

Time Commenced – 18:01
Time Finished – 20:27

Corporate Scrutiny and Governance Overview and Scrutiny Board

07 November 2017

Present: Councillor Stanton (Chair)
Councillors Barker, Bayliss, Carr, Eldret, Graves, Hezelgrave,
M Holmes, Jackson, J Khan, Poulter and Webb

In Attendance: Claire Davenport, Mark Taylor, Ben Clawson-Chan, Ian Fullagar, Heather Greenan, Kas Sahota, Clare Harrison (Democratic Services).

37/17 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Pegg

38/17 Late Items

There were no late items.

39/17 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

40/17 Minutes of the meeting held on 03 October 2017

Minutes of the previous meeting held on 03 October 2017 were agreed as an accurate record.

41/17 Forward Plan

The Board considered the contents of the Forward Plan published on 10 October 2017. No new items were added to the Board's Work Programme.

The Board resolved to note the Forward Plan.

42/17 Performance Items and Performance Forward Plan

The Board considered a report of the Chief Executive updating Members on performance information in relation to on Staff Health and Wellbeing (sickness absences) and the Q2 Performance Report.

It was reported that following the initial report received by the Board in February 2017 on Staff Health and Well Being, a Performance Surgery was scheduled and was attended by Members of the Board on 18 October 2017. It was reported that a number of issues came out of the surgery and actions put in place to address these. Issues included the high levels of stress related sickness absence and whether or not there were unidentified trends in absences. It was further reported that a Managing Absence Project Group had been put in place to undertake actions such as a review of the stress management policy, undertaking trend analysis between age, gender, grade, sector and length of absence. The Board was informed the top 60 long and short term cases were now subject to case management by two dedicated HR Advisers. There was also recognition that for fully understanding needs and what works is in the early states and that there is an increasing drive for cultural change within the authority to drive staff productivity and hold managers to account.

Members were informed that non-compliance on the completion of return to work interviews within 72 hours remained a concern and that the performance surgery recommended that be added as a measure to the Council Scorecard from Q2 onwards. It was also recommended that the use of rewards, recognition and incentives for high levels of attendance be explored and that training and development made available and to build Health and Well Being tools into manager induction materials.

The Board was further informed that a number of next steps had been identified following the performance surgery which included:

- The development of Project Plan and Action Plans being developed by the Managing Absence Project Group.
- Quarterly monitoring of sickness absence data to be part of performance monitoring reports to Cabinet and Executive Scrutiny Board.
- Personnel Committee to receive regular updates at their meetings in November and January.
- Executive Scrutiny Board to consider inclusion of update on People Strategy as part of the forward plan prior to March 2018.

It was reported that the Council's Personnel Committee were keen to lead on this issue but would work in collaboration with the Executive Scrutiny Board at a joint Performance Surgery in April to review implementation of action plans. Members queried what work is being done with other local authorities to share learning on stress related absences and how to reduce these. Members were informed that officers are currently talking to other authorities about these sorts of issues but that it was important to remember that they may not be in

the same place as us in relation to budget cuts and restructures which may impact strongly on stress levels of staff.

The Board also asked if staff are currently able to access free flu vaccinations in the winter period in an attempt to reduce staff sickness. Officers reported that the flu vaccination is available to all frontline staff free of charge, but not all staff. Members recommended that the flu vaccination should be available free of charge to all staff and administered at the Council House/place of work.

In relation to the rest of the Quarter 2 Performance Report, members were informed that of the 50 Pledges which form the Council Delivery Plan, six Pledges are completed, 39 Pledges are 'on track' and five Pledges are showing minor slippage. It was reported that 67% of performance measures in the Council Scorecard are forecast to meet or exceed their year-end target.

The Board was informed that the number of new Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) issued within the 20 week timescale was at 81%, against a target of 90%. It was reported that an additional measure on conversions has been proposed for inclusion on the scorecard and that the service is well aware of the issues in relation to the completion of EHCPs and is working hard to try and resolve these.

The Board resolved to:

- 1) request an update on the People Strategy as part of the forward plan prior to March 2018;**
- 2) agree to a joint Performance Surgery with the Personnel Committee in April to review implementation of action plans;**
- 3) recommend that the flu vaccination should be available free of charge to all staff and administered at the Council House/place of work; and**
- 4) note the Council Cabinet report on Performance Monitoring 2017/18 – Future Of Derby Pledges September 2017, Quarter Two Results And Mid-Year Target Review.**

43/17 Council Cabinet Response to Scrutiny Recommendations

The Board considered a report of the Chief Executive which allowed the scrutiny board to receive responses from Council Cabinet on recommendations made at the previous Board meeting held on 03 October 2017.

