

CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 23rd June 2014

Present: Councillor J Oakes (Chair)
Councillors Creaser, Gill (substituting for Bleakley), Hughes,
Kempson, Procter and Sandiford

In Attendance: Emma Hussain, Principal Policy Officer
Katie Gee, Corporate Officer
Anita Hall, Service Assurance Manager
Caroline Jarvis, STAN, Service Assurance Team
Joe Kennedy, Head of Operations
Councillor Lamb, Portfolio Holder Operational Services and
Development Control

2 members of the public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Bleakley and Keith Pilkington (co-opted Member).

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETINGS

Resolved:

That the minutes of the last meeting held on 17th March 2014 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair agreed to deviate from the Procedure for Public Speaking and allow the members of the public to ask questions as the reports were discussed.

No questions were raised at this point.

6. CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair informed Members that at the last meeting in March, the Committee discussed the Apprenticeship Scheme Policy and it was agreed to set up a small

task and finish group to review this in more detail. Cllrs McInnes, Cllr Procter and Cllr Essex met with the HR Manager and the Chief Executive to look at options and it was agreed that the Council will pay a fixed weekly wage of £150.00, which will allow 4 apprentices to be supported.

7. STAN UPDATE

The Service Assurance Manager presented an update on the Services to a Neighbourhood service (STAN).

The project received funding from the North West Improvement & Efficiency Partnership (NWIEP) and set up to run for three years. Partners in the project were Rossendale, Pendle and Ribble Valley Councils and LCC's Help Direct, with Rossendale leading on the project.

Having satisfied the NWIEP that reporting conditions and targets were being met they handed over responsibility to Rossendale as the lead authority and being the applicant.

The three years of the original project came to an end at the end of September 2013 at which time Pendle Council no longer were involved in the STAN service. Rossendale and Ribble Valley continued with the project for a further 12 months.

STAN has quickly become a familiar face and known for giving great help and advice. Footfall has increased with many residents seeking help in relation to the various welfare reforms and assistance with completing forms.

There has also been an increase in footfall to STAN since the One Stop Shop moved to Futures Park, this was anticipated and one of STAN's venues is on the square in Rawtenstall near the Council's old One Stop Shop.

The Council are continually looking for ways to improve the help and support available, to Rossendale residents and during 2013, Rossendale Borough Council supported a bid by Rossendale Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) which would enable them to provide a CAB member of staff to be on the STAN the Van when in Rossendale.

This bid was successful and for 12 months from April 2014 there will also be a member of Rossendale CAB on STAN to help and support residents.

In Rossendale the STAN service is funded out of DWP provisions. The latest DWP funding makes particular reference to LA's providing help and support to their residents in relation to the various welfare reforms. The STAN/CAB partnership is currently working well and helping to build strong links between the two organisations.

The current STAN advisor previously worked for a CAB in Manchester and has brought a wealth of experience and knowledge to the STAN service. This and introduction of the CAB on STAN aims to enhance the help and advice available to our residents.

Ribble Valley will cease to be involved in the STAN project from October 2014. Rossendale will continue with the project until at least 31 March 2015 to coincide with the CAB advisor being on STAN and would actively explore funding opportunities in order to continue with the project beyond March 2015.

There are possible plans for STAN and some of its customers to go along to future Neighbourhood Forums to explain the good work of STAN and the service it provides.

Members asked if there were facilities on STAN for people to speak in private if they so wished. The STAN advisor indicated to the Members that people had stated that they did not mind talking about personal matters on STAN, but that there was a private interview room if they wished to use it. The STAN advisor went on to say that many visitors preferred the cozy, less formal environment on STAN to the One Stop Shop.

Looking to the future, the Service Assurance Manager indicated that they may be able to offer appointments and home visits.

A number of questions were raised by Members which the Service Assurance Manager responded and Members who had used the service were very complimentary.

Resolved:

That the information be noted.

8. INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE REPORT – QUARTER 4

The Principal Policy Officer presented the Council's performance report for Quarter 4 (January – March 2014), which showed that the Council was working well towards delivering its Actions and Performance Indicators in its 2013-2014 Corporate Business Plan.

After a strong performance in Quarter 3, the Council had continued to perform well in Quarter 4, with 94.9% of Actions finishing Quarter 4 green in status. This was an improvement of 1% on Quarter 3.

