

## **Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel**

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2013 at 6.00 p.m. in a Conference Room at the Council House, Walsall

Members in Attendance    Councillor J. Rochelle (Vice Chair in the Chair)  
Councillor B. Douglas – Maul  
Councillor G. Illmann - Walker  
Councillor M. Longhi  
Councillor D. Shires  
Councillor R. Worrall  
Councillor D. Coughlan (Substitution)

Officers Present            Rory Borealis – Executive Director (Resources)  
John Bolton – Interim Executive Director (Social Care  
&Inclusion)  
Lynn Hall – Head of Benefits  
Isabel Gillis – Director of Public Health  
Paul Gordon – Head of Business Change  
Neil Picken – Senior Committee Business and  
Governance Manager

### 232/13            **Apologies**

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor S. Coughlan.

### 233/13            **Substitutions**

Councillor D. Coughlan substituted for Councillor S. Coughlan.

### 234/13            **Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**

There were no declarations of interest or party whip for the duration of the meeting.

**Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting which took place on 12 September, 2013, a copy having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and correct record.

236/13      **Delivery of Working Smarter Programme – Theme 2 – Improving health including wellbeing and independence for older people**

The Panel considered a report which set out the progress made toward elements of Theme 2 of the Working Smarter Programme, namely:-

- Developing and delivering a prevention strategy;
- Developing and delivering the operating model;
- Promoting independence through Personalisation;
- Getting it right at the “front door”;
- Joint commissioning with Health;
- Sustainable Local Care Markets;
- Active Living;
- Assets based approach to local health improvements;
- Service impact on health and wellbeing;
- Delivery of the health and wellbeing strategy.

A Member sought clarity on the asset based approach to local health improvements. The Director of Public Health advised that the aim of this approach was ultimately to minimise the dependency on statutory services as oppose to locking people in. It looked at strengths within communities rather than risks and deficits and sought to get to know communities and build relationships rather than devising interventions to fix problems. It also looked at skills and abilities of those within communities to establish what communities could do for themselves and how the Council could enhance that.

A discussion ensued as to the meaning and use of the Vanguard Method. The Executive Director (Resources) advised that it was a systems thinking method which challenged conventional management thinking. Traditional working methods were based on a set of assumptions built over a number of years that led to hierarchies, functional management and an approach to budget management that often made it hard for the organisation to help customers. Systems thinking provided a new way of looking at every aspect of the council to redesign services around the customer and their needs. In order to achieve this there was a need to radically and

fundamentally rethink work methods and processes. The Method helps senior managers to empower staff and improve services, making substantial savings over time as a result of our customers getting the help that they need in the way that they need it – which makes better use of public money.

A Member commented on the prevention strategy and new operating model noting that it would assist people at the time of crisis stating that if prevention was working times of crisis should be minimised. The Interim Executive Director (Social Care & Inclusion) advised that there were different levels of prevention and that measures were in place to reduce risks, however, within social care most intervention occurred at a time of crisis. The new operating model sought to solve the problem and reduce further risk.

In relation to promoting independence through personalisation, the Interim Executive Director (Social Care & Inclusion) provided clarity on assessments and the point at which a social worker would become involved with a customer. He explained that the process for all customers was much quicker than had previously been the case. He further advised that within social care those most at risk were known to the Council and that more work was required to reach such people earlier to prevent hospital admissions. The system, together with health, required building to respond better at an early stage.

A Member asked whether the new operating model within social care could have been achieved without Working Smarter? The Interim Executive Director (Social Care & Inclusion) advised that the principles of Working Smarter were used and achieved results. A boost in staff morale was reported as they now felt better equipped to help customers. In response, the Member commented that radically turning services upside down could cause disruption leading to backlogs, as was the case at a neighbouring authority. Given the importance of services provided it was questioned whether this put the authority at risk? The Interim Executive Director (Social Care & Inclusion) advised that he had not observed any backlogs within social care commenting that the reverse was true.

A discussion ensued in relation to the Swift Ward at the Manor Hospital. Members were advised that both social care and health staff agreed that this was not the best care setting for older people. This was an area which required further consideration. It was asked whether Working Smarter would be used to look at discharge? In response, Members were advised that within Social Care there was a mix of working smarter methods and bureaucracy in systems that were required. The Working Smarter methodology was being introduced to middle managers so that they can assess services and identify the best approach. With regard to the Swift Ward, it was Andy Rust, Head of Joint Commissioning Units role to develop solutions. The hospital came under pressure during the winter period and so work on this matter would begin once the worst of the weather had subsided. A solution was expected to be in place by September, 2014.

It was questioned whether Adult Social Care received any additional funding to assist with the implementation of a new system? Officers confirmed that no additional funding had been received.

A Member requested details as to when the 'Move it' Scheme was implemented to which officers agreed to respond in writing.

