

**Minutes of the Corporate Performance Management, Efficiency and Effectiveness Scrutiny Committee**

**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> June, 2014 at 6.00 pm**  
**In Committee Room 2, The Council House, Dudley**

**Present:-**

Councillor D Blood (Chair)  
Councillor B Cotterill (Vice-Chair)  
Councillors C Baugh, D Caunt, A Finch, S Henley, I Marrey, M Mottram,  
D Russell and M Wood.

**Officers:-**

S Byatt (Apprentice), H Ellis (Divisional Lead - Intergrated Youth Support), K Jackson (Consultant – Public Health), J Jennings (Head of Communications and Public Affairs), M Johal (Democratic Services Officer), I McGuff (Assistant Director, Quality and Partnership), I Newman (Treasurer), G Thomas (Assistant Director, Policy and Improvement (Lead Officer to the Committee)) M Williams (Assistant Director - Environmental Management), M Wooldrige (Principal Policy and Performance Management Officer)

1      **Apology for Absence**

An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor P Harley.

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2      **Appointment of Substitute Member**

It was reported that Councillor D Vickers had been appointed as a substitute member for Councillor P Harley for this meeting only.

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3      **Declarations of Interest**

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

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4      **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 25<sup>th</sup> February, 2014, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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## **Update on Apprenticeships**

The Committee received a presentation updating Members on the Council's apprenticeship programme.

The Head of Communications and Public Affairs, Divisional Lead - Intergrated Youth Support and Miss Byatt (Apprentice) were in attendance for this item and points made during the course of the presentation included the following:-

- The Council's priority was to develop internal apprenticeships across the Council to help school leavers in attaining a job and the opportunity to learn
- The Council hoped to be regarded as an authority that provided high quality and rewarding apprenticeships for the young people; to show leadership in 'growing our own talent' and that apprentices develop 'work ready' skills that will benefit the whole of the Borough and economy as a whole
- Advantages of the scheme were that it supported young people to be trained with a recognised employer, improved chances of young people getting a job and staying local, enriched the organisation, helped close the Council's skills gap in a positive way using work force planning opportunities and that there were benefits for future local employment.
- The TORCh leadership programme had identified problems with the Council's apprentice scheme in that there was no clear vision for apprenticeships across the Council; the Council were unable to quantify participation, range of services, satisfaction and completion; there was a fragmented recruitment policy; there were inconsistent procedures for managers and there was not enough quality baseline data.
- Solutions to the problems that had been identified included clarification that management responsibility for Council apprenticeships lay within Corporate Human Resources; robust record keeping in relation to the recording and tracking of the number of apprentices; the development of a handbook for managers and a prospectus for apprentices and the agreement to a framework for management review and feedback data.
- Other developments included the implementation of a civic induction and a celebration event to mark the conclusion of the apprenticeship (scheduled on a six monthly basis); an updated protocol for looked after children; amended workforce planning document that includes the consideration of apprentices; opened discussions with Human Resources about including apprentices on the redeployment register and agreed recommendations for quarterly performance monitoring.

Following the presentation of the information Members raised the following queries and responses were given as indicated:-

- The number of apprentices that had been taken on by the Local Authority was queried – It was explained that currently there was insufficient data available to give a definitive answer. It was also pointed out that given the budgetary constraints and reduction in staff this also had an impact on offering jobs to apprentices.

A Member requested that when sufficient data was available a report be submitted to the Committee showing evidence that the Council were “growing our own talent” and closing the skills gap as highlighted in the presentation given.

- How many apprentices were currently on the Council’s scheme? – There were 92 apprentices within the Council and they were predominantly in administration. However, apprenticeships were now being spread into other areas such as greencare, housing and construction.

A Member commented that there was a gap in engineering and an apprenticeship scheme should be made available within this field.

- Reference was made to updating the protocol for “Looked after Children” and it was queried whether any consideration had been given to those with learning disabilities – People with learning disabilities were given the same opportunity and support as looked after children were, however, it was acknowledged that the numbers were low and that there was a need to work on publicity. It was stated that an analysis of the 92 apprentices within the Council could be undertaken with a view to ascertaining the number of those that had disabilities.
- The methods used for advertising the Council’s Apprenticeship Scheme – Attendance at recruitment fairs, on the Council’s Website and direct work with Colleges and Schools and it was reported that there was a dedicated Apprentice Task and Finish Group.