The Board resolved to note the report.

44/17 Council Cabinet Agenda

The Board considered a report from the Chief Executive on the Council Cabinet Agenda. Members considered the Council Cabinet Agenda in its entirety for the meeting scheduled for Wednesday 08 November 2017 and made a number of comments and recommendations to Council Cabinet.

Item 8 - Approval of the Council Tax Support Scheme (CTS) for 2018/2019

Members considered a Council Cabinet report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Governance and Director of Finance to approve the CTS Scheme from 1 April 2018.

It was reported that the only change agreed to take effect from 1 April 2018 is to increase the minimum contribution that certain households affected by disability and where disability income has been awarded will pay, from 27.5% to 30%.

The Board resolved note the report.

Item 9 - Acquisition of Temporary Accommodation

Members considered a report of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Urban Renewal and Strategic Director for Communities and Place to agree to the acquisition of up to six 2 or 3 bed homes for use as Temporary Accommodation, at a maximum total purchase price of £900,000. This sum to be added to the corporate capital programme in 2018/19.

The Board was informed that a further recommendation would be added to the report for Council Cabinet to consider which would ask for an approval to negotiate and agree acquisitions to be delegated to the Strategic Director for Communities and Place.

Members queried the cost of the temporary accommodation against what the Council is paying for Bed and Breakfast accommodation and were informed that the Council would expect to save money through these acquisitions, or at least break even on the costs.

The Board asked how people are assisting in moving on from temporary accommodations and where they go to, as well as suggesting that more work should be done with private landlords to encourage them to provide accommodation for those in priority need. Officers reassured the Board that Derby Homes has invested in and is leading on work around partnerships with private landlords. The Board was also informed that move on accommodation currently includes a range of provision, including Derby Homes properties, private landlords and other housing association properties.

Members asked how long people are staying in temporary accommodation and expressed concern that an increase in properties would still be insufficient if people are not being moved on and housed in permanent accommodation in a timely manner. Members were keen to ensure that extra work is done to

consider how temporary and B&B accommodation is being used, current timescales, stay times and bottleneck issues. This would be with a view to identifying whether the increase in the number of homes for temporary accommodation is enough and if there should be an introduction of timescales and/or performance measures around the length of stay in temporary accommodation.

The made no recommendations to Council Cabinet, however, requested a further report to be brought to a future meeting of the Board on the use of temporary accommodation.

Item 10 - New Swimming Pool Complex at Moorways

Members considered a Council Cabinet report of the Cabinet Member for Governance and Finance; Cabinet Member for Leisure, Culture and Tourism and Strategic Director for Communities and Place to accept a number of recommendations which allow progress to phase two of the current Leisure Facility Strategy for a new swimming pool to be built on the site of the existing Moorways swimming pool.

Members expressed concern about the operating model options, including the risks of not finding a suitable operator for the Local Trust or Out-sourced delivery models. Members were informed that in the worst case scenario, if the facility were Council-run this would be at a subsidy to the Council of £1m a year which would put the council close to its VAT limits for financial exemption, put pressure on future annual budgets and could have significant knock-on effects for future capital projects. Members queried if there was a different design that would be a lesser financial risk to the Council and were informed that the facility planning model and extensive analysis of supply and demand data identified that this model was the most cost-effective model.

Members queried if the design of the pool facility is the most cost-effective or attractive option for external operators or Local Trusts to want to take on the operation of the facility. Members were reminded that the option had been chosen not only from the perspective of providing something cost-effective, but providing something that is right for the city of Derby and what people want and need from a public swimming pool facility. Members were informed that the options appraisal will determine the most cost-effective operating model for the overall leisure strategy. Members were further informed that the MACE team does have a private sector operator in their design team and that the Council has expertise from private sector facility managers within the team as well as advisors from Swim England to ensure that the facility will be cost-effective and include the right elements for a successful facility for the city.

The Board questioned what was being done to enable people from across the city to access Moorways by public transport and felt that the location and lack of access to public transport routes would encourage private car use.