In relation to empowering staff Members highlighted a sentence within the report which stated "...it would be disingenuous to suggest that the process has "empowered" staff". It was suggested that the Working Smarter initiative empowered staff and this seemed to conflict with the report. The Interim Executive Director (Social Care & Inclusion) explained that within social care there was a big divide between traditional approaches and new models of care. The transition for staff preferring the old process was challenging however support was being provided to develop their roles.

A further discussion took place regarding the commissioning function. Members were advised that a review of the joint commissioning unit was being undertaken and that the report would be made available to Members. Councillor Longhi requested that a copy be provided to him.

In relation to the transition of Public Health into the Local Authority on 1 April, 2013 it was asked whether area teams were suitably trained and had the mindset to understand the impact on health and wellbeing in the role they undertook. A Member suggested that a paper be considered by the relevant Scrutiny and Performance Panel to set out how area community teams are able to drive the framework and monitor outcomes. In response the Director of Public Health stated that she had observed that there were many expectations of what could be delivered through area partnerships, Health and well being was only one aspect amongst a variety of others. The focus was on building health and wellbeing within the Council and amongst partners. Further discussion ensued on the delivery model for Public Health, the involvement of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector, the opportunity for a theme based rather than an area partnership approach and inconsistency with Area Partnership teams in terms of knowledge of knowledge of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The Executive Director (Resources), in response to a question in relation to the need for Assistant Directors and the Working Smarter Team, advised that there was a need for strong leadership both managerially and politically to deliver results and to remain determined to bring about radical change when the going gets tough. He advised that there wasn't and had never been a "working smarter team" (although some people had become accustomed to using this phrase on a day to day basis) – the approach was for senior leaders and front-line staff to learn a different way of thinking and working and then to help others elsewhere in the organisation to do the same – making much better use of existing resources.

A Member asked what are the three things that councillors could do to support delivery of the working smarter objectives? The Executive Director (Resources) advised that he would reply to all Members of the Panel in writing.

## **Resolved**

1. That the report be noted;

2. That the interim Executive Director (Social Care and Inclusion) provide a report on the review of the Joint Commissioning Unit to Councillor Longhi;
3. That the Executive Director (Resources) writes all Members of the Panel setting out three things that councillors could do to support delivery of the working smarter objectives.

237/13

### **Quarter 2 Financial Monitoring Position 2013/14**

The Panel considered the predicted revenue and capital outturn position for 2013/14 based on the performance for quarter 2 (April to September, 2013), for services within the remit of the Panel. A revised 'Table 1' which set out the forecast revenue outturn 2013/14 at Head of Service level was tabled.

The Executive Director (Resources) advised that the projected underspend within the mainstream budget, (under direct control) had increased to £360k. There was however a council wide saving to negotiate contracts with existing suppliers to realise savings and inadequate progress had been made on these savings to date – the Assistant Director (Finance) now had responsibility to maximising savings from this source and he was currently evaluating what realistic year-end position might be delivered.

Members enquired as to why, within the forecast capital outturn 2013/14, the table was blank in relation to Gypsy and Travellers. The Executive Director (Resources) advised that the scheme had been held and so no figures were included.

In relation to Appendix 1 – Reasons for Revenue Variations further details were sought in relation to Customer Service which showed a variance of £120k in relation to cover for long term sickness and staff secondments.

#### **Resolved**

1. That further detail be provided as to the reasons for Revenue Variation in relation to Customer Service which showed a variance of £120k in relation to cover for long term sickness and staff secondments.
2. That the report be noted.

238/13

### **Localised Council Tax Reduction Scheme**

The Panel considered a report [annexed] a report as submitted to Cabinet on 11 September, 2013 which details the four potential options for a localised council tax support scheme.

Members considered the report. Members agreed that option 4 which would fully fund the reduction from other council efficiencies, savings or income streams and to adopt the current council tax reduction scheme should be supported.

A Member queried the information available publicly with regard to discretionary housing payments as it stated that support would be available to assist with Council Tax. It became clear that the documentation both printed and online was incorrect and needed to be revised as discretionary housing payments did not cover council tax.

**Resolved**

1. That Cabinet be advised that the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel recommend that Option 4 – to fully fund the council tax reduction scheme from other council efficiencies, savings or income and to adopt the current council tax reduction scheme be adopted;
2. That council documentation be amended to accurately reflect what the discretionary housing payment covered.

239/13      **Welfare Reform Working Group – Terms of Reference**

The Panel considered the draft terms of reference [Annexed].

**Resolved**

1. That the terms of reference be approved;
2. That Councillor Sean Coughlan be appointed Lead Member.

240/13      **Work Programme and Forward Plan**

Members considered the work programme and Forward Plan.

**Resolved**

That the work programme and forward plan be noted.

241/13      **Date of next meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Panel would take place on 28 November, 2013.

*The meeting closed at 7.40 p.m.*

Chair:.....

Date:.....

