

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY
PANEL
HELD ON TUESDAY, 12 MARCH 2013
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT 7.00 - 8.50 PM**

Members Present:	A Lion (Chairman), Ms S Watson (Vice-Chairman), C Finn, D Jacobs, Ms H Kane and G Mohindra
Other members present:	D Stallan, Ms S Stavrou, G Waller and C Whitbread
Apologies for Absence:	G Chambers, Mrs R Gadsby and J Hart
Officers Present	D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive), J Gilbert (Director of Environment and Street Scene), A Hall (Director of Housing), P Maddock (Assistant Director (Accountancy)), P Maginnis (Assistant Director (Human Resources)), D Newton (Assistant Director (ICT)), N Richardson (Assistant Director (Development Control)), S Tautz (Performance Improvement Manager), J Twinn (Assistant Director (Benefits)) and A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer)

36. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

The Panel noted that there were no substitute members.

37. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were made.

38. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 November 2012 were agreed.

39. TERMS OF REFERENCE / WORK PROGRAMME

The Panel noted their Terms of Reference and Work Programme.

40. ICT UPDATE

The Assistant Director ICT, Dave Newton, introduced the report updating the members on Information and Communication Technology in the authority. The meeting noted that the plans for disaster recovery was ongoing with the telephone system taking priority. The Council had invited quotations in January 2013 and had 5 suppliers respond. The 3 most suitable would be interviewed and assessed within the next month.

The new website went live in July 2012 and the website delivery board was keeping its performance under constant review.

The authority would be upgraded to Microsoft Office 2010 sometime in July of this year. The meeting noted that this upgrade was free but had been delayed because

some of our core systems have had to be upgraded before Microsoft Office 2010 could be installed. New hardware such as laptops and tablets were also being evaluated to assess our ability to carry out mobile working off site.

The email system was also being reviewed. It was noted that it took up a lot of storage space on our servers and they were looking at 'out hosted' solutions. They were also looking to increase the size of file attachments that the system could handle.

Councillor Mohindra asked how the new telephone upgrade selection process would work. He was told that there were a number of processes to be assessed, the top three would then be evaluated, they would have to give a presentation to the project team where they would be scrutinised.

Councillor Stallan was interested in mobile working and what equipment would be used. He asked that a presentation be arranged for this. Mr Newton said they were still evaluating equipment but a presentation could be arranged when they were further along the process.

Councillor Lion noted that a forum had been set up to review the new website and that he had been asked to take part in this. Councillor Stallan added that