



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING : Monday, 1st July 2019

PRESENT : Cllrs. Coole (Chair), Ryall (Vice-Chair), Hawthorne (Spokesperson),
Dee, Finnegan, Lewis, Organ, Pullen, Taylor, Toleman, Walford,
Wilson, Lugg and Hansdot

Others in Attendance

Jon Topping, Head of Policy and Resources

Tony Wisdom, Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES : Cllrs. Haigh, Hilton and Stephens

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

12.1 No declarations were made on this occasion.

13. DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIPPING

13.1 There were declarations of partywhipping.

14. MINUTES

14.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd June 2019 were confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

15. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

15.1 There were no questions from members of the public.

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 Committee considered the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme and Council Forward Plan.

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17.2 The Chair advised that he would be attending a meeting of the Gloucester Advice Partnership to discuss Universal credit with partner organisations and report back to the Committee.

17.3 **RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Work Plan and the Council Forward Plan be noted.**

18. YEAR END PERFORMANCE REPORT 2018-19

18.1 Councillor Jennie Watkins, Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods was in attendance in place of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources who had been unable to attend due to absence on Council duties.

18.2 Councillor Watkins introduced the report which set out the Council's performance against a set of 28 key indicators in 2018-19. She noted that throughout 2018-19 work had been ongoing around setting targets and thresholds for RAG statuses to present the data in an even more meaningful way. Alongside this work, the strategy, performance and governance workstream of the Together Gloucester 2 Programme had been progressing.

18.3 She drew Members' attention to the following indicators:-

- Delivery of affordable housing units
- Number of housing completions
- Percentage of total waste recycled
- Time taken to process Housing Benefit new claims

18.4 The Chair referred to CST1 and he asked if the reduction in face to face contacts had resulted in a corresponding increase in other channels of customer contact. The Head of Policy and Resources undertook to ask IT and he advised that a new telephony system was being procured which would provide better information.

18.5 Councillor Pullen referred to CST2 and he questioned the customer waiting time for telephone recorded as 2m 03 secs. The Head of Policy and Resources advised that the new customer service portal would provide everything customers needed and give a much improved service.

18.6 Councillor Watkins asked what were Members' expectations for telephone waiting times and it was agreed that further clarification on the indicator was required.

18.7 Councillor Wilson asked what had been the longest individual wait. Councillor Finnegan stated that on one occasion she had held on for 45 minutes to be told to hang up as other customers required to use the line. She then recalled and waited a further 30 minutes before being told to hang up. She then sent an e-mail to which she had not yet received a reply. Councillor Lewis reported similar experiences.

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- 18.8 The Head of Policy and Resources reported that the appointments system for reception, which was the start of the process, had been well received and the subject of customer compliments. He believed that this had reduced the number of customers waiting for attention in the reception area.
- 18.9 Councillor Organ noted that many people still did not have access to the internet, particularly the elderly and the vulnerable. He asked that consideration be given to another channel specifically for these groups of people.
- 18.10 Councillor Hawthorne noted that Members' experiences reported this evening did not reflect the reported statistics. He suggested that the Committee be provided with the raw data so the matter could be considered for further scrutiny.
- 18.11 Councillor Watkins questioned the value of that given the forthcoming introduction of a new telephony system. She accepted Councillor Organ's point. The Head of Policy and Resources undertook to make enquiries about the provision of raw data and further clarification of the indicator.
- 18.12 The Vice-Chair referred to CIE5 and asked if the falling number of customers using the garden waste collection service was a cause for concern. The Head of Policy and Resources would seek further information to clarify. Councillor Lewis noted that a number of his neighbours had installed artificial grass which would not produce green waste.
- 18.13 In answer to a question from Councillor Hansdot, the Head of Policy and Resources advised that the new customer portal would interact with all services. The Chair noted that it was to be called The Gateway which was also used for an initiative in Matson. Councillor Watkins took note.
- 18.14 Councillor Hansdot referred to CIE 4 and expressed concern at the number of missed domestic waste collections. The head of policy and Resources noted that missed collections totalled just 0.7 per cent of the total number of collections.
- 18.15. Councillor Pullen welcomed the fall in the number of complaints received (CST 3) and the forthcoming new complaints policy. He stated that data on the resolution of complaints would be useful. The Head of Policy and Resources stated that he had that information for revenues and benefits and would check the availability of data for other services.
- 18.16 **RESOLVED that the report of year End Performance Monitoring 2018-19 be noted.**

19. FINANCIAL OUTTURN REPORT 2018-19

- 19.1 Councillor Jennie Watkins, Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods was in attendance in place of the Cabinet Member for

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Performance and Resources who had been unable to attend due to absence on Council duties.

- 19.2 Councillor Watkins introduced the report which informed Members of the final Council position against agreed budgets for the 2018/19 financial year including a summary of how the Council has progressed against key savings targets for the year.
- 19.3 She noted the increased costs of providing temporary accommodation and advised Members of a new initiative with Cheltenham YMCA to provide an additional 48 beds.
- 19.4 Councillor Wilson asked how the Council was allowed to spend the VAT Shelter. The Head of Policy and Resources advised that the Council could spend the funds as it wished but had previously committed to using the funds for housing regeneration or on inner City areas.
- 19.5 Councillor Watkins stated that the 48 new placements would reduce the overspend on temporary accommodation and this was one of several initiatives in the pipeline. She noted that Registered Providers could recover more funds than the Councils and she would be looking at further homelessness prevention measures and addressing the problem of empty homes in the City.
- 19.6 Councillor Pullen noted that no income had been recorded for the property investment strategy. Councillor Watkins advised that several possible investments were under consideration. The Head of Policy and Resources noted that property investment was an active process that could be drawn out and the could make bids but not be successful. He hoped the strategy would deliver income in the current year.
- 19.7 Councillor Lewis noted the fall in the prompt payment performance and he was advised that this was the first time that performance had fallen and this was due to staff shortage in Quarter 2. The Head of Policy and Resources advised that he was not aware that any creditors had suffered as a result.
- 19.8 Councillor Lugg asked if the bequest to the museum could be used for cataloguing the collections. She was advised that the bequest had to be used for collections and the Head of Policy and Resources undertook to make enquiries.
- 19.9 Councillor Toleman believed that there was a Government initiative to address the problem of intentional homelessness and he was advised that it was a proposal at the present time.
- 19.10 The Chair thanked Councillor Watkins and the Head of Policy and Resources for their attendance.
- 19.11 **RESOLVED that the Final Outturn Report 2018-19 be noted.**

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20. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2018-19

- 20.1 The Committee considered the Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2018-19.
- 20.2 The Chair advised that he would reserve the report for debate at the council meeting on 11th July.
- 20.3 He also advised that he had visited the Centre for Public Scrutiny and he had been invited to Essex County Council to advise on Member engagement in scrutiny.
- 20.4 **RESOLVED that the Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 20-18-19 be received.**

21. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday, 2nd September 2019 at 6.30 pm.

Time of commencement: 6.30 pm hours

Time of conclusion: 7.30 pm hours

Chair