

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

19th June 2014

PRESENT:-

Conservative Group

Councillor Mrs. Watson (Chairman), Councillor Jones (Vice-Chairman) and Councillors Hewlett, Murray, Mrs Hall (substitute for Councillor Smith), Watson and Wheeler.

Labour Group

Councillors Bell, Rhind, Richards, Southerd, Taylor and Wilkins

In Attendance

Councillor Harrison (Conservative Group)

FM/05 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillor Smith (Conservative Group).

FM/06 **PRESENTATION FROM EQUITA (COUNCIL'S ENFORCEMENT AGENTS)**

Paul Sharpe of Equita gave a presentation in respect of the national changes to debt recovery processes, which have been introduced recently. The rationale behind these changes are intended to place stronger controls on the operation of the bailiff and debt collection industry; and in particular, to prevent rogue operators from using unfair methods when collecting debts. The most important change has been the introduction of a so-called 'compliance stage' which allows non-enforcement activity, such as telephone calls and emails etc. before visits have to take place.

Members asked questions relating to the presentation

Cllr Mrs Watson thanked Paul for the presentation and for clarifying concerns and the points raised

MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE

FM/07 **CORPORATE PLAN - PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT 2013/14**

A report was presented detailing progress and achievements during the year 2013/14, in relation to the Council's Corporate Plan 2009-14. Appendices to the report gave detail on the progress against Corporate Plan key projects, performance measures, The Corporate Plan consisted of 4 main themes or priorities.

The Officer referred Members to the statistics in respect of sickness absence, and the actions that had been taken to reduce these figures. It was reported that post implementing new processes the first months monitoring figures showed an improvement, and close monitoring would continue.

Members commented on the report and asked questions of the Officer.

RESOLVED:-

(1) That progress against targets and projects for the period 1st January to 31st March 2014 is approved.

(2) That performance for the year 2013/14 is approved.

FM/08 **CONSULTATION ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14 AND ACTION PLAN 2014/15**

A report was submitted on the Annual Consultation Strategy that detailed how consultation activities would support the delivery of key priorities set down in the Corporate Plan 2009/14. It detailed the achievements made during 2013/4.

The key consultation exercises for 2013/14 were summarised in the report covering the following areas:

- Allocations/Tenancy Policy
- Citizen Panel survey
- Safer Neighbourhood meetings/Community Safety road shows
- Local Plan
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The report then looked ahead, providing information on the range of planned consultation activities for 2014/15

It was explained that additional thought needs to be given not only what we consult on; but how we do it e.g. SMS, social media etc.

(1) That the key consultation achievements for the year ending 31st March 2014 be noted.

(2) That the refreshed Action Plan, as shown in an Appendix 2 be approved.

(3) That the planned consultation activity to be undertaken by the Council in 2014/15 be noted.

FM/09. **COMMUNICATIONS ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14 AND ACTION PLAN 2014/15**

A report was submitted on the outcomes achieved in external and internal communications during 2013/14. It presented an action plan for 2014/15 that detailed how communication activities would support the delivery of key priorities set down in the Corporate Plan 2009/14.

The report gave examples of the external communication undertaken with reference being made to the successful communications that were undertaken during the recycling campaign. A section was also provided on internal communications, before looking ahead to 2014/15.

Again, the Officer advised moving forwards to support the action plan it is necessary to look at how we communicate and how effective the communications are, in addition to what we communicate.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) ***That the Committee consider the Corporate Communications Annual Report and key achievements for 2013/14 , as shown in the Appendix***
- (2) ***That performance against the Communications Action Plan 2013/14 be noted.***
- (3) ***That the Council's revised Communications Action Plan for 2014/15 be approved.***
- (4) ***That the updated Corporate Communications Campaigns, be approved.***

FM/10 **DATA QUALITY STRATEGY 2013/14 ANNUAL REPORT AND ACTION PLAN 2014/15**

A report was submitted on the revised Data Quality Strategy 2012/15 which was adopted by the Committee in June 2012.

The Officer explained the importance of Data Quality in the Council and the need to have 100% confidence that when data is reported it is reliable.

During this year a significant amount of work has been undertaken to ensure compliance with the Government's new stringent approach to connectivity and data security (Public Service Network (PSN) Code of Compliance).

The report concluded by looking at the Action Plan for 2014/15.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) ***That progress made against the Data Quality Strategy Action Plan 2013/14, be noted.***
- (2) ***That the Action Plan 2014/15, be approved.***

FM/11 **CORPORATE EQUALITIES AND SAFEGUARDING ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14 AND ACTION PLAN 2014/15**

A report was submitted on the achievements in 2013/14 and the importance of ensuring that Equalities and Safe Guarding are embedded in services and that

the Council is compliant. The report detailed the duty on public authorities and others carrying out public functions. Case studies were included to highlight the work that had been undertaken during 2013/14, and concluded by looking at the planned activities for 2014/15.

