

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES

17 DECEMBER 2013

Chairman:	* Councillor Jerry Miles	
Councillors:	* Ramji Chauhan (3) Mano Dharmarajah * Jean Lammiman (4) * Phillip O'Dell	* Bill Phillips * Anthony Seymour * Sachin Shah (2) * Yogesh Teli
Voting Co-opted:	(Voluntary Aided) † Mrs J Rammelt Reverend P Reece	(Parent Governors) † Mrs A Khan
Non-voting Co-opted:	Harrow Youth Parliament Representative	

- * Denotes Member present
- (2), (3) and (4) Denote category of Reserve Members
- † Denotes apologies received

456. Attendance by Reserve Members

RESOLVED: To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Members:-

Ordinary Member

Councillor Sue Anderson
Councillor Marilyn Ashton
Councillor Chris Mote

Reserve Member

Councillor Sachin Shah
Councillor Ramji Chauhan
Councillor Jean Lammiman

457. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

Agenda Item 8 – Implications of Welfare Reform and Channel Migration for Access Harrow

Councillor Jean Lammiman declared, during the course of the meeting, a non-pecuniary interest in that her husband was involved in the electoral canvass. She remained in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Agenda Item 9 – Minerva Project Update

Councillor Sachin Shah declared a non-pecuniary interest in that he was a member of the cross party steering group. He would leave the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

RESOLVED ITEMS

458. Appointment of Vice-Chairman

RESOLVED: That Councillor Chris Mote be appointed as Vice Chairman for the remainder of the municipal year.

459. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2013 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

460. Public Questions

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were received.

461. Petitions

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions had been received.

462. Reference from Cabinet - Response to Scrutiny Review on Accessible Transport

Members agreed to receive a reference from Cabinet which provided the response to the scrutiny review on accessible transport as a matter of urgency for the reasons set out on the supplemental agenda.

The Chair advised the Committee that the review had been well received and some positive feedback had been provided.

RESOLVED: That the response be noted.

463. Implications of Welfare Reform and Channel Migration for Access Harrow

Members received a report of the Director for Business Transformation and Customer Services which detailed the impact of the changes in Welfare Reform on the Council's plan to migrate customers to cheaper channels in order to reduce the cost of Access Harrow by £1.3 million over four years.

The officer outlined the content of the report and responded to Members comments and questions as follows:

- A Member, referring to page 18, suggested that it would be helpful to receive the percentage of self service transactions on a month by month basis. The officer advised that this information was already available and that he would add the Member to the distribution list for this data.
- In response to a Member's question as to the steps that were being taken to make the G and H groups identified by Experian (customer segmentation at household level) more aware of the MyHarrow account, the officer advised that there would be a series of road shows with partners such as the Citizens Advice Bureau. Workshops had also been run in the One Stop Shop. Another Member suggested that RELATE might be able to assist with awareness raising.
- In terms of IT security, the officer reported that the MyHarrow account was a hosted solution provided by Gandlake and that a penetration test was run on the portal each year to ensure that it stood up to rigorous security testing.
- The officer reported that minimum complaints were received about the MyHarrow account but that there had been some minor issues with the web form in relation to the annual canvass but was fixed within an hour. He undertook to provide the Member with details of the complaints received by the Council on general matters for the last quarter.
- In response to a Member's query about whether residents returning forms was the time consuming element of the process, the officer advised that there was once considerable duplication between the Council and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) but the Council now had access to the DWP system to avoid this. Work was being done with other Council departments to identify what documents or proof was already held and so did not need to be seen.
- Concern was expressed at the proposed reduction in scale of the One Stop Shop with an 'emergency-only' service being available from 2016/17. The officer advised that work would be done to ensure that the One Stop Shop self-serve area was more welcoming with staff on hand to assist residents.

- A Member commented that the search facility on the Council's website was not that good and sought clarification as to what was being done to improve the experience of users. He suggested that a pop up help box might assist. He also questioned progress on improving the experience of residents accessing multiple services in terms of only providing information once. The officer advised that budget limitations meant that the search facility could not be as integrated as Google and that linking search results on our website was a manual process. When a user used a web form, feedback was requested and a focus group was run every six months and those users who had provided helpful feedback were invited to attend and participate in testing of the website. This had proved to be helpful. In addition to this, Web Trends, a facility purchased last year, provided heat maps and usage data which identified successes and areas for development on the website. The officer explained that a trial for webchat was undertaken two years ago without success however the facility was currently being trialed again on certain areas of the website.

In terms of providing information once, this had been facilitated by locating all services into one area and the officer advised that work would be complete in January 2014 on a life events form.

- In response to a query as to the success or otherwise of the MyHarrow account and online electoral registration, the officer advised that in 2012 residents had received a PIN to enable them to make changes to the electoral register on line. The Cabinet Office had agreed that the Council could do this and initially 15,000 signed up with another 6-7,000 then updating their details. During this year's canvass an email alert was sent to the 42,000 residents with a MyHarrow account and 8,000 had completed their canvass form online so far.

The Chair thanked the officer for his presentation and responses.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the progress made in migrating customers to cheaper channels be noted;
- (2) the challenge of migrating certain groups of customers to cheaper channels be noted.

