 and 10. He welcomed the Head of Communities to the meeting.

18.2 The Head of Communities advised the Committee that although not a legal requirement the Council had an approved Green Travel Plan 2014/2018 aimed at developing best practice within the region. He reported that the policy aimed at modal shift in the ways people travelled. He highlighted a number of different schemes and incentives the Council had put in place to support staff with this transition, including discounted staff travel, cycle to work scheme, cycle mileage allowance and equipment subsidies.

He reported that the focus over the last 12 months had been on the Green Travel Policy and had included replacing the Council's own fleet of vehicles with modern and eco friendly vehicles and the implementation of a staff travel portal, that required staff to pre-book all journeys to ensure the most cost effective and eco-efficient method of travel was used. He noted that there were exceptional cases where staff would not be required to use the portal to allow them to respond to emergencies and out of hours calls.

He concluded by reporting that procurement for replacement fleet and the staff portal was currently being progressed and was likely to be completed by August 2017. He advised that this also included provision for an electric vehicle and associated charging points placed strategically across the City, which could be opened to the general public.

18.3 In response to Councillor Hilton's query regarding the provision of electric charging points, the Head of Communities advised that the Council were currently in discussion with specialist advisors to scope the requirements and consider most appropriate locations.

18.4 In response to Councillor Hampson's query regarding evidence to support the success of staff engagement, The Head of Communities confirmed that data and

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statistics had been collated. Following a suggestion by the Chair, he agreed that this data would be circulated to Members.

- 18.5 Councillor Pullen commented that given that most staff travel occurred in and around the inner city, it would be appropriate for the charging vehicles to be placed in these locations.
- 18.7 Councillor Hawthorne suggested that a report evaluating the impact of the Green Travel Policy 2014/18 be compiled to inform future work and best practice. The Head of Communities confirmed that a report would be drafted.
- 18.8 **RESOLVED that:**
1. Qualitative and quantitative data evidencing successes of the Green Travel Policy 2014/18 be circulated to the Committee.
 2. A report evaluating the impact of the Green Travel Policy 2014/18 be drafted and shared with the Committee.

19. AMEY ANNUAL PERFORMANCE MONITORING

- 19.1 The Chair welcomed Mr Malcom Cox, the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Cook) and the Corporate Director to the meeting.
- 19.2 Mr Cox summarised the headlines in the report, stressing the challenges that the Council and Amey continued to face in light of the continued cost savings.
- 19.3 The Chair, referring Members' attention to the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) commented that in relation to the close calls KPI, the rag ratings seemed to be incorrect and were in fact the reverse of how they had been presented. Mr Cox confirmed that this was an error caused by a technical fault with the system used to compile the data.
- 19.4 In response to the Chair's query on the high levels of sickness, Mr Cox acknowledged that the company was struggling to recruit individuals with the right skills and was looking to pay their employees at a more competitive rate in line with market standards. He explained that the company had introduced back to work interviews in an attempt to improve the current absence levels.
- 19.5 In response to Councillor Ryall's query regarding staff turnover, Mr Cox explained that the staff turnover currently stood at 7-10% and agency staff had been drafted in when required.
- 19.6 Councillor Hilton commented that KPIs failed to demonstrate the quality of the work undertaken, noting that the grass cutting around the City was of a poor standard. He suggested that the Cabinet Member for Environment engage in discussions with Amey regarding inclusion of KPIs monitoring the standard of work undertaken. Councillor Cook assured Members that this was being considered in the discussions with Amey.

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- 19.7 Mr Cox acknowledged that quality of work was quite a subjective matter. To address this issue, it had been decided to re-arrange staff into teams, who would take responsibility for all the work in the zone they were working on, rather than being allocated specific jobs across all zones to ensure that all the work had been completed in each area.
- 19.8 Councillor Pullen, referencing the challenging growing conditions referred to in the report, queried what lessons had been learnt from the 30 day grass cutting trial. Mr Cox stated that the team had not had access to the right machinery and tools to deal with the lengths of grass encountered and this had caused significant delays, noting that problems in the previous years had been due to staff recruitment. He reported that the company had a more detailed understanding on the tools and resources required to deal with a 30 day grass cutting regime following this year's trial.
- 19.9 In response to a query from the Chair, Councillor Cook confirmed that the Council had been required to employ additional resource to undertake the work that Amey had been delayed in carrying out. He advised that Amey operatives would be revisit the areas to ensure that all required works had been completed and the costs of this additional resource would recovered from Amey, as it had been their organisation that had failed to carry out their commitments.
- 19.20 The Corporate Director acknowledged that the 30 day trial had not delivered the benefits that had been anticipated. He explained that the Council would work closely with Amey to develop a grounds maintenance schedule for 2018 that the Council could be confident in. He stressed that the Council did not accept that the only way to deliver savings was through accepting reduced services and he was pressing Amey to explore how working efficiencies and streamlining process could be identified and implemented. He noted that Amey had been successful in delivering these efficiencies and savings in other local authorities without a detrimental impact on services.
- 19.21 Councillor Hawthorne commented that it would be helpful to be provided with a thematic breakdown of the nature of the complaints received, rather than statistical figures. Councillor Cook confirmed that he would consider this request.
- 19.22 Councillor Lewis expressed concern at the lack of supervision in the ground crews. Councillor Cook acknowledged that this was a focus area during the conversations with Amey. Mr Cox explained that Supervisors had now been equipped with hand held devices that allowed them to continue with the administrative work whilst out and about. He went on further to explain that the refuse trucks were fitted with 360 degree cameras that allowed supervision of the staff.
- 19.23 Councillor Patel expressed frustration at the discarded refuse left behind by the waste operatives stating that it led to rodent infestations and were a visual eyesore on the City's streets. He requested a strong and robust approach to supervision of the grounds crew to ensure that the issues did not continue to reoccur.
- 19.24 Mr Cox reported that each inspector was required to carry out 20 inspections per month in addition to the ad-hoc inspections that were also required. He confirmed that all inspections were random and no fore-warning was provided and advised

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that the schedules had been amended so the street cleansing and vehicle operative crews were better aligned with each other.

