

**CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT,
EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Tuesday, 25th February, 2014 at 6.00 pm
in Committee Room 3 at the Council House, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Councillor Blood (Chair)

Councillors Boleyn, Caunt, Harley, Marrey, Mottram, Russell, Sykes and Wright.

Officers

Assistant Director, Policy and Improvement (Lead Officer to the Committee),
Principal Policy and Performance Management Officer (Chief Executive's
Directorate) and Mr J Jablonski (Directorate of Corporate Resources)

Also in attendance

For Minute 25 – Mr S Bennett – Customer Services Manager and Chair of
Customer Feedback Group and Mr M Smith and Mr A Paul – Departmental
Representatives on Customer Feedback Group

For Minute 26 – Assistant Director, HR and Organisational Development,
Assistant Director Environmental Management, Assistant Director Economic
Regeneration and Ms H Marsh-Geyton.

21 **APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor
A Ahmed.

22 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No member declared an interest in any matter to be considered at this meeting.

23 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20th
November, 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed.

24 **PUBLIC FORUM**

No matters were raised under this agenda item.

25 CUSTOMER FEEDBACK SCRUTINY REPORT

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted on a review of the arrangements for the operation of the corporate customer feedback arrangements, in particular the Complaints reporting procedures. Attached as Appendices 1-3 to the report were the Local Government Ombudsman Annual Letter, the Local Government Ombudsman record of complaints for Dudley MBC and 2012/13 Customer Feedback Performance report respectively.

A presentation was given on the content of the report submitted, copies of which were circulated at the meeting and would be made available on the Council's Committee Management Information System.

Sean Beckett, the Chair of the Customer Feedback Group presented the first part of the presentation whilst Michael Wooldridge, Principal Policy and Performance Management Officer, commented on the future performance reporting aspects of the presentation.

Arising from the presentation given the following principal comments were made:-

- That, arising from comments made it was noted that the question of delay in responding to complaints and issues raised at meetings of Community Forums would receive further consideration at a meeting to be held on 13th March, 2014 relating to a review of Community Forums and that this would lead into a report to be considered by the Council on the operation of Community Forums in due course. It was also considered that Members of Corporate Board also needed to be aware of the issues regarding complaints and other issues raised at Community Forums not being dealt with expeditiously.
- It was noted that complaints considered by the Chief Executive were now dealt with by Jan Jennings and members of her team.
- That a draft summary guide for Councillors on the Customer Feedback procedure – compliments, comments and complaints - had been drafted and would be forwarded to all members of the Council in due course.
- That in future information on performance would be reported half-yearly in the first and third quarter reports.
- That the future arrangements for performance reporting would enable learning points to be made so that if necessary changes to policies and procedure could be identified.

- It was noted that making it easier for customers to complain would lead to an increase in complaints however this was to be welcomed and could also be an opportunity to increase the number of compliments received.
- An assurance was given that arrangements were in place in all Directorates to support the future performance reporting arrangements.
- That the revised IT arrangements involving the M3 system would enable further details to be available as regards customer feedback and complaints making the system more cost effective than that previously in operation. The system would also enable learning to take place and so stop a repetition of similar failures occurring.
- That arising from consideration of the letter from the Local Government Ombudsman, attached as Appendix 1 to the report submitted, the Assistant Director, Policy and Improvement be requested to submit a report to a future meeting of the Committee on issues relating to the performance of the Local Government Ombudsman contained in the report entitled "Raising the Standards", their annual report and accounts for 2012/13, detailing in particular what they had done over the last twelve months to improve their own performance, referred to in the last paragraph of the letter.

RESOLVED

1. That the information contained in the report, Appendices to the report, submitted and as reported at the meeting, on the arrangements for the operation of the Corporate customer feedback arrangements, in particular the Complaints reporting procedures, be received and noted including the future reporting of details on a half yearly basis in the first and third quarter reports.
2. That the Assistant Director, Policy and Improvement be requested to report to a future meeting of the Committee on issues relating to the performance of the Local Government Ombudsman in dealing with complaints.

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted on the third Quarterly Corporate Performance Management Report for 2013/14 relating to performance for the period 1st October to 31st December, 2013.

