



Rutland County Council

Catmose Oakham Rutland LE15 6HP.
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Minutes of the **RESOURCES SCRUTINY PANEL** held in the Council Chamber, Catmose, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HP on Thursday, 16th July, 2015 at 7.00 pm

Present: Mr A Walters (Chairman)
Mr O Bird
Mr K Bool
Mr B Callaghan
Mr W Cross
Mr O Hemsley
Mr J Lammie
Mrs D MacDuff
Mr A Stewart
Miss G Waller

Apologies: None

In attendance: Mr T C King Portfolio Holder for Places (Development) and Finance

Officers present: Mrs D Baker Head of Corporate Governance
Mrs D Mogg Director for Resources
Mr S Della Rocca Assistant Director - Finance
Ms N Brown Co-ordinator Corporate Support Team

120 RECORD OF MEETING

The Record of the Meeting of the Resources Scrutiny Panel held on 12 February 2015, copies of which had been previously circulated, was confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

121 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made in respect of the items on the agenda for this meeting.

122 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

No petitions, Deputations or Questions had been received from Members of the public.

123 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS

No questions had been received from members.

124 NOTICES OF MOTION FROM MEMBERS

No Notices of Motion had been received from Members.

125 CONSIDERATIONS OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE PANEL FOR A DECISION IN RELATION TO CALL IN OF A DECISION

No matter was referred to the Panel for a decision in relation to call in of a decision in accordance with Procedure Rule 206.

126 QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT 2014-15

Report No. 98/2015 from the Chief Executive was received, the purpose of which was to report on the Council's Performance for the fourth quarter of 2014/15.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

- i. The report measures Key Performance Indicators which are in line with the Council's Strategic Objectives;
- ii. 99% of Agenda's and Reports had been published on time, but one member had experienced delays with receipt of paper copies in amended format;
- iii. There was concern regarding the level of abandoned calls in Customer Services and the negative view that customers may have as a result;
- iv. The new Customer Services Manager was reviewing indicators around customer services, in particular those regarding abandoned call rates, to ensure that they could be measured accurately and action could be taken where appropriate;
- v. Work was being done on ensuring that staffing patterns matched periods of high volume enquiries in Customer Services. Alternative options for utilising staff from other departments to cover during busy periods were being explored, along with a call back system and a queue busting scheme;
- vi. Direct dial numbers were also being publicised on the website in order to reduce the high level of "switch Board" calls going through Customer services;
- vii. The Council's Website was currently under review and would be developed in order to improve accessibility of council functions and services by electronic means;
- viii. It was confirmed that key performance indicators are set at the start of the financial year, however they could be reviewed in year, where this was deemed appropriate;
- ix. Wording for the indicator on those killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents would be reviewed.

AGREED:

- 1) That the panel noted the contents of Report No. 98/2015.

127 QUARTER 4 FINANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT AND DRAFT OUTTURN 2014/15

Report No. 96/2015 from the Director for Resources was received, the purpose of which was to inform the panel of the draft outturn figures (subject to audit) for the financial year 2014/15 and provide an update on the status of the 2015/16 budget and accompanying recommendations, which would be presented to Cabinet for approval on 21 July 2015.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

