

Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE

Scrutiny Committee

HELD ON TUESDAY 24 JULY 2018 AT 6.30 PM

MEETING ROOM 1, 135 EASTERN AVENUE, MILTON PARK, MILTON, OX14 4SB

Present:

David Turner (Chairman)
Anthony Dearlove, Elaine Hornsby, David Nimmo-Smith, Ian Snowdon, John Walsh, Ian White and Sue Lawson (as substitute for Jeannette Matelot)

Apologies:

Will Hall and Jeannette Matelot tendered apologies.

Officers:

Ron Schrieber, Mark Stone, Sally Truman and David Wilde

Also present:

Councillors Jane Murphy and Bill Service. David Chong-Ping, Mel Research. Clare Dorey and Jo Leith, Capita

7 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2018 were agreed as an accurate record and were signed by the Chairman.

8 Declarations of interest

None.

9 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

None.



Listening Learning Leading

10 Public participation

None.

11 South Oxfordshire Residents' Survey 2018

The committee considered a report and presentation from MEL Research summarising the findings of the South Oxfordshire Residents' Survey 2018.

David Chong-Ping, MEL Research, introduced the report and presentation. Also present to answer questions were Jane Murphy, Leader of the council, Mark Stone, chief executive and Sally Truman, customer engagement manager.

The committee was informed that residents' attitudes towards the work of the council were generally positive and much better than national averages. However, there were a number of measures where satisfaction had decreased, including an increase in negative attitudes in terms of the council being too impersonal and remote. A larger proportion of residents, 38% felt that they could not influence decisions compared to 32% who thought they could.

It was noted that, although a large amount of information was accessible via the council website, the percentage of residents who felt informed about the services and benefits offered by the council had reduced slightly since the last survey. It was also noted that there was widespread public confusion about the responsibilities of different tiers of local government.

The chief executive reported that, in order to increase public awareness of council activities:

- consideration was being given to issuing a hard copy council newsletter to residents to keep them informed. The first edition would include a "responsibility grid" setting out the responsibilities of the council/county/other bodies.
- officers would investigate how customer feedback from telephone callers to customer services could be captured.
- the council website was being updated and would provide more detail regarding inquiries from the public.

Following further discussion, it was

RESOLVED: to

1. note the report and presentation; and
2. recommend the actions proposed to increase public awareness of council activities to Cabinet.

12 Capita performance: HR, payroll and IT

The committee considered the report of the head of partnership and insight and head of corporate services on the performance of the council's contractor, Capita, in the delivery of HR, payroll and IT services.

Councillor Bill Service, Cabinet member for partnership and insight, introduced the report. Also present to answer questions were Councillor Jane Murphy, Leader of the council, Mark Stone, chief executive, David Wilde, IT consultant, and Clare Dorey and Jo Leith, Capita.

The report detailed the milestone dates assigned to the key points in transforming each service from the model in operation at service commencement date to the new way of working agreed by the councils for each service and, where applicable, the key performance indicators (KPIs). As the new way of working (the target operating model) had not yet been achieved for the IT service, the performance indicators were not currently enforceable, so limiting the council's ability to influence performance improvements at this time.

However, the committee was advised that, although the provision of the HR and payroll service was still not meeting required performance standards, the service was improving. With regard to IT, officers believed that Capita was now more positively engaged in resolving the current problems and the council had a structured plan to move the service forward, which included engaging the support of a leading IT consultant.

In addition, the committee was informed that Capita were pulling together a high level options appraisal addressing areas of the contract identified as requiring change and had proposed a further committee meeting in six to eight weeks' time in order to present proposed changes.

In response to members' questions, the chief executive reported that there were no problems with some of the services contracted out to Capita and that the HR, payroll and IT services were improving.

The committee placed on record its thanks to the officers for all their work to resolve problems with the contract.

Following further discussion, it was

RESOLVED: to

1. note the report; and
2. support the officers' attempts to resolve outstanding issues with the HR, payroll and IT contracts.

13 Five councils' partnership contracts - finance update

The committee considered the report of the head of partnership and insight on the financial position of the Five Councils' Partnership contracts.

Mark Stone, chief executive, introduced the report. Also present to answer questions was Councillor Bill Service, Cabinet member for partnership and insight.

The committee was informed that the financial benefit originally expected from the contracts had been considerably reduced by events since the contacts went live. The chief

executive confirmed that he and his team now believed the Five Councils' contract would break even at best.

The chief executive also reported that the council's external auditors had confirmed that the methodology the council was now using to calculate the true cost of the contract reflected the costs fairly.

RESOLVED: to note the report.

14 Work schedule and dates for all South and Vale scrutiny meetings

The committee noted its work programme and agreed to move the date of its next meeting, scheduled for 11 September, to a date to be confirmed, in order for the Chief Executive and the Regional Director of Capita to attend.

It was agreed to add the air quality action plan to the work programme.

15 Exclusion of public

RESOLVED: to exclude members of the press and public from the meeting for the following items of business under Part 1 of Schedule 12A Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 on the grounds that:

- (i) it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and
- (ii) the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

16 Five councils' partnership contracts - finance update

The chief executive updated the committee on the council's share of the termination cost of the VINCI contract and on legal advice received.

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm

Chairman

Date