

RESOURCES SCRUTINY PANEL**18 March 2010****Attendance:**

Councillors:

Wright (Chairman) (P)

Anthony (P)
Gemmell (P)
Henry (P)
Higgins (P)
Huxstep (P)Jeffs (P)
Learney (P)
Mitchell (P)
Thompson (P)
Verney (P)**Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:**

Councillor Allgood (Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency)

Councillor Godfrey (Portfolio Holder for Performance and Organisational Development)

1. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Councillors Allgood and Godfrey declared personal and prejudicial interests due to their involvement as Cabinet Members in actions taken or proposed in Reports RE92 and RE93 below.

However, the Panel asked the Cabinet Members, as Portfolio Holders, to remain in the meeting, under the provisions of Sections 21(13)(a) of the Local Government Act 2000, in order that they could provide additional information to the Panel and/or answer questions.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 February 2010 be approved and adopted.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no comments made or statements received.

4. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT AND INTRODUCTION FROM THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR PERFORMANCE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Councillor Godfrey introduced the Business Plans for the Divisions within his Portfolio. He stated that the various significant areas of work and projects as detailed presented a considerable workload for the Divisions.

In view of the potential capacity issues that could arise to deliver the outcomes within the Business Plans, the Chairman asked the Portfolio Holder if Cabinet could consider prioritising the items within the Business Plans and report its conclusions to the next meeting of the Panel. In this way, consideration could be given to which items of business were worthwhile undertaking, as aligned to the Council's corporate priorities, and which might be delayed.

It was noted that, due to identified staffing issues within its Division, the Improvement, Performance and Scrutiny Team had already prioritised its Business Plan.

Following debate, the Panel supported this approach for the Divisions that were the subject of its scrutiny.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet be requested to prioritise the items within the Business Plans in line with Corporate Priorities and the Portfolio Holders for Performance and Organisational Development and Finance and Efficiency report Cabinet's conclusions to the next meeting of the Panel.

5. **IMPROVEMENT, PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY TEAM BUSINESS PLAN 2010/11 ONWARDS**
(Report RE92 refers)

In answer to questions from Panel members, the Improvement, Performance and Scrutiny Manager explained that work was commencing to identify milestones for the development of a Customer Insight database. It was also explained that the 2011/12 target for Members' awareness of the work of the Winchester District Strategic Partnership within the Members' Survey was incorrect and would be updated.

The Panel did not identify any particular issues to be included in future performance monitoring reports.

RESOLVED:

That the Panel raises no comment on the Improvement, Performance and Scrutiny Division Business Plan extract, attached as Appendices to Report RE92.

6. **CUSTOMER SERVICES DIVISION BUSINESS PLAN 2010/11 ONWARDS**
(Report RE92 refers)

The Head of Customer Service explained that national protocols would be observed to ensure that the introduction of a process to enable customers to report major life events would not be open to fraud.

In addition, it was commented that the encouragement of Customer Service and Office Support staff to undertake qualifications had been beneficial in reducing staff turnover.

A beneficial contract had also been negotiated with Experian through the collective negotiating benefits of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Improvement Board, for preparation of the Customer Insight project to develop baseline data. The contract was for three years, after which Census material would be available.

The Panel debated the challenging targets including that of five minutes waiting time for face to face customers in the Customer Service Centre and ninety five percent of calls sampled being rated as satisfactory or highly satisfactory by customers. To receive face to face contact with no waiting time would result in Customer Service staff being available with no customers to serve on occasion, which would be to the financial detriment of the Council. The Panel noted that it was also more expensive to reduce waiting times by allocating additional staff resources, and that the emphasis of the Customer Service experience was to provide quality advice fully answering customer enquiries at the first contact and so reduce subsequent customer contact.

The Head of Customer Service also explained how the severe winter weather in January had led to a surge in calls (which were sixteen percent higher than in the corresponding period in 2009). There had been an increase in the number of call abandoned, but the situation had been managed satisfactorily in view of the circumstances. The Panel agreed that it would be of benefit if future Reports contained details of the range that could be expected of calls abandoned with upper and lower limits.

The Panel did not identify any particular issues to be included in future performance monitoring reports.

RESOLVED:

That the Panel raises no comment on the Customer Services Division Business Plan extract, attached as Appendices to Report RE92, and that future reports contain details of the range that could be expected of calls abandoned with upper and lower limits.

7. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY DIVISION BUSINESS PLAN 2010/11 ONWARDS
(Report RE92 refers)

The Panel questioned the progress of the continued implementation of Thin Client. The Head of Information, Management and Technology explained that 40 new units had been obtained from the 2009/10 budget and this enabled 70 units to be deployed across the Council. After this, existing PCs would be converted to Thin Client use, but these would not deliver the associated energy saving. The converted units were not anticipated to increase the risk of breakdown.

The Panel requested that a Report on the introduction of an in-house IT services be brought to its next meeting.

