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Meeting	Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee
Date	4 September 2017
Present	Councillors Williams (Chair), Galvin (Vice-Chair), D'Agorne, Fenton, Reid, S Barnes, Flinders and Brooks (Substitute)
Apologies	Councillor Gates

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## **17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, any prejudicial interests or any disclosable pecuniary interests which they might have in respect of business on the agenda. None were declared.

## **18. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

It was reported that there had been two registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Andy Mendus, Independent Member of the Audit & Governance Committee spoke on Item 7 – Section 106 agreements. He commented on the central register of S106 agreements and issues there had been with this accessibility of this document. He also noted that there was a problem with missing entries on Open Data. Finally he suggested that an Obligation Enforcement Table should be publicly available online.

Gwen Swinburn spoke on the Draft ICT strategy and the problems there had been with accessing the previous strategy. She also raised the issue of proper consultation on the draft budget, following the very short time period given to review the previous budget. She urged the Council to follow Supreme Court and Cabinet Officer guidance on consultation principles. Finally, she highlighted concerns around the refusal of FOI staff to carry out internal reviews.

## **19. SCHEDULE OF PETITIONS**

Members considered a report which provided them with details of new petitions received to date, together with those considered by the Executive or relevant Executive Member/Officer since the last report to the Committee.

Resolved: That the petitions at Annex A be noted.

Reason: To ensure the Committee carries out its requirements in relation to petitions.

## **20. 2017/18 FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MONITOR 1**

Members considered a report providing a high level analysis of the services falling under the responsibility of the Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee, which includes all corporate, strategic and business services. The Corporate Finance & Commercial Procurement Manager and Group Manager – Shared Intelligence Bureau were in attendance to present the report and answer Member questions.

In response to Member questions Officers stated:

- In some areas saving were deliberately made from vacancies being held open, however they were not all planned shortfalls – for example in Democratic Services.
- The Budget Consultation period being put together was 12 weeks and feedback would be used to inform decision making, however this consultation may not be on a 'Draft Budget'.
- The move from 2 yearly budgets was thought to be a political decision.

It was agreed a briefing note would be circulated to the Committee reporting figures on responses to the previous consultation.

Resolved: That Members note the report.

Reason: To update the Committee on the forecast position for 2017/18.

## 21. DRAFT ICT STRATEGY

Members considered a report outlining the process undertaken to develop the new proposed ICT Strategy as a platform for the council's ICT provision moving forward. The Head of ICT and Digital Manager were in attendance to present the report and answer Member questions.

Officers gave a brief background to the report and stated that previous feedback had shown that residents wanted a digital strategy which is what led to the creation of a website.

In response to Member questions Officers stated:

- This strategy was the 'guiding principles' for the department to use as building blocks for future work. There was a feeling that the previous strategy sat too far apart from the work being done and the department wanted to ensure this didn't happen with the new strategy.
- There was a qualified Change Manager who now sat within the department and would undertake detailed engagement with all Directorates.

During discussion Members raised the issue that the language used within the document was wrong, that it was incredibly jargon heavy and that there was a lack of detail in the strategy as a whole. They felt that this needed to be addressed by the department moving forward.

Resolved: That Members;

- a. commented upon the draft strategy and endorsed it for onward approval
- b. note that an Update Report on Consultation on the Draft ICT Policy is on the work plan for the committee's January meeting.

Reason: To ensure that scrutiny members have the opportunity to be consulted on a key strategy that will influence the future delivery of frontline services.

## **22. OVERVIEW REPORT ON FINANCIAL INCLUSION**

Members considered a paper providing an update on the activities and initiatives undertaken by the Council to promote financial inclusion across the city. The Assistant Director – Customer Services & Digital and Head of Customer, Resident & Exchequer Services were in attendance to present the report and answer Member questions.

In response to Member questions Officers stated:

- With regard to Universal Credit payments it could take some time for the impact to become apparent as it may take time for recipients to start to struggle financially. In Harrogate it had taken around 6 months for issues to arrive following roll out.
- Library staff had been fully trained to provide assisted digital support.
- In relation to the Citizens Advice York service they had made the decision to cut sessions, funding had not been cut.
- When vouchers were provided to residents this was usually in the form of food vouchers or vouchers for the York Furniture Store for specific items.

Resolved: That Members note the work on promoting financial inclusion in the City and the preparations in place for the further roll out of Universal Credit.

Reason: So Members are aware of the activities and initiatives undertaken by the council to promote financial inclusion.

## **23. SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS**

Members received a report providing information on Section 106 agreements and how they are administered and controlled. The Assistant Director – Planning & Public Protection and Head of Development Services and Regeneration were in attendance to present the report and answer Member questions.

In response to Member questions Officers stated:

- It required dedicated resource to provide a table for each S106 agreement. This was a worthwhile process though as it helped Parish Councils have sight of trigger points for payments.
- S106 agreements were legal agreements and the Leisure Team would seek assurances that these payments are spent on their intended purpose. This was important as monies were supposed to mitigate the impact of development.
- There was an awareness that finding things was an issue, given the amount of data involved, and that this needed to be addressed.
- There was no guarantee that a scheme would be implemented just because it had been approved.

During discussion Members stressed the importance of being able to see how these agreements were progressing easily and clearly, as Members wanted to ensure that monies were being spent in the right way.

Resolved: That Members;

- I. Note the information received in this report, including the follow up of the agreed actions from the 2016/16 audit of Section 106 agreements.
- II. Request 6 monthly update reports.

Reason: To ensure that Members are aware of the administration of S106 agreements.

## **24. ATTENDANCE AND WELLBEING PROJECT**

Members considered a report providing information on work being undertaken to address the management of sickness absence in the Council and to brief Members on the current and planned work being undertaken by Human Resources with a focus on attendance management and employee wellbeing. The HR Business Manager was in attendance to present the report and answer Member questions.

In response to Member questions Officers stated:

- CYC was not performing in line with other Local Authorities in terms of sickness absence. Some of this was related to the way information was recorded but there were particular hotspots such as Adult Social Care where absence figures were particularly high.
- Some managers did struggle with dealing with this issue and this needed to be addressed through training to improve manager confidence.
- Tackling issues like his one needed a strong evidence base and information was not always easily accessible to managers. Having a function on iTrent where this data was available in real time would improve this considerably.
- Back to Work interviews should always take place after a sickness absence. Again the improvements in iTrent would mean that everyone would have visibility if this had not been done. The information from these interviews would regularly be discussed at team meetings, albeit some information would remain medical in confidence.

During discussion Members highlighted that this was an ongoing issue which had not improved over a significant time period. Stress related sickness was of particular concern and for this reason they requested that update reports come to Committee on a quarterly basis.

Resolved: That Members;

- I. Note the report.
- II. Request that this committee receive future updates on a 3 monthly basis.

Reason:

- I. To understand the key issues and response to the recommendations to secure improvements in control arrangements around sickness absence.
- II. To review the progress and impact of the project and the impact on attendance and wellbeing across the Council.

## **25. WORK PLAN 2017/18**

Members gave consideration to the Committee's draft work plan for the municipal year.

During discussion Members requested the following additional reports:

November – Draft Final Report of the Elections Scrutiny Review Task Group

January – Update report on Attendance and Wellbeing Project

March – Update report on Section 106 Agreements

It was also agreed that, as the Committee were already receiving regular update reports on the CRM system and 'my account', there was no reason to reconvene the e-Democracy Task group.

Resolved: That the committee's work plan for 2017/18 be approved, subject to the above additions.

Reason: To ensure that the committee has a planned programme of work in place.

Councillor D Williams, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.10 pm].