Arising from an overview of the content of the report by the Lead Officer, Members asked questions to which responses were given. Particular points raised were as follows:-

- It was noted that the Credit Union no longer had an office in Stourbridge Library due to a lack of people using the facility and that in future people wishing to join the Credit Union would be able to do so via a new website thereby enhancing access to membership of the Credit Union.
- In relation to Objective 3 (Ref 2.3d – Development of a new Tourist Strategy and Action Plan for the Borough) - Members were critical of the lack of progress on this matter and considered that Council projects were not being driven by the Council. Particular reference was made to the need for an effective website to market the attractions of the Borough with links to other facilities and services. Mention was also made of other advertising arrangements that had been suggested in the past, for example, advertising at Birmingham Airport and scrolling adverts at the entrances to the Borough none of which had occurred.

It was suggested that a stand alone website on the lines developed by other areas, for example, visit Dudley.com was needed which could be developed quickly at a reasonable cost especially in view of Black Country Festival to be held in July.

It was considered that action therefore needed to be taken now to ensure a website was up and running for July.

Mention was also made of partners with whom the Council could work to progress the project.

During consideration of this matter Councillor Boleyn declared a non-pecuniary interest in view of her employment by Trustees of British Glass Foundation.

In response to points made the Assistant Director, Regeneration reported that rather than develop a separate strategy for the Borough work was progressing on a prospectus document highlighting attractions and seeking to develop and promote tourism in the Borough including open spaces, the canal network and the geology of the Borough.

Major investment projects for example at Castle Hill, in the Town Centre and at the Glass Museum were also cited.

A website was also being looked at and the Assistant Director would inform Councillor Harley where it was located, although it was not known whether it was a separate site to the main Council website.

Regarding apparent delays in completing projects the Assistant Director referred to funding issues and the need to comply with the requirements of other Agencies so that matters were not always totally within the Council's control.

The Assistant Director was however made aware of Members concerns regarding Tourism, the need to better promote the attractions of the Borough and the need for developments to take place as soon as possible in view of the forthcoming Black Country Festival in July.

- Arising from comments made in relation to various performance indicators in respect of household and municipal waste the Assistant Director, Environmental Management undertook to provide Councillor Caunt with the following information:-
 - (1) Figures in relation to monthly rubbish collection tonnage
 - (2) Monthly recycling tonnage figures; and
 - (3) Figures relating to the total cost of landfill.
- Arising from comments made the Assistant Director, Environmental Management undertook to investigate and report back to Councillor Marrey regarding the position in respect of advertising on BT cabinets.
- In response to a query from a Member regarding the status of Objective 2 – Ref 4.2a the Assistant Director, Policy and Improvement undertook to query the position with the Lead Officer indicated.
- Arising from a query by a Member as to the wording set out under key activities of Objective 1 – Ref 4.1b in respect of personalisation the Assistant Director, Policy and Improvement undertook to speak to the Officers concerned regarding the wording used and ensure that this was updated for the next Quarterly Performance Report.
- Arising from a query by a Member in respect of PI675 and PI67 in particular the downward trend in relation to these indicators the Assistant Director, Policy and Improvement would speak with the Officers concerned so that further information might be included on these matters in the next Quarterly Performance Report.
- Regarding Objective 7 – Ref 5.7a the Assistant Director, Policy and Improvement undertook to investigate when the DACHS Fuel Poverty Strategy had been ratified by the Council and inform Councillor Sykes accordingly.

- Arising from consideration of PI258 – number of lost time accidents at work it was reported that all such accidents, and near misses, were reported to the Health and Safety Executive and the Assistant Director, Environmental Management undertook to supply the figures relating to all accidents reported to the Health and Safety Executive to Councillor Caunt.
- In relation to PI418 – Local Authority working days/shifts lost per FTE due to sickness absence – comments were made that this indicator should be split between short term and long term sickness absence so that Members could more effectively comment on possible trends and issues in relation to short term sickness absence.

The Assistant Director, HR and Organisational Development, reported that the split figures were available and would be e-mailed to Members of the Committee.

Councillor Caunt was pleased to see short term absence heading in the right direction.

The split figures would also be included in future Quarterly Management Reports.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the Quarterly Performance Management Report in respect of performance for the period 1st October to 31st December, 2013, be noted together with the comments made at this meeting and that the Officers indicated undertake the actions referred to above.

The meeting ended at 7.55 pm

CHAIR