

STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2013 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Fleming (Chairman)

Cllr. Dickins (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs. Abraham, Mrs. George, Mrs. Parkin, Piper, Mrs. Purves and Miss. Thornton

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Neal and Miss. Stack

Cllrs. Mrs. Davison, Eyre, Fittock and Mrs. Sargeant were also present.

1. Appointment of Chairman

Resolved: That Cllr. Fleming be appointed Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

2. Appointment of Vice Chairman

Resolved: That Cllr Dickins be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

4. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Chairman, who was also Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Performance, reported that he had produced a more detailed work plan which could be considered later in the meeting.

5. Referrals from Cabinet or the Audit Committee (if any)

There were no referrals from the Cabinet or Audit Committee.

6. Scope of Officer Responsibilities

The Head of Information and Customer Services, the Human Resources Manager, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Policy and Performance Manager gave a presentation to the meeting regarding their areas of responsibility falling within the remit of the Committee. They also explained which matters they considered would be key upcoming issues.

In response to a question surrounding budget assumption for the number of staff, the Chief Executive Designate confirmed that the assumption was that there would be no

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changes to the level of staffing. The Human Resources Manager also confirmed that a minimum of three months had to pass before a vacancy could be filled.

A Member also queried whether there was a charging schedule for Freedom of Information requests. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services confirmed that a charging schedule was in place but this was limited as the Council had a legal duty to provide information when it was requested.

7. 2013/2014 Performance Indicators and Target Setting

The Committee considered a report setting out performance indicators and targets for 2013-2014. Each year the Council undertakes a thorough review of the performance indicators it adopts and the performance targets it sets to continue to support the improvement of services and to enable the Council to deliver on its vision and promises to the Community. The report recommended that data was collected against 52 local performance indicators. For each performance indicator there was also a performance target for 2013/14.

The Chairman moved that LPI IT 001 – Percentage of IT Service Desk Calls resolved within the agreed time, and LPI FM 001 – Percentage of Facilities Management Service Desk calls resolved in agreed time, be removed from the indicators reviewed by Members as they related more to management activity. Officers provided assurance that the data would still be collected and available to any Member who requested it.

Members considered each of the performance indicators in turn. In response to a question surrounding the increase in domestic burglaries, the Chief Executive reported that domestic burglaries across Kent were reducing but this was not the case in Sevenoaks, as a result of this, Kent Police would be reviewing levels of policing across the County and Sevenoaks should benefit from an increase in the number of police in the District.

Concerns were also expressed surrounding the performance indicators for Building Control (LPI BC 001 and LPI BC 002) and Officers undertook to review these targets.

Referring to LPI EH 008 – Percentage of food establishments in the area which are broadly compliant with food hygiene law, a Member expressed concern that a target of 85% was too low. The Chairman responded that this indicator did not relate to dangerous food but referred more to administrative deficiencies such as incomplete paperwork. The Chairman gave assurances that if a premises was considered to be dangerous it would be closed down. Officers were asked to clarify the narrative around this indicator.

In response to a question regarding targets relating to shared services and whether the targets were the same in both organisations, the Chief Executive Designate reported that the Council's ambition was to always get the targets the same but that in some instances the targets set at Sevenoaks District Council were higher than those set at Dartford Borough Council.

Referring to indicator LPI HR 001 – the average number of working days lost to sickness absence per FTE, a member suggested that it may be helpful to split this into long-term sickness and short-term sickness as long-term sickness had a disproportionate effect on

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the statistics. Another Member expressed some concerns surrounding this as there were only a small number of staff on long-term sick leave and it was important that staff could not be identifiable from any published data. It was agreed that this information would be provided to any Members who asked to see this information.

A Member noted that a number of the 'targets' that had been listed were not in fact targets but were more assumptions. It was suggested that the language used in the report should be reconsidered to enable distinctions between targets and assumptions to be made.

During a discussion surrounding the performance indicators for the Planning Service, the Policy and Performance Manager reported that the performance measures used by the Government were under review and may be changing shortly.

A Member suggested that the target for determining individual residential planning applications should be 99% to ensure that local residents were receiving the best possible service. Officers agreed that they would review this target. Before drawing the discussion to a close, the Chairman suggested that target setting should be undertaken by the Strategy and Performance Advisory Committee but that the Cabinet should retain responsibility for in-year monitoring performance against the targets, the Committee agreed this approach.

Resolved: That the Strategy and Performance Advisory Committee consider performance indicators and target setting once a year and Cabinet retain responsibility for monitoring performance against targets during the year.

8. Work Plan

The Chairman tabled an updated copy of the work plan. The Committee would be considering an item on the LGA Peer Review in October 2013. The Peer Review focused on sector-led improvement and was part of the LGA Peer Challenge programme.

Other topics that had been added to the work plan included items on Customer Service Standards, Corporate Plan, Communication Plan, Business Transformation, Ombudsman's Annual Complaint Report, Members and Democratic Services, workforce and HR and Equality. The "Policy" items would enable the Committee to become more involved in policy development.

The Chairman also invited Members to spend some time in the Contact Centre to hear some of the calls that were received by the Council.

Members stressed that they would like to become involved in the development of policy at an early stage.

The Chairman stressed that the Work Plan was currently "draft" and could be amended if Members wished to consider items not already listed.

Resolved: That the updated work plan be noted.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.40 PM

CHAIRMAN