Miss Byatt briefly explained about the work undertaken by her as an apprentice and informed the Committee that she had been offered and had accepted a job elsewhere.

The Lead Officer to the Committee reported that consideration would be given to including information on the apprentice scheme in the regular quarterly corporate performance reports in the 2014/15 Municipal Year.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the Head of Communications and Public Affairs and her team for their hard work and wished Miss Byatt all the best in her future employment.

Resolved

That the oral presentation given on the Council's apprenticeship scheme, be noted.

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6 **Report back on the Tourism Website**

The Committee received a presentation updating Members on the Council's tourism website.

The Head of Communications and Public Affairs referred to concerns raised at a previous Committee meeting about the tourism website and in particular that there was no single site to access the relevant information. The Marketing and Communications section took on the responsibility of tourism in December 2013 and since then the tourism website "Discover Dudley" was being updated and refreshed in phases.

Head of Communications and Public Affairs displayed the website on screen and navigated the pages of the tourism website for Members' information and commented that the website was now an integral part of the Council's website.

In responding to queries from Members, Head of Communications and Public Affairs informed the Committee that following completion of the revamp work to Dudley Market there would be opportunities to holding events to attract tourism, that blogs for the website were instantaneous and that updating and managing of information on the website was undertaken by the individual businesses. A Member suggested that the inclusion of more pictures than text would make the site more attractive.

The Lead Officer to the Committee undertook to refer the matter relating to concerns raised about the state of Dudley Museum to relevant Officers and to update Members on any feedback.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Head of Communications and Public Affairs and her team for their hard work and on their achievements.

Resolved

That the oral report given on the Tourism Website be noted.

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7 **Annual Scrutiny Programme 2014/15**

A joint report of the Lead Officer and the Director of Corporate Resources was submitted on items proposed and suggested for inclusion in the Annual Scrutiny Programme for detailed considered by this Scrutiny Committee during 2014/15.

Resolved

- (1) That the issue on The Work and Priorities of the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner, as contained in the Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2014/15, and as referred to in paragraph 3 and Appendix 1 to the report submitted, be noted.
  - (2) That the suggested item, as referred to in paragraph 4 of the report submitted, relating to services provided by the Council that are shared between Directorates also be included as an item for detailed scrutiny and that outline discussions on the matter take place at the meeting of the Committee to be held in November 2014 with a view to substantive discussions taking place at the meeting in February 2015.
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### **Corporate Quarterly Performance Management Report**

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted on the fourth Quarterly Corporate Performance Management Report for 2013/14 relating to performance for the period 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2014.

Arising from an overview of the content of the report by the Principal Policy and Performance Management Officer, Members asked questions to which responses were given, as follows:-

- Clarification on the indicators given and whether there was a national benchmark that could be used for comparison purposes – Although there were a whole range of matrix indicators online there was no national benchmark and that the indicators given reflected the Council's own year on year performance.

The Lead Officer to the Committee referred to the former Best Value Performance Plan which had included information to allow comparisons to be made, however, since its removal the requirement to produce information on 146 performance indicators had also been removed, making ongoing comparisons much harder. Essentially, it was intended to attempt to incorporate wider benchmarking into the next performance review cycle, with the likelihood that end of year information would be available to review 2014/15 outcomes.

- In relation to Young People (performance indicator 434, average time (days) to match a child to an adoptive family) – Members expressed concerns relating to the length of time taken in the adoption process; there was no information or indicators to portray or measure quality; the target of 182 days was considered to be unachievable and it was considered that the target should reduce gradually from the actual target of 299.

The Assistant Director, Quality and Partnerships explained that the primary purpose of the team was to meet the needs of the child and to ensure adoption would not lead to a breakdown and would be of a permanent nature. Although the number of children to be adopted was a small group there were varying problems associated with particular adoptions, for example, this year there had been seven sibling groups which delayed the process as efforts were made to ensure that siblings were not split.