464. Minerva Project Update

Members received a report from the Corporate Director of Resources which set out progress to date on a new Council project, Project Minerva, which was forward planning for savings in a number of Council departments post 2015. The Project was also considering future plans in relation to the Council's IT and Business Transformation Partnership services currently managed under a partnership agreement with Capita.

The Chair drew Members attention to the tabled documents which included appendix to the report of the Corporate Director. The Corporate Director

advised that the appendix focused on the analysis of the recommendations and that it had been necessary to table the document as the information had not been ready to be made available in the public domain at the time the agenda was printed and circulated.

Members, in noting that the appendix contained some Part II exempt information, agreed that they would agree a motion to exclude the press and public, and subsequently to re-admit them as the need arose during their discussion.

The Corporate Director outlined the content of his report and went through the details of appendix 1. He reported that all of the private sector providers consulted had indicated that they would fundamentally change the way services were delivered. For example, those consulted had indicated that it would be cheaper to provide services from other areas in the country and that savings would be delivered by the wage differential. In addition, none of the Councils running shared services used SAP but instead used Agresso.

The Corporate Director drew Members attention to pages 8 and 9 of the tabled documents which detailed the proposed recommendations to Cabinet in January 2014. The conclusion of officers was that, in terms of the contract with Capita, the opportunity should be taken to go back to the market at the contract break. The market had indicated that there would need to be a six month hand over period should the procurement lead to a change of supplier. There would also need to be a consideration in terms of timing around the election process.

Members then made comments and asked questions as follows:

- A Member expressed the view that it was important to get the processes right and surprise at the readiness of some Councils to engage in shared services. He stated that it was important to keep options open. The Corporate Director advised that the figures quoted in Appendix 1 were net of profit margin and that the cost to the client side would require consideration. Further savings may be derived from scale as a result of a shared service.
- In terms of a shared arrangement it was questioned how much political control Councillors would have in a shared arrangement and whether there was a political will to lose some of that influence. The Corporate Director advised that Members would need to satisfy themselves in this regard before a shared service was progressed.
- A Member expressed the view that the Council should perhaps confine itself to considering sharing services with London Boroughs rather than further afield in order to be comparable.
- In terms of outsourcing, concern was expressed at the regeneration effect and local economic impact. The Corporate Director advised that 56% of those staff that could potentially be affected lived in the borough.

The Chair thanked the Corporate Director and other officer for their attendance and responses. He requested that a further report be submitted to the Committee prior to the election. The Corporate Director advised that subject to the decision of Cabinet in January 2014, there would be progress with the OJEU notice but that it would be helpful to report to a future meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the progress on Project Minerva to date be noted;
- (2) a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee; and
- (3) the Committee's comments be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration.

465. Report of the Customer Care Scrutiny Review

Members received a report of the Divisional Director of Strategic Commissioning which presented the findings of the Customer Care Scrutiny Review Group.

The Chair thanked all those who had participated in the review and, in particular, the Member who had chaired the review group until September 2013. He advised that the starting point for the review had been whilst customer care was improving, there had still been areas of concern. He outlined the project and advised that of the 46 recommendations, only one – recommendation 38 – required a specific Cabinet decision. This recommendation proposed a review of the Council's Complaints process.

RESOLVED: That the recommendations in the report of the Customer Care Scrutiny Review be agreed and referred to Cabinet for consideration.

466. Report from Lead Members

Members agreed to consider the report of the Divisional Director of Strategic Commissioning which accompanied the reports from Scrutiny Lead Members as a matter of urgency for the reasons set out on the supplemental agenda.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the actions proposed be agreed.

467. Scrutiny Work Programme Update

Members received a report of the Divisional Director of Strategic Commissioning which provided an update on the projects currently underway as part of the scrutiny work programme.

The officer reported that the Scrutiny Leadership Group had requested that a review group be established to consider the deletion of the post of Chief Executive and that the scope for the review was attached to the Divisional Director's report. Due to the dates of Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2014, it was proposed that the draft report of the

scrutiny review group be provided to the Leader of the Council, in confidence, once comments from all Members of the review group had been received and incorporated. This would enable the report of the review group to be considered by the Leader and influence the decision making process prior to the decision of Cabinet in January 2014.

Members discussed the process for submission of the review group recommendations to Cabinet and the need for a Special meeting of the Committee in order to approve the review group's report. The officer advised that there was also a need for a report on Health Checks to be considered by the Committee, possibly at a special meeting to be scheduled at the rising of the special meeting on 23 January 2014 or at the a special meeting convened to consider the review group report on the deletion of the post of Chief Executive.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the progress on individual projects be noted;
- (2) the decision to consider the deletion of the post of Chief Executive be noted;
- (3) proposals to close down all projects early in the new year be agreed;
- (4) the identified projects be referred to the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee for inclusion in the Committee's work programme;
- (5) a special meeting be convened in the week commencing 6 January 2014 in order to consider the review group report on the deletion of the post of Chief Executive and possibly the report on health checks.

468. Appointment of Scrutiny Lead Member

RESOLVED: That Councillor Varsha Parmar be appointed as Policy Scrutiny Lead for Corporate Resources in place of Councillor Jerry Miles.

469. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED: That in accordance with Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) for the reasons set out below:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Reason</u>
15.	Minerva Project Update	Information under paragraph 3 (contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

470. Project Minerva Update

RESOLVED: That the appendix be noted.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.32 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR JERRY MILES
Chairman