

PERFORMANCE AND FINANCE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

6 NOVEMBER 2013

Chair: * Councillor Sue Anderson

Councillors: * Graham Henson * Chris Mote
* Zarina Khalid (1) * Anthony Seymour

* Denotes Member present
(1) Denotes category of Reserve Member

150. Attendance by Reserve Members

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

Ordinary Member

Reserve Member

Councillor Mano Dharmarajah

Councillor Zarina Khalid

151. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

Agenda Item 10 – Corporate Equalities Objectives

Councillor Sue Anderson declared a non-pecuniary interest in that her son was a NEET (not in Employment or Education or Training) and was in receipt of Adult Social Care from Harrow and of care from Mental Health Services at the Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust. She would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Agenda Item 8 - Procurement Strategy Update; Agenda Item 9 - Business Continuity Update; Agenda Item 13 – ICT Service

Councillor Graham Henson declared a non-pecuniary interest in that he had been the relevant Portfolio Holder when the above projects had been initiated and agreed. He would remain in the room whilst the matters were considered and voted upon.

152. Appointment of Vice-Chairman

RESOLVED: That Councillor Anthony Seymour be appointed the Vice-Chairman of the Sub-Committee for the 2013/14 Municipal Year.

153. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2013 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

154. Public Questions & Petitions

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were put, or petitions received.

155. References from Council and Other Committees/Panels

RESOLVED: To note that no References were received.

RESOLVED ITEMS

156. Procurement strategy update

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Corporate Director of Resources, which set out a position statement following the first 6 weeks of implementation of the revised Commercial, Contracts and Procurement Division structure and the programme of work to the end of the current financial year.

The Divisional Director, Commercial, Contracts & Procurement advised that:

- the Service had been operating with a number of interim members of staff for a number of years and that a revised structure and programme of work had been implemented and work was underway to fill all posts with permanent full-time staff as quickly as possible. It was intended that the new structure would be in place by January 2014;
- a £500k procurement savings target, to be achieved by March 2014 had been identified;
- a number of savings, efficiencies and income generation measures were being investigated and implemented as appropriate and included the following:

- establishing a trading organisation for the Council;
- greater exploitation of assets;
- improvement and rationalisation of systems, tools and processes related to the procurement function;
- re-writing of the Contract Procurement Rules;
- a category management approach to all third party spend;
- development of a commercial strategy;
- implementation of a Tollgate system for large value contracts, which would have a pre-analysis process and ensure good governance and early engagement with Directorates;
- improved use of the existing contracts register as an effective planning tool;
- better contract management to ensure that consistent standards and identified benefits were realised.

A Member stated that the Procurement Strategy Board had been set up to ensure contracts were value for money and asked how the Council's agenda for ethical procurement and its equality objectives would feed into this. The Divisional Director advised that Harrow had a good record in this area and officers had a good awareness of issues related to sustainability, equalities, using local businesses and providers and this culture was well embedded across the Council. He added that contracts should be awarded to SMEs in an open and transparent manner and contract yields should look at benefits in the round. There was some flexibility in the Council's current procurement rules as dispensations were permitted. It was important that officers worked closely with Finance officers to evaluate the overall benefit of a contract to both the Council and the Community.

A Member asked what the current position on the £500k procurement savings target was. The Divisional Director advised that he was not able to confirm this at the moment. He was seeking clarity regarding cashable and non-cashable savings and was working closely with the Finance Business Partners to identify what savings had been achieved to date. He undertook to provide a further report to the Sub-Committee regarding the position on the savings target.

A Member asked to know the process for renewing and/or re-tendering contracts. The Divisional Director advised that the central contracts register would enable pre-planning and would flag up contracts that were due to expire. It was important that officers began reviewing a contract at least 18 months before expiry. This would allow them to evaluate the current contract, the market, other possible suppliers, and look at what other authorities were doing under similar circumstances.

The Member asked about the format of the contracts register and whether Directorates had been made aware of the pre-planning measures detailed above. The Divisional Director stated that the contracts register was maintained as an excel spreadsheet. He added that a robust structure was being developed to flag up those contracts which were due to expire and that this process would be cascaded to Directorates.

A Member asked whether the school expansion programme which was due to be completed by September 2015 was a realisable target. The Divisional Director advised that there was a single company framework agreement in place with Keepmoat Apollo, the Council's building contractors, which would end in April 2014 but that orders for the schools works could be ordered off the framework up to that time. The Council was considering other potential providers for the Teachers' Centre project and would continue to monitor Keepmoat Apollo's performance throughout the term of the programme. He added that, in his view, the timescales for completion of the School Expansion Programme were extremely tight but achievable.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

157. Business Continuity Update

RESOLVED: That Agenda item 9, 'Business Continuity Update' be deferred and a revised report entitled 'Business Continuity and IT Disaster Recovery', be submitted at the next meeting of the Sub-Committee on 21 January 2014. This was because the report submitted did not encompass all of the issues that had been previously requested by Members.

