



Rutland County Council

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Minutes of the **MEETING of the RESOURCES SCRUTINY PANEL** held in the Council Chamber, Catmose, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HP on Thursday, 10th September, 2015 at 7.00 pm

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

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

Officers present: Mrs D Baker Head of Corporate Governance
Mrs D Mogg Director for Resources
Mr S Della Rocca Assistant Director - Finance
Mr M Poole Interim Head of IT
Mrs K Cross Corporate Support Officer

Apologies: None

197 RECORD OF MEETING

The Record of the Meeting of the Resources Scrutiny Panel held on 16 July 2015, copies of which had been previously circulated, was confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

198 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

199 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

200 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS

No questions had been received from Members.

201 NOTICES OF MOTION FROM MEMBERS

No Notices of Motion had been received from Members.

202 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.

203 SENIOR PAY REVIEW

A presentation was received from The Director for Resources, the purpose of which was to brief the panel on the Senior Pay Review that was currently underway. The presentation covered the scope of the review, reasons for undertaking the review, the review process and the reporting and decision making process.

The presentation looked at the meaning of Senior Pay, what the drivers were behind the review and the review process itself. The Strategic Management Team posts had not been fully reviewed for some time and there were several reasons for this review needing to take place including;

- A need to reduce the level of spending on agency/interim staff;
- A need to test out the Council's salary levels to ensure it can effectively recruit and retain at this level; and
- To ensure posts are correctly positioned in the Council's pay and grading structure.

The LGA has been appointed to deliver the project and job evaluation interviews and questionnaires have been undertaken. A report was currently on the Forward Plan for consideration by Full Council in October. Depending on the outcome of the review and any financial implications, recommendations may also need to be made to Council by Cabinet.

During the presentation the following points were noted:

- i. There was concern raised over the 2014/15 gross cost of using interim staff and clarity was sought over what percentage of that figure was estimated salary savings. The Assistant Director –Finance explained that typically salary savings amount to c70% of the cost of interims;
- ii. There was a combination of reasons for using interim staff , including the length of time it has taken to recruit skilled professionals;
- iii. It was confirmed that the LGA has lots of experience of the sector and knowledge of local government;
- iv. The Director explained that the review will not necessarily lead to a pay increase. At this stage it is an evaluation which is due for completion on 11 September 2015, to then be reviewed and a draft report with options of pay structures presented.

AGREED:

- 1) That the Chairman will discuss with the Director for Resources whether, once the final report is received, it comes back to Resources Scrutiny before going to Full Council.

204 QUARTER 1 FINANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT 2015/16

Report No. 153/2015 from the Director for Resources was received, the purpose of which was to inform the panel of the full year forecast position as at Quarter 1 for 2015/16 and to provide an update on the status of the 2015/16 budget and accompanying recommendations, which would be presented to Council for approval on 14 September 2015.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

- i. The panel were concerned that this report has come to them after going to Cabinet and to that extent their views would not be taken into consideration;
- ii. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that Cabinet are willing to take individual comments or questions;
- iii. Q2 and Q3 reports will be going to Resources Scrutiny Panel before Cabinet;
- iv. Concerns were raised over whether other scrutiny panels would get the opportunity to raise comments on future quarterly reports before they go to Cabinet. It was agreed that if other scrutiny panels wanted to comment on the quarterly reports they could attend the Resources Scrutiny meeting as non-panel members to raise those comments/concerns.

AGREED:

- 1) That the panel noted the contents of Report No. 153 /2015.

205 QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT 2015/16

Report No. 150/2015 from the Director for Resources was received, the purpose of which was to inform the panel on the council's performance for the first quarter of 2015/16.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

- i. A new manager was now in place in Customer Services and needs to be given the opportunity to improve the service;
- ii. There has been concern over the level of sickness absence across the organisation, which is to be looked at in the future;
- iii. There was confusion over which Scrutiny Panel should consider each KPI or project. It was suggested that when the next reports are generated, it was made clear for every KPI and project which Scrutiny Panel they related to..

AGREED:

- 1) That the panel noted the contents of Report No. 150/2015
- 2) That the panel will receive an update on the progress in Customer Services at the next panel meeting.

206 ANNUAL COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS REPORT 2015/16

Report No. 147/2015 from the Head of Corporate Governance 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 1 January 2015, which was the date the new Policy was implemented, to 30 June 2015. The Head of Corporate Governance confirmed this was the final report not a draft.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

- i. Members were pleased that improvements to service, as a result of complaints, were now being reported.
- ii. The panel asked for clarification of the ward area as the report contained parish level information.
- iii. This report will be presented to Resources Scrutiny Panel only. Therefore if there is sufficient concern over a specific directorate, then these should be raised with the Director for Resources in advance of the Resources Scrutiny Panel meeting.

AGREED:

- 1) That the Panel noted the contents of Report No. 147/2015 and that this report will be presented to Resources Scrutiny Panel in the future.

207 OVERVIEW OF IT SERVICES

Report No. 165/2015 was received from the Director for Resources. The report was prepared at the request of the Resources Scrutiny Panel, following the discussion at a previous meeting about the budget for IT and a willingness to gain a better understanding of how the budget was spent.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

- i. Clarification was sought as to who the Performance and Support team are and what they do;
- ii. A breakdown of the £130k website budget was provided: £100k was allocated to redesign the website and £30k was brought forward for project management costs. Future annual costs are currently unknown;
- iii. Concerns were raised over the £100k costs. It was explained that there are only a limited number of web developers who specialise in government websites and that the Council was not starting from scratch and needed the online services it was intending to offer to integrate with its back office systems. The last time the website was developed approximately four to five years ago, it cost £40k-£50K;

- iv. Concerns raised over whether additional IT staff would be needed, and arrangements put in place to keep the website up to date;
- v. It was suggested that people do not find the current website user friendly and that the new website will be going out for public consultation;
- vi. Due to the large number of people who pay in person - approximately 250 per week - and the amount of resources needed to process them, the Council need to have a simple and transactional friendly website.

Councillor Stewart left the meeting at 8.20pm

- vii. The panel expressed concern over the number or vacancies within the IT department. It was confirmed that recruitment has not been progressed in order to allow the incoming Head of IT the flexibility to create and develop his own team structure;
- viii. Concerns raised over whether the Council gets value for money for the Agresso system with the cost of the system and two full time members of staff supporting it. It was confirmed that both posts that previously supported the system are now vacant and all options would be considered including procuring external support due to the difficulty in recruiting specialists and the expense involved;
- ix. Concern was raised over the high cost for Education & Early years system. This system is renowned for being expensive, however it is up for review and alternative options will be considered;
- x. The Raise system is being replaced by Liquid Logic. The annual cost will increase as it will be externally hosted, however as more systems are hosted over time the cost will reduce as IT support may be reduced;
- xi. The Panel expressed interest in how often the video conferencing facilities were used. It was explained that the facilities are not used regularly due to some limitations to who you can use it with and that the facility needs to be promoted. However, with the Skype facility available on iPads there is scope to review this; and
- xii. The Panel sought confirmation of the IT Operational Support budget, specifically the purchase of hardware and the maintenance agreements. Assurances were made that this was only a budget, there was a plan for the purchase of hardware however it changed every year;
- xiii. The maintenance agreement budget is the cost of contracts committed to for external providers.

AGREED:

- 1) That the Panel noted the contents of Report No. 165/2015; and
- 2) That the Director for Resources would provide an update to the Panel in 6 months.

208 REVIEW OF FORWARD PLAN

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

209 ANY URGENT BUSINESS

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

210 DATE AND PREVIEW OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 12th November 2015.

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The Chair declared the meeting closed at 20.32pm

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