Actions that were amber status also reduced by 1% on Quarter 3, to only 5.1%. Quarter 4 finished with no red Actions.

The number of Performance Indicators that were green in status had risen from 57.6% in Quarter 3 to 75.8% in Quarter 4. The number of amber Performance Indicators had reduced from Quarter 3 from 27.3% to 6.1% in Quarter 4. The number of Performance Indicators that were red in status increased from 15.1%, in Quarter 3 to 18.1% in Quarter 4 – this accounts for 6 indicators.

For those Performance Indicators that were behind target an action plan had been completed which provides a summary of the related issues and intended actions to improve future performance.

In Quarter 4 the Council received 13 complaints down by 7 from Quarter 3.

The highest area/category of complaints was seen in 'Bins/Bins Collection' and 'Council Tax Charges', which saw 2 complaints each. A Member raised concern at this low figure and asked for clarification on how these were recorded.

It appeared that some Members use the Member Enquiry system to make their complaint and this would not necessarily be recorded as a complaint if it was dealt with and answered satisfactorily through the enquiry system. If contact with the council is a request or query it is treated as such, rather than a complaint.

The Scrutiny Officer indicated that the Committee and Member Services Manager would be attending the meeting in September with the Annual Complaints and Ombudsman report and clarification could be given at this time.

There were no new ombudsman complaints received in Quarter 4. There are also no outstanding ombudsman complaints at the end of Quarter 4.

In Quarter 4 the Council received 42 compliments from a wide range of Service Areas. This was slightly down on Quarter 3. The highest area/category of compliments was seen in 'Staff Member or Team' and 'Quality of Service'.

The Risks to the Council indicated that 70.4% (19) were low risk (green), with 29.6% (8) identified as medium risk (amber)

A number of questions were asked in relation to Service Assurance Team targets delivered by Capita, as follows:

- a) CS5 - % of telephone calls answered by Coventry Call Centre within 20 seconds.
- b) CS6 - 0 % of abandoned calls – Coventry Call Centre.

An explanation on under performance was noted as set out in the associated PI actions plans within the performance report [pg 67-72]. It was noted that March is annually a busier period with an increase in demand for the service as a result of new council tax bills. The impact of welfare reform changes are also still being felt on the service. Targets from 2014/15 are currently being agreed for these indicators.

Members suggested that the Head of Customer Services and ICT attend the next meeting to provide an explanation and answer any further questions in relation to under-performance of these Performance Indicators, as members were aware that the contract was up for renewal in 2016.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Corporate Scrutiny Committee notes the level of performance and risks detailed in the report.

2. That the Corporate Scrutiny Committee continues to monitor performance of those actions and performance indicators that are underachieving targeted levels of performance and ask the Head of Customer Services and ICT to attend the next meeting to explain Capita's underachieving target areas in more detail.
3. That the Corporate Scrutiny Committee request that a message be sent to all Council staff congratulating them on their performance and achievements during 2013/14.

9. REFUSE AND RECYCLING FRONTLINE VEHICLES

The Head of Operations presented a report informing members of the frontline Refuse Collection Vehicle replacement requirements and options available.

Rossendale currently deliver Refuse and Recycling services using 10 frontline Refuse Collection Vehicles (see below) in addition to auxiliary support vehicles and 2 spare vehicles available in the event of maintenance requirements or mechanical failure.

2 x Glass, Cans & Plastics
2 x Paper and Card
4 x Residual Waste
1 x Organic Waste
1 x Organic / Back-up

The current Refuse Collection Vehicle fleet was purchased in March/April 2010 at a cost of £1.35m, and was approaching 5 years old and as a result, due to the challenging nature of the local terrain, is mechanically less reliable than in previous years. This results in higher maintenance costs and increasing risk of breakdown, impacting service delivery. In previous years the frontline fleet had been replaced initially in 2006 and again in 2010, with optimum efficiency in terms of service delivery identified in the first 3 years due to reduced levels of mechanical failure. Years 4-5 show a significant increase in maintenance costs and incidence of mechanical failure.

Following analysis of available finance options which compared Lease v Purchase over a period ranging 3-5 years, the most cost effective model in terms of Council finances had been identified as a purchase replacement of 10 replacement frontline vehicles over a 5 year period.