Other concerns raised by the Board included the energy efficiency of the building and whether 'sport swimming' was of more importance than 'leisure swimming'. It was reported that the 50m metre pool will be a state-of-the-art facility and will be able to be divide the main pool into two or three sections, as well raise and lower the floor to change the height of the pool for different uses. It was reported that there will also be three distinct areas within the 'leisure pool area' for different age groups of children and young people and that there will be a learner pool that can accommodate groups with privacy needs. The facility will also be designed to be more accessible for those with disabilities.

The Board resolved to request that Council Cabinet gives further consideration to:

- 1) The risks of not finding a suitable operator, particularly the financial risks around the Council running the facility in this event, including pressure on future annual budgets and putting the council close to the VAT threshold for financial exemption which could have significant knock-on effects for future capital projects; and**
- 2) Enabling people from across the city to access the Moorways site by public transport, particularly those on lower incomes.**

Item 11 - Budget Outturn Quarter 2, 2017/18

Members considered a Council Cabinet report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Governance and Director for Finance summarising the Council's overall financial position at the end of September 2017 against the budget approved by Council on 15 February 2017.

Members queried the continued issues around inaccuracies of spend and optimistic forecasting in the Capital Programme. The Board was informed that work is currently being done to inform Managers that providing an accurate account of spend forecasts would not result in the loss of funds for projects, which is the suspected cause of such inaccuracies.

Members also raised the issue of undeliverable savings which were unclear in the report, and requested that future reports more clearly identify at an earlier stage when savings targets are known to be undeliverable.

The Board made no recommendations to Council Cabinet, however made a request to the Director of Finance that future reports clearly identify at an earlier stage when savings targets are known to be undeliverable.

Item 12 - Performance Monitoring 2017/18 – Future of Derby Pledges September 2017, Quarter Two Results and Mid-Year Target Review

Members considered a report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Governance and Chief Executive on progress made towards the Future of Derby 50 Pledges (Council Delivery Plan) and includes highlights from key performance measures included in the Council Scorecard.

Members were informed that notable achievements at quarter one included:

- The Ram Energy tariff has been launched, and has generated significant interest from customers with the first households switching to the tariff.
- Continued success of projects funded through Crowdfund Derby.
- Significant progress on a number of regeneration and leisure projects, including those within the City Centre masterplan.
- 15 'Talking Points' are now operating across the city, transforming the way that adults access care and support.
- An improved focus on homelessness prevention work, with 333 preventions made at the end of quarter two.
- 221 repairs, improvements and adaptations have been made by the Healthy Housing Hub, supporting people to live independently in their homes.

Members expressed continued concern around the performance around Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and the conversions from statements to EHCPs and were informed that of the five proposed additions to the Council Scorecard, subject to approval by Cabinet there were two included on this issue, which are:

- Percentage of statements converted to an Education, Health and Care Plan (pre-16 years); and
- Percentage of statements converted to an Education, Health and Care Plan (post-16 years).

No recommendations to Council Cabinet were made on this item, however the Board agreed to continue monitoring the Performance of EHCPs and items on the Performance Forward Plan.

Item 13 - Contract and Financial Procedure Matters Report

Members considered a Council Cabinet report of Cabinet Member for Finance and Governance and Chief Executive outlining a number of items that require reporting to and approval by Council Cabinet under Contract and Financial Procedure rules.

It was reported that changes included:

- An approval for delegated authority to bid for the available funds from the Clean Bus Technology Fund 2017-2019;
- An agreement to bid for funding to the DEFRA early measures funding for Air Quality; and
- Approval for Business Rates Write Offs.

Members queried the lack of information around Business Rates Write-Offs and the length of time between this request and previous requests. Members felt that as much effort should be put into recovering these costs as is put into recovering Council Tax arrears as the money is all public money.

Members felt that in the interests of the public and transparency, businesses should be named where possible and full details including dates and timescales and the scale of debt should be included in future reports to ensure more in-depth analysis to take place. The Board was keen to continue regular monitoring of Business Rates arrears with a view to considering trends and processes to identify early warning signs, consider the introduction of early interventions and consider preventative work to advise and assist businesses with an aim to reduce company closures and liquidations and ultimately reduce business rates write-offs.

The Board resolved to request that the Director of Finance:

- 1) Reprint the documentation relating to business write-offs for the Council Cabinet meeting to be held on Wednesday 08 November to include business names, date information and further details on trends (to be exempt if necessary); and**
- 2) includes full details including dates and timescales future reports and the scale of debt to ensure more in-depth analysis to take place and to allow the possible introduction of early interventions and preventative work to advise and assist businesses, reduce company closures and liquidations and ultimately reduce business rates write-offs.**

MINUTES END