- i. Cllr King presented the report and indicated that the Council was in a good position overall as outlined in the report;
- ii. An example of how the Quarterly budget monitoring reports would be presented in future had been provided for all Members of the panel. The new format would provide more detailed information and would be easier to navigate. It had been improved to take account of feedback provided by Councillors. This was a pilot and constructive feedback was welcomed in order to further improve and develop the format of the information provided;
- iii. It was common to have variances which could result in the accumulation of a surplus, or an overspend. Variances were more likely in less stable budgets than demand led budgets, such as some that exist in People's Services. In the last few years the Council has generally accumulated a surplus;
- iv. Where there was a surplus, it could be set aside for use in following years. Where there was a long term reduction in spending on a particular budget, it could be reduced in future years;
- v. The forecast details what budget holders believe they will spend in a full year on specific areas; if the budget is revised each quarter there is an audit trail to show all of the changes made. Quarter 4 reflects the actual end of year position;
- vi. Staff vacancies and spend on interims was a recurring theme in the Quarter 4 report;
- vii. It was confirmed that some staff vacancies had proved difficult to recruit to. The option of an interim may have also been considered because it provides a better solution than a permanent employee such as where skills are required to complete a short-term project, or a specific piece of work. In some cases an interim is less expensive in overall terms than acquiring a permanent replacement for a vacancy;
- viii. Further information regarding the number of interim Officers and plans for recruiting to these positions on a permanent basis was requested and will be presented at Q1;
- ix. A report to review senior management pay arrangements would be presented to Council later in the year. The panel requested that this report was brought to Resources Scrutiny before going to Council. The Chair would look to consider how this might be achieved taking into account the timeframes;
- x. A question was raised regarding investments in training for less senior officers and succession management planning. The Director for Resources confirmed that the plans for a leadership and development programme were currently being finalised by Human Resources;
- xi. The figures for the funding required in order to extend the Travel For Rutland Service until the end of August would be confirmed in Quarter 1. This was due to uncertainty over a grant that had been advanced by a Government Department in error;
- xii. The question of outsourcing IT Support had been explored, but was not considered to be a viable option at this time. The Council was moving towards

- all new software systems being hosted by the providers, this would mean that support and specialist knowledge would also be provided by the software companies;
- xiii. There was a request for further information from the People's Directorate regarding costs associated with the transitional arrangements in the People's Directorate (Section 1.33) and when the structure approved as part of the People's Review would be established; and
 - xiv. Clarification was given regarding the un-allocated Capital Programmes detailed in Appendix 6. It was explained that this was where funding streams had been received, but there was no plan currently in place against which to allocate them.

AGREED:

- 1) That the panel noted the contents of Report No. 96/2015.

128 INTERIM COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

Report No. 131/2015 from the Director for Resources was received, the purpose of which was to provide the panel with an overview of the numbers of Compliments, Comments and Complaints received by the Council since 1st January 2015, which is the date the new Policy was implemented, and 31st March, which is the end of the financial year. A full report would be presented to the next Resources Scrutiny Panel and would include a presentation on what the Council has done in response to feedback received from our customers.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

- i. It would be helpful to see a spreadsheet which always looks at the previous 12 months, so that it is possible to see how each department is progressing;
- ii. More information regarding the nature of the complaints would be useful in order to establish whether the complaints were regarding services, officer interaction, or disputes regarding eligibility for benefits, for example. This information would enable action to be taken where appropriate and also would identify any trends that might develop;
- iii. It was disappointing that there were so few compliments recorded and the question of whether officers were able to identify and then record compliments was raised;
- iv. There should be a vehicle for providing positive feedback and it was confirmed that a new system was being introduced to encourage customer feedback;
- v. The vexatious complainant protocol had been invoked where this had been appropriate;
- vi. It would be helpful to establish where problems may arise in a particular ward, in order for reassurance to be given and enquiries made by the ward member;
- vii. As Rutland is a small council, the service provided is more intimate and staff pride themselves on providing a good service to customers;
- viii. Parish Council complaints should also be recorded and improvements could be made to ensure Parish Councils are aware of how to access Council Services. This could be done in the form of a fact sheet sent out to Chairs of Parish Councils;
- ix. Service areas that receive a large number of compliments could share their best practice with other areas.; and

- x. It was agreed that the next report would contain data from quarter 4 2014/15 and quarter 1 2015/16.

AGREED:

- 1) That the panel **NOTED** the contents of Report No. 131/2015 and the information contained within this interim Compliments, Comments and Complaints report and provided feedback regarding the format of the full report, particularly the statistical data, which will be presented to the next Resources Scrutiny Panel.

129 REVIEW OF FORWARD PLAN

The panel reviewed the Forward Plan and noted the forthcoming reports.

The panel requested a Report on the developments and plans for Customer Services and it was agreed that the Director for Resources would provide a presentation at the next meeting. The presentation would include details of the Website project.

130 ANY URGENT BUSINESS

No items of urgent business had been previously notified to the person presiding.

131 DATE AND PREVIEW OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 10th September 2015.

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The Chair declared the meeting closed at 20.45pm

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