The Head of Information, Management and Technology informed the meeting that the first savings had been received from the HPSN2 contract for mobile telephones, which had recently been changed from Orange to O2.

Following discussion, the Panel agreed the Business Plan as set out.

RESOLVED:

That the Panel raises no comment on the Information Management and Technology Business Plan extract, attached as Appendices to Report RE92, and that a Report on the introduction of an in-house IT services be brought to its next meeting.

8. **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES DIVISION BUSINESS PLAN 2010/11 ONWARDS**
(Report RE92 refers)

The Head of Democratic Services explained that as ninety eight percent of Electoral Registration canvass forms were already returned, a pragmatic view was taken in attempting to achieve a 100% return, in view of the extra resources that this would require. The Electoral Services Unit was however under direction to achieve the highest level of Registration that was reasonable to be achieved.

Following discussion, the Panel agreed the Business Plan as set out.

RESOLVED:

That the Panel raises no comment on the Democratic Services Business Plan extract, attached as Appendices to Report RE92.

9. **LEGAL SERVICES DIVISION BUSINESS PLAN 2010/11 ONWARDS**
(Report RE92 refers)

The Head of Legal Services stated that the satisfaction survey of the burial function would most probably be undertaken by Survey Monkey, the online survey tool.

The Division was closely monitoring the potential impact on workloads of the South Downs National Park, but it was anticipated that the implications would be marginal for Legal Services.

In respect of the percentage of enforcement notices issued within 15 working days of receipt of satisfactory instructions, the Head of Legal Services stated that performance had been improved following increased expertise and staff allocation within Legal Services, and also increased capacity and experience within the Enforcement Team to give improved instructions.

The Panel did not identify any particular issues to be included in future performance monitoring reports.

RESOLVED:

That the Panel raises no specific comment on the Legal Services Division Business Plan extract, attached as Appendices to Report RE92.

10. **ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION BUSINESS PLAN 2010/11 ONWARDS**
(Report RE92 refers)

The Panel agreed that Flexible Resource Management should be identified as a stand-alone risk and be separated from Workforce Planning.

The Panel did not identify any particular issues to be included in future performance monitoring reports.

RESOLVED:

That the Panel raises no comment on the Organisational Development Business Plan extract, attached as Appendices to Report RE92 and that Flexible Resource Management be identified as a standalone risk and be separated from Workforce Planning.

11. **REVENUES DIVISION BUSINESS PLAN 2010/11 ONWARDS**
(Report RE93 refers)

With the Chairman's consent, the Deputy Head of Revenues circulated at the meeting an updated table of Key Performance Indicators.

The Panel did not identify any particular issues to be included in future performance monitoring reports.

RESOLVED:

That the Panel raises no comment on the Revenues Division Business Plan extract, attached as Appendices to Report RE93.

12. **FINANCIAL SERVICES DIVISION BUSINESS PLAN 2010/11 ONWARDS**
(Report RE93 refers)

The Committee noted that this Report had not been notified for inclusion within the statutory deadline. The Chairman agreed to accept this item onto the agenda, as an item requiring urgent consideration, in order that the matter could be dealt with as soon as possible.

The Head of Finance confirmed that the Council did have a Contracts Register.

It was added that the production of the Statement of Accounts would proceed satisfactorily this year.

Following discussion, the Panel agreed the Business Plan as set out. It did not identify any particular issues to be included in future performance monitoring reports.

RESOLVED:

That the Panel raises no comment on the Financial Services Division Business Plan extract, attached as an Appendix to Report RE93.

13. **ESTATES DIVISION BUSINESS PLAN 2010/11 ONWARDS**

(Report RE93 refers)

The Head of Estates informed the Panel that a report would be submitted to Cabinet later in 2010 outlining options to extend the life of the City Offices, Colebrook Street rather than seek their replacement.

In respect of Avalon House and Hyde Street, marketing was continuing to seek their letting to a high quality tenant. Avalon House would not be suitable as a replacement to the City Offices due to its limited floor area. The Estates Strategy would be submitted to Cabinet in due course.

Members of the Panel welcomed the opportunity to visit the F2 storage facility at Bar End, Winchester.

The Panel did not identify any particular issues to be included in future performance monitoring reports.

RESOLVED:

That the Panel raises no comment on the Estates Division Business Plan extract, attached as Appendices to Report RE93, and that the Head of estates organise a visit for Members of the Panel to the F2 storage facility at Bar End, Winchester

14. **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME (REPORT PS402 REFERS) AND MATTERS ARISING**

RESOLVED:

That the Scrutiny Work Programme, as set out on the reverse of the agenda and as extracted from Report PS402, be noted.

15. **VOTE OF THANKS**

As this was the last meeting of the Panel in the current Municipal Year, the Panel passed a vote of thanks to the Chairman, Councillor Wright. Councillor Wright responded in kind.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 8.45pm

Chairman