Members asked questions with regard to what processes are in place for staff dealing with safeguarding matters.

Cllr Mrs Watson passed on her thanks to Chris Smith for the work that had been undertaken on Hate Crime.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the Corporate Equalities and Safeguarding Annual Report for 2013/14 shown in an Appendix to the report be approved for publication.**
- (2) That progress against the 2013/14 Action Plan be noted.**
- (3) That the Corporate Equalities and Safeguarding Action Plan for 2014/15 shown in an Appendix to the report be approved.**

FM/12 **ANNUAL TRAINING REPORT 2013/14 AND PRIORITIES FOR 2014/15**

A report was submitted to propose the priority actions for corporate training activities during 2014/15 to support the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan 2009/14. It also provided an overview of corporate training, learning and development activities completed during 2013/14 and the outcomes. The detail of the report provided a review of 2013/14, including a graph showing training days for the year. Sections were then included on the following areas:-

- Review of training activity 2013/14
- Training for front line staff
- Modern Apprenticeships
- Work Experience

The report then looked at the key outcomes from this training activity. The report also looked at priorities for 2014/15 and detailed proposals for training under the following headings:-

- Leadership and Management Development
- Health and Safety
- Employment Policy
- E-learning resources
- IT Training
- Soft skills

There was discussion on the content of the report with particular reference to "growing our own" and also absence management training for managers. Members were advised that it is mandatory for all managers to attend absence management training.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) *That the priority areas for training and development during 2014/15, which are linked to the delivery of the key priorities of the Council's Corporate Plan, be approved.*
- (2) *That the range of training activities and actions provided during 2013/14, be noted.*

FM/13 **ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT 2013/14 AND ACTION PLAN 2014/15**

A report was submitted to give an overview of the Council's health and safety performance, including an analysis of accident data for 2013/14. It reflected the Council's approach in enabling managers and employees to understand and fulfil their health and safety responsibilities.

It was explained that whilst statistically there appeared to be an increase in accidents, this was because of the increase in activities to the Summer Playcheme which had nearly a third more children attend the activities than in previous years.

The report detailed the main achievements over the year with particular reference to accidents, ROSPA Gold Award and training. Other sections covered training, achievements in Health and Safety training, the implementation of IT, risk assessments, professional support and an accident analysis. The report concluded by setting out the targets for 2014/15.

RESOLVED:-

That the key health and safety achievements and performance for the year ending March 2014 be noted and the Health and Safety Action Plan that sets down the priority actions for 2014/15, be approved.

FM/14 **COMPLAINTS AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS – 1ST OCTOBER 2013 – 31ST MARCH 2014**

An informative report was submitted on the comments, compliments and complaints received during this period. These comprised 0 comments, 18 compliments and 35 complaints. Tables were included within the detail of the report showing the division to which each related. Statistics were then provided on the Freedom of Information requests received.

Members suggested that the level of detail contained in the report should be looked at moving forwards.

RESOLVED:-

That the complaints and Freedom of Information requests, as detailed in the report, are noted.

FM/15 **FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES SERVICE PLANS 2014/15**

It was reported that Service Plans were a key part of the Council's performance management framework, acting as an important link between high level plans and strategies, such as the Corporate Plan and Sustainable Community Strategy, and personal performance objectives established through the Employee Review and Development Scheme. The form and content of service plans had been reviewed and minor changes had been made. The amendments captured a number of cross-cutting themes for the Council such as the Transformation Programme, Partnerships, outcomes and linking priorities to budgets. Detail was provided on the content of the Service Plan, a copy which was appended to the report. The Plan would cover a one year period and be reviewed at the end of March 2015. Progress reports to Members would be made on a quarterly basis.

RESOLVED:-

That the Service Plan for Finance & Corporate Services be approved as basis for service delivery for the period 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015.

FM/16 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee was asked to review its work programme.

RESOLVED:-

That the updated work programme be noted.

RESOLVED:-

FM/17 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT [ACCESS TO INFORMATION] ACT 1985)**

RESOLVED:-

That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that there would be disclosed exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Act indicated in brackets after each item.

FM/18 **HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES STAFFING RESTRUCURE**

Approval was granted for the recommendations detailed within the report

MRS ANN WATSON

CHAIRMAN

The meeting terminated at 7.05 p.m.