WEST DEVON OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (INTERNAL) COMMITTEE

West Devon Borough Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **West Devon Overview and Scrutiny (Internal) Committee** held on **Tuesday, 14th June, 2016** at **10.00 am** at the **Chamber - Kilworthy Park**

Present: **Councillors:**

Chairman Cllr Musgrave
Vice Chairman Cllr Yelland

Cllr Cann OBE   Cllr Kimber
Cllr Evans   Cllr Mott
Cllr Hockridge   Cllr Moyse
In attendance:

Councillors: Cllr Leech
Cllr Cloke
Cllr Edmonds

Officers:
Head of Paid Service
Executive Director (Service Delivery & Commercial Development)
Group manager – Support Services
Group Manager – Business Development
Case Management Manager

1.   **Apologies for Absence**
        *O&S(I) 1
        Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs M Davies, J R McInnes and P J Ridgers.

2.   **Confirmation of Minutes**
        *O&S(I) 2
        The minutes of the Meeting held on 6 October 2015 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

3.   **Declarations of Interest**
        *O&S(I) 3

Members and officers were asked to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of this meeting, but there was none made.

4. **Chairman's Announcements**
   *O&S(I) 4
   The Chairman exercised his discretion and invited officers to provide an update on the Council website.

   In so doing, the following points were raised:-

   (a) It was noted that the Council was in the process of developing a potential business case to improve its website. Regardless of the merits of this business case, there were options identified by GOSS interactive (website content management system) that would result in quick improvements being made to the website;

   (b) In light of the Council already having an existing contract with GOSS interactive, officers were confident that any improvement works would be at minimal (if any) cost to the Council;

   (c) It was anticipated that the business case would be finalised for the consideration of the Senior Leadership Team before the end of June 2016;

   (d) By gradually transferring the IT infrastructure, the Committee was informed that website improvements should be evident to the user within three months. Furthermore, Members were assured that a gradual transfer would have no impact on the public face of the website and there would be no detrimental knock-on effect to the Contact Centre;

   (e) In citing four alternative methods that the customer could currently self-serve on the website, officers acknowledged that the website was confusing and not user friendly for the general public.

5. **Committee Terms of Reference**
   *O&S(I) 5
   The Chairman presented the Committee Terms Of Reference and emphasised the importance of Members being aware of the scope and function of the Committee.

   As a general point, a Member requested that the formatting and layout of these Terms Of Reference be revisited to ensure that they were presented in a more reader friendly manner.

6. **Public Forum**
   *O&S(I) 6
   It was noted that no issued had been raised by the general public.

7. **Hub Committee Forward Plan**
   *O&S(I) 7

The most recent (published 9 June 2016) Hub Committee Forward Plan was presented for consideration and was duly noted without any issues being raised.

8.   **Case Management Presentation**
          *O&S(I) 8
          The Case Management Manager proceeded to undertake a presentation that outlined the Case Management function, its current staffing structure and how it fitted into the Future Operating Model.

          In the ensuing debate, reference was made to:-

          (a) responses to customer enquiries. A Member reiterated his previously raised concerns at a number of instances that he had been made aware of whereby residents had been promised a response to an enquiry from an officer that was never forthcoming. In reply, officers acknowledged this point and highlighted the transitional resources report that was ultimately seeking Council approval to temporarily increase resources within the Case Management function in order to help address the backlog of workload.

          Furthermore, officers made a plea that Members inform them of such instances where this issue was occurring;

          (b) the post function. When questioned, officers confirmed that the post function had been outsourced. Whilst post was still being generated in-house, it was noted that the remaining processes were now outsourced and, due to economies of scale, cost savings were already being realised. As an assurance, officers did also confirm that the post was still sent securely and was fully compliant with data protection legislation;

          (c) allocating work within the Case Management function. As an example of how a planning application would be allocated to a Case Manager, the Committee was informed that the Case Management Manager would work with the Development Management Community Of Practice Lead to ensure that it was assigned appropriately.

          In conclusion, the Chairman wished to thank the Case Management Manager for her interesting and informative presentation.

9.   **Performance Measures**
          ***O&S(I) 9**
          The Committee considered a report that presented the Performance Measures for Quarter 4 for 2015/16.

          In discussion, reference was made to:-

          (a) the dashboard information now being readily available for Members to view on their IPads. Officers highlighted the recent Member

Drop-in Sessions during which accessing the dashboards (and the consequent live performance information) was illustrated to Members. Whilst a relatively new concept that would evolve, it was agreed that the lead Hub Committee Member should work with officers to ensure that the performance information is up to date, accurate and relevant;

(b) the quarterly performance reports. In addition to being able to access the dashboards, the Committee was assured that it would continue to receive the quarterly performance reports;

(c) the work of the Performance Measures Task and Finish Group. The view was expressed that the Group may feel a twelve month review would be opportune to ensure that the reports were still focusing upon the indicators of most interest and relevance to Members. As a guide, the Committee was of the view that the current most important performance measures should be focused around: Development Management; Waste and Recycling; the Contact Centre; Customer Satisfaction and Complaints against Service(s);

(d) the average call answer time. The Committee recognised the current pressures facing the Contact Centre and acknowledged that a new telephony system was to be put in place before the end of July 2016. It was hoped that the new telephony system, coupled with the adopted Service Action Plan, would lead to improvements in this performance measure. To monitor the effectiveness of these measures, the Committee requested that it receive a progress update on the Contact Centre at its meeting on 8 November 2016.

Members recognised that the key to reducing the number of calls into the Contact Centre was to promote the benefits of channel shift. However, Members also appreciated that the current Council website was a barrier to channel shift and until it was faster and more user friendly there was little merit in actively promoting its benefits;

(e) improvements in the Development Management service area. Members commented that they were noticing improvements in the Development Management service and welcomed this trend. As a further positive, a Member also wished to record the excellent service provided by the Democratic Services team;

(f) performance measures that could be impacted by other partner organisations (for example the Citizens Advice Bureau). A Member questioned whether reference in relevant performance measures should be made to other organisations. In reply, officers confirmed that they would look into this outside of the meeting, but did warn against double entries of similar information;

(g) the importance of staff welfare. The Head of Paid Service shared Member concerns over staff welfare and the huge pressure that the

organisation was currently under and emphasised how important he considered staff welfare to be. Related to this point, the Head of Paid Service was also concerned at the long term sickness absence performance measure and felt that it would be helpful to have a detailed look at the data underpinning this indicator.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That the performance levels against target communicated in the Balanced Scorecard and the performance figures supplied in the background and exception reports be noted; and

2. That Members have reviewed the performance dashboards (as detailed in Section 5 of the presented agenda report) and have provided feedback as outlined in the minutes above.

10.   **Draft Annual Work Programme 2016/17**
       *O&S(I) 10
       The Committee took the opportunity to express its views in relation to its 2016/17 Work Programme and proceeded to make the following comments:-

       ▪ In accordance with Minute O&S(I) 9 above, it was agreed that a Contact Centre Progress Update should be scheduled on to the Committee agenda for 8 November 2016 meeting;

       ▪ In light of the comments raised during this meeting, the Committee endorsed the proposal whereby an agenda item entitled: 'Overview of the Website Development' also be added to its agenda for 8 November 2016 meeting;

       ▪ Assuming that full Council (at its meeting on 28 June 2016) approved the Hub Committee recommendations in respect of undertaking an interim review of the Transformation Programme (Minute HC 07 refers), it was agreed that the draft terms of reference for this review would be presented to the next Committee meeting on 19 July 2016.

The Meeting concluded at 11.35 am

Signed by:

Chairman