With regard to targets, the Assistant Director, Quality and Partnerships indicated that these were set by Central Government and should be aspired to and he explained that the target of 182 days was a metropolitan average figure.

- In relation to Health and Well-Being (performance indicator 67, number of eligible cohort offered an NHS Health Check) – Members expressed concerns relating to the targets as they were progressively failing each quarter; the budget that had been allocated was to conduct nine thousand checks but as the target had not been achieved it was queried whether the money had been spent elsewhere or whether savings had been made and as GP's were not meeting targets whether consideration could be given to exploring other sources such as family and children's centres to undertake health checks and diverting funding accordingly.

The Consultant for Public Health briefly explained how the Health Check programme worked, specifics relating to its delivery and also gave details relating to the eligibility criteria. She explained that the target relating to the eligible cohort was one fifth of the overall cohort of which 50% uptake had to be achieved from those invited. The reason for the targets being missed for the current year had been due to the numerous changes to primary care and in the main due to the changes to technological systems which involved a massive migration process which had greatly impacted upon providers in delivering health checks in a timely manner. The Public Health Team had undertaken some work to mitigate the problems such as working with the Information Technology supplier, ensuring that General Practitioners (GP's) did not delay the signing of the data sharing agreement and that staff were undertaking visits to move things forward as quickly as possible. However, although some recovery had been made the target had not been reached as there were other compounding reasons such as capacity issues within GP practices and Pharmacies.

With regard to the allocated budget for health checks the Consultant for Public Health stated that the money left over had been used for marketing purposes to raise public awareness, a point of care system had been purchased and additional providers had been taken on board to assist in conducting health checks. It was considered that if children's and family centres were in agreement and staff held an appropriate health care qualification there was no reason why they could not conduct health checks. However, GP's still had to be involved as checks were reliant and based on information held by GP's in their practices on their patients.

In response to a comment made by a Member in that Public Health were now part of the Local Authority and that Members should be given the opportunity to scrutinise their budget, the Treasurer stated that the intention was to align Public Health with the main budget process and it was expected that information on their budget would be included in reports for 2015/16. However, it was pointed out that public health money was ring fenced and there were limits on its use.

A Member suggested that wording should be included in letters sent out by GP's to inform patients that they had the option to go to an alternative provider and listing the alternative places available to them to where they could have their health check.

- In relation to comments regarding various performance indicators in respect of household and municipal waste, the Assistant Director – Environmental Management commented that wheelie bins had been introduced because of health and safety risks and employees were now obligated to carry out a “dynamic risk assessment” associated with the collection of bags; if bins were damaged the Council would, following an assessment, either repair or replace the bin; records were kept on those residents and households that did not recycle and appropriate letters would be sent out to encourage participation; there were problems with tenants in flats to recycle because of storage issues and discussions were taking place with a view to addressing the problems.

It was suggested that timings of the garden waste collection period be revisited to extend green waste collection in the winter months and to delay start up of collections to March or April as trees were shedding leaves later in the year.

Arising from a comment made the Assistant Director – Environmental Management stated that when the recycling programme was rolled out a comprehensive booklet had been sent out to inform residents on materials to be recycled, however he acknowledged the need to remind residents and undertook to send out follow up information.

The Committee thanked the Assistant Director – Environmental Management for the work undertaken and in particular the work undertaken regarding the litter pick in conjunction with the community.

- In relation to Section 5, Corporate Risks, performance indicator ORG0002 (the Council may be unable to set and/or manage its budget so as to meet its statutory obligations within the resources available), the Treasurer explained that there was a risk and detailed discussions had been held at the Audit and Standards Committee meeting in February of this year. The budget had been set in March which highlighted the need for savings of £34 million to be made over the next three years. Even with these savings, that budget showed a deficit rising to £23 million by 2017/18 and Local Authority reserves at the time were only sufficient to sustain this deficit until part way through 2016/17 and it was pointed out that further savings would need to be made.

Resolved

That the information contained in the Quarterly Performance Management Report in respect of performance for the period 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2014, 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 8.25 pm.

CHAIR