158. Corporate Equalities Objectives - Annual Progress Report

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Divisional Director of Strategic Commissioning which provided an update on progress against the Council's Equality Objectives which had been adopted by Cabinet in April 2012 and progress against the Excellent Level of the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG).

An officer stated that the Equality Act 2010 introduced a range of rights, powers and obligations and imposed a new Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) on public authorities in the exercise of their functions. The Council's performance in this area was evaluated through a series of existing performance scorecards and this data was set out in detail in the appendices to the report. Updated versions of this report would be submitted annually to the Sub-Committee.

A Member asked how equalities objectives were aligned with the budget-setting process. The Divisional Director of Strategic Commissioning advised that provided a strong evidence-base. He added that the overall effectiveness of carrying out an EqIA on the budget-setting process would need to be reviewed and incorporated appropriately.

The Member queried the fact that the percentage of adults in contact with secondary mental health services, living independently with our without

support had increased but was not within targets set and had been RAG rated as Red. He added that this issue had been flagged up as a priority at the February budget-setting meeting. An officer advised that although this objective was rated Red, Harrow compared well with neighbouring authorities and other authorities in London. Mental health services in Harrow were provided by Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust. A robust monitoring process was in place and the Council would continue to monitor and improve performance in this area. She added that there were no issues related to Mental Health currently identified in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and no areas of growth had been identified. She undertook to circulate more detailed information regarding this to Members of the Sub-Committee.

The Member asked why data from the SAP system had been used to compile data regarding the increase in the proportion of disabled employees working at the Council. He added that recent staff surveys had flagged up a higher proportion of disabled staff than identified by the SAP system. The Divisional Director advised that the staff survey did not have a hundred percent completion rate, whereas the SAP system accurately reflected all staff. In his view, it was important staff should feel comfortable about revealing their disability status, which was the reason for using SAP data.

Referring to the X16 Work experience and job readiness programme, which was aimed at 16-25 year-old clients who were not in employment or education or training (NEETs), and in receipt of services from Harrow Children and Families Service, the Chair asked why those aged over 18 years of age would be in receipt of services from the Children and Families Service. An officer advised that young people identified as having a learning disability or those leaving the care system were entitled to receive services from Children and Families up to the age of 25. He added that there were also a number of other agencies supporting these young people to ensure their readiness for work and offer additional support and guidance.

The Chair asked whether the increase in the percentage of people with 'learning difficulties' living in their own homes or with families, should read people with 'learning disabilities'. An officer advised that the sentence should read 'learning disabilities' and referred to those individuals who were receiving a service from the Council.

The Chair queried the target that more children and young people with disabilities would be participating in sport through the provision of training and support to 100% of PE teachers. An officer advised that there was a dedicated post in the School Support Service in relation to PE, which provided support to schools. He added that a report compiled by the Director of Public Health was due to be submitted to the Health and Wellbeing board on the subject of obesity in young people and the promotion of healthy living among the young.

The Chair asked for clarification regarding the increase in the number of workless residents who were supported to access employment and training programmes generated through planning gain. She added that the commentary relating to this target which stated that the number of clients was

not an accurate measure of trends because the client group changed with the funding stream, was not clear. An officer undertook to provide clarification to Sub-Committee members regarding this commentary.

A Member asked whether there were plans to introduce more green gyms in the borough. An officer stated that these were popular and well-used, however, he was not aware of any additional funding available for more of these to be built.

A Member asked whether the target of having 2000 Neighbourhood Champions was achievable. An officer advised that there had been discussions about revising this target and it was intended that local groups such as Harrow Association of Disabled People and Harrow Senior Residents Association would be contacted regarding the initiative.

A Member asked why the Corporate Equalities Objectives had changed since 2012. An officer advised that the overarching objectives, which had been defined by the PSED for a period of four years had remained the same, however, the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for 2013/14 were new. The Member stated that the data provided in the appendices to the report would be easier to follow if they were combined into a single table which set out the targets, KPIs and results. The officer undertook to ensure that future reports followed this format.

The Chair requested more information about the Community Engagement team. An officer advised that the recruitment and selection process for posts within the team was ongoing and he expected the team to be in place by mid-December 2013. The Chair asked about the Council's Community Cohesion Strategy. An officer stated that a lead officer for this area had been identified and undertook to circulate the Strategy to Members of the Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

159. Exclusion of the 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 for the reason set out below:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Reason</u>
13.	ICT Service	Information under paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

160. ICT Service

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Director of Customer Services and Business Transformation which set out the current position with regard to the IT service, which had been outsourced to Capita in November 2010.

A Member asked about the ITO Transformation Programme. An officer advised that the programme included things such as rolling out the Citrix platform which would enable the use of thin client devices, faster logging in, increased data security and the roll out the of the Mobile and Flexible Working programme.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.52 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR SUE ANDERSON
Chair