- 19.25 Councillor Taylor concurred with the comments that there had been a number of issues with the street cleansing regime this year. He welcomed the swift and efficient resolution provide by both the Cabinet Member and Corporate Director when the issues were highlighted to them.
- 19.26 Councillor Hawthorne commented that it felt like the senior management within the Amey organisation did not understand the pressures the operational teams were facing and welcomed Mr Cox's candidness in this regard.
- 19.27 Councillor Hilton, referring to the cost savings projects referenced in the report, questioned who would carry out the tree inspections that were being devolved from Amey. Councillor Cook advised that this would now be the responsibility of the Arborculturalist, who would prioritise his work accordingly.
- 19.28 In light of the concerns presented by Members, the Corporate Director suggested that the Committee could consider inviting Amey back to the Committee to address the concerns around supervision and allocation of the resources. He also suggested that a report on the agreed Grounds Maintenance Schedule be bought back to the Committee later in the year.

19.29 RESOLVED that:

- 1. The Amey Annual Performance Monitoring be noted.**
- 2. A thematic breakdown and analysis of complaints received be included within the Annual KPI Statement,**
- 3. Amey be invited back to the Committee in 3 months to address concerns regarding supervision and allocation of operational resources.**
- 4. A report on the agreed Grounds Maintenance Schedule for 2018 be bought to the Committee before the start of the 2018 cutting season.**

20. GLOUCESTER CITY COUNCIL REVENUES & BENEFITS ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2016/17

- 20.1 The Chair welcomed Ms Sadie Neal, Ms Jo Styles and Mr Glenn Morgan to the meeting.
- 20.2 Members were presented with the Gloucester Civica Partnership's Annual Performance report on the Revenues and Benefits Service for 2016-17. Ms Neal stated that there a number of small errors in the KPI figures listed on page 36 of the agenda pack. She circulated revised figures as appended to the minutes and proceeded to give Members a short presentation to complement the report before opening up the matter for debate.

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20.3 In response to a query from Councillor Wilson regarding Garden Waste Renewals, Ms Neal explained that Civica had been asked to remove the online form due to incompatibility with the new purchasing system. She noted that Civica had bought into extra resource to ensure that the service was unaffected and advised that work on restoring this function was ongoing and was intended to be ready prior to October.

20.4 In response to a query from Councillor Patel, regarding the fraud prosecution as a result of the implementation of real time information, Ms Styles explained that the all benefit fraud was investigated through the Department of Work and Pensions' Single Fraud Initiative Team, which Civica collaborated with and made referrals to. She confirmed that a breakdown of the referrals made to the Single Fraud Initiative would be provided to the Committee.

20.5 RESOLVED That:

1. The Gloucester City Council Revenues & Benefits Annual Performance Report 2016/17 be noted.

2. A breakdown of the referrals made to the Single Fraud Initiative be provided to the Committee.

21. CIVICA ITO ANNUAL REPORT 2016 - 2017

21.1 Members were presented with the Gloucester Civica Partnership's Annual Performance report on the ITO service for 2016-17. Mr Morgan gave Members a short presentation to complement the report before opening up the matter for debate.

21.2 In response to a query from the Chair regarding application of patches, Mr Morgan explained automated reporting tool was now in place, with 8 weekly application cycle. He noted that Civica were aiming to reduce this down to 4 weeks.

21.3 In response to a query from Councillor Pullen regarding the digital transformation around the Together Gloucester Project, Mr Morgan acknowledged that the project would require dedicated resource and colleagues from Civica Digital had provided advice and guidance to the Council's management team. Ms Neal commented that the ICT Strategy Board and monthly meetings had been reinstated to ensure that the requirements of the transformation project were fully understood.

21.4 RESOLVED that the Civica ITO Annual Report for 2016-2017 be noted.

22. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

22.1 Special meeting on the 26th July 2017 at 6:00pm in the Civic Suite, North Warehouse and 7th September 2017 at 6:30pm in the Civic Suite, North Warehouse.

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Time of commencement: 6.30 pm hours

Time of conclusion: 8.35 pm hours

Chair

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Gloucester City Revenues & Benefits Annual Performance 2016/17

Executive Summary: Amended Figures

KPI No	KPI Description	Target (Full Year)	Annual perf.	Status
1	Council Tax Collection (in year)	97%	97%	▲
2	Council Tax Collection (arrears)	30.00%	32%	▲
2	Business Rates Collection (in-year)	97.60%	98%	▲
2	Business Rates Collection (arrears)	35.00%	36%	▲
3	Speed of New Claims Processing	21 days	22 days	▼
4	Speed of changes in Circumstances Processing	9 days	8 days	▲
5	Outstanding Workload (Revenues)	N/A	1578	N/A
6	Outstanding Workload (Benefits)	N/A	1810	N/A
7	Local Authority Error Overpayments	<0.48	0.4%	▲
8	Customer Complaints	N/A	37	N/A

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