

## APPENDIX A

### PERFORMANCE AND FINANCE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

#### Chair's briefing – Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> March 2013

##### **Members:**

Councillor Sue Anderson (Chair)

Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane (Vice-Chairman)

##### **Officer attendees:**

Carol Cutler, Director of Customer Services & Business Transformation (item 2)

Rahim St John, Head of Business Transformation Partnership (item 2)

Mohammed Ilyas, Policy Officer – Equalities and Diversity (item 3)

Carole Yarde, Head of Transformation Community Health & Well Being (item 3)

Liz Defries, Service Manager – Performance & Data Services (item 4)

Julie Alderson, Corporate Director of Resources – Finance Update (items 5 & 6)

Guy Fiegehen, Scrutiny Officer

## NOTES

### **1. Welcome/introductions**

The Chair and Vice-Chairman welcomed officers attending.

### **2. IT update and issues to be covered at June P&F**

The Director of Customer Services & Business Transformation said the current planned programme of work was going well involving improvements to the storage area network and new servers for the council's main systems. She expected service levels for users to stabilise by the end of April once the current disruptive work is finished. The Chief Executive had met Capita's CEO about the serious incidents that had occurred and additional resources are starting to appear.

The Chair and Vice-Chairman said they wanted the report to June P&F on Capita outsourcing to include

- i. An update on the improvement programme
- ii. What went well/not so well and lessons learned
- iii. Particular issues
- iv. Knock on effects on overall performance

The Chair and Vice-Chairman commented on the need to upgrade or replace the Civica W2 system which supports the planning application process.

A second report to the June P&F meeting on Business Continuity will cover issues raised in the Governance Audit and Risk Management (GARM) reference and provided by Risk, Audit & Fraud team. The focus will be disaster recovery and how services would manage without IT for a substantial period.

The Director also reported new computers were to be installed in libraries in the next month to help meet the expected increased use as a result of policy changes.

The Chair and Vice-Chairman thanked the Director and Head of Business Transformation for their briefing.

### **3. Equality Objectives: Corporate update and progress in Community Health and Well Being Directorate**

The Policy Officer said one of the current aims is that equality indicators are 'mainstreamed' and become part of corporate and directorate performance scorecards, but targets needed to be smarter. Harrow had recently been cited by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission as a best-practice example, and other recent achievements included publishing the council's public sector equality data for the second time, publishing 'Our Harrow, Our Story' and holding the 'Making a Difference' seminar.

The Head of Transformation said the Equalities Task Groups in each directorate have a key role in improving managers' skill levels in equalities assessments for service changes. There is still a need for culture change in many parts of the organisation, and it is important the centre continues to support directorates to change.

The Chair and Vice-Chairman welcomed the good progress being made in Community Health and Well Being Directorate in particular. They were also concerned that Quality Assurance for Equalities Impact Assessments takes place as soon as possible rather than be left toward the end of the process in order to minimise the risk of judicial review.

The Chair and Vice-Chairman thanked the Policy Officer and Head of Transformation for their informative and encouraging reports and asked the Scrutiny Advisor to advise on the appropriate meeting for P&F to receive the annual report on Equalities. (This has been agreed subsequently for the September 2013 meeting.)

### **4. Corporate Scorecard Q3 2012/13 and update on indicators identified for further monitoring**

The scorecard was reviewed and updates considered. Detailed comments and follow-up action are identified in Appendix B. The Chair and Vice-Chairman thanked the Service Manager for proposals to trim the number of items on the 'watch' list for further monitoring.

### **5. Last P&F questions and matters arising**

The follow-up actions from P&F on 29<sup>th</sup> January were in hand, and the additional information on CAMHS, for example, would be sent shortly. The Corporate Director apologised that she had not yet considered fully the advice she had received from the Director of Legal & Governance Services on the seven SAP reports due to workload pressures preparing next year's budget.

### **6. Q3 Finance – Update**

The Corporate Director said she was confident the Council's total underspend in 2012-13 will exceed £2.9million on the basis of data for Q3 and periods 10 & 11. Community Health & Well Being had switched to forecasting an underspend from an overspend in the previous quarter, and the £1million contingency was largely intact. Children and Families (C&F) still faced pressures, however.

The Chair and Vice-Chairman queried whether the one per cent salary cut had affected retention and recruitment and, in particular, asked for cost and other details of the market factor C&F had introduced. Planning had experienced fewer problems than expected as the recession had reduced planning applications.

The Chair and Vice-Chairman were also very concerned that the performance indicator for the proportion of cost centres for which SAP budget forecasts are completed had fallen

substantially since Quarter 2. It had been 'Low Green' but was now 'High Red' at the end of Quarter 3. They asked to receive any further information on a possible replacement for this indicator (known as KP 06) which the Corporate Director said would be less mechanical and better reflect the balance between high-value and low-value items.

The Chair and Vice-Chairman thanked the Corporate Director for her support to them and to P&F Committee as a whole and wished her well in her new role. They also asked for an introductory meeting to be arranged for them with Simon George, the new Director of Finance & Assurance.

**7. Special P&F 4<sup>th</sup> March: 'Engaging Young People' review – matters arising**

The Chair and Vice-Chairman were very pleased with the success of the special meeting held at Cedars Community and Youth Centre especially the large number of young people who had attended and spoken and the range of backgrounds and organisations from which they came. They noted the meeting had urged the continued importance of encouraging and enabling young people to participate in the work of Overview and Scrutiny and other Council groups to act similarly. The Chair and Vice-Chairman asked the Scrutiny Officer to prepare a draft 'thank you' letter to those who had attended.

**8. P&F sub-committee meeting – 26<sup>th</sup> April 2013**

The provisional agenda items were confirmed as follows:

1. P&F Chair's report (Guy Fiegehen)
2. Revenue and capital monitoring (Q2) (Tom Whiting)
3. Contracts and procurement savings – year-end report (Robin Edwards)
4. Planning consultation and enforcement – update (Stephen Kelly)

**Guy Fiegehen**  
Scrutiny Officer  
April 2013