It was anticipated that the Council could retain 2 of its best vehicles to act as spare vehicles in the event of mechanical failure. Any sale proceeds would be recycled into the Vehicle Replacement Reserve which had a current balance of £275k.

Due to operational requirements in the Borough, local terrain and difficult access to collection areas, there is a requirement for the Refuse collection vehicles to be highly manoeuvrable and relatively narrow. The only vehicle that fully complies with the required specification was the Dennis Elite 6-6x2 Narrow Track and mid-lift vehicle.

A number of questions were raised by Members which the Head of Operations responded.

- Do the Council do all the maintenance of vehicles themselves?
- Was it possible to look at more economical vehicles?
- Accept that the Council are limited to a specific type of vehicle due to the access difficulties throughout the Borough.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee recommend to Cabinet the most cost effective model as detailed in the report for the replacement of frontline Refuse Collection Vehicles.

10. REFUSE AND RECYCLING COLLECTION ROUTES REVIEW – AREA BASED WORKING

The Head of Operations provided a detailed presentation to update the Committee on the proposed changes to refuse and recycling services, specifically the introduction of area based working. This follows the recommendations of the Street Cleansing Task and Finish Group recommendations which were subsequently approved by Cabinet in June 2013.

The current collection of refuse and recycling had proved not to be the most cost effective as the collection vehicles were operating in every area of the Borough on each collection day of the week. The current routing may not present the most fuel efficient method, with refuse and recycling vehicles using approximately 4 miles per gallon of fuel.

Non-productive time was relatively high due to travelling to and from the depot or tipping facilities.

The new service would see all collection vehicles in the same area on the same day, allowing crews and supervision to improve communication and provide a more consistent service.

Through improved areas of operation and efficiencies, collection catch up arrangements could be applied quickly, resulting in few missed collections.

Two loaders from each vehicle would be redeployed on cleansing activities during periods when the vehicles were travelling to and from tipping facilities. The Council need to target key areas that have lots of litter.

How these changes are communicated to the residents is key to the project and the Council need to ensure that communication material would be informative, easy to understand and targeted delivery as close as possible to the go-live date of 30th September 2014.

All call staff would be fully briefed and would have prepared scripts to deal with enquiries.

Members asked that the Council work with Civic Pride and other volunteers to ensure timings for when litter picking would be taking place.

All Members were very supportive and positive about these new working arrangements.

RESOLVED:

That the Corporate Scrutiny Committee recommend to Cabinet the service changes within the Refuse and Recycling Collection Route Review.

11. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14

The Scrutiny Support Officer presented the Annual Report for 2013/14, which was a combined report of the work of two Scrutiny Committees and Task and Finish Groups.

Members thanked the Scrutiny Support Officer for her support over the last twelve months.

The Scrutiny Support Officer indicated that the report would be presented to the Full Council meeting on 16th July 2014 for approval.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2013/14 be noted.
2. That the report be presented to Full Council in July for approval.

12. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15

The Scrutiny Support Officer asked Members to consider and approve the ideas put forward by members of the public, elected members and Council Officers.

The projects for inclusion in the 2014/15 Work Programme were agreed as follows, taking into consideration the financial position of the Council.

- That any progress updates on the Rawtenstall Town Centre Developments be presented via group meetings and if then requested by Members, through the scrutiny process.
- That a report be presented to Corporate Scrutiny on the PSN Network and Council website in the future.
- That clarification be sought from the Clinical Commissioning Group on the GP appointment systems.
- That a Task and Finish Group be established to look at Community Safety/ASB/All Crime.
- That Corporate Scrutiny request an update on the Hot Food Takeaway Interim Policy Statement.
- That a Task and Finish Group be established to review the Council's contribution to St Vincent's and its referrals to the service.

That the following partner organisations provide presentations to Partner Scrutiny

- Dementia Friendly Rossendale
- Coastal Health Care (MIU Provider)
- CCG Five Year Plan
- North West Ambulance Service
- HealthWatch
- Crime and Disorder
- Green Vale Homes
- Review of Leisure Trust
- Rossendale Transport

The Rogue Landlords Task and Finish Group was an ongoing piece of work, carried over from last year.

RESOLVED:

That the Work programme, as above, be approved and reported to Full Council for information.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 8.20pm

Signed
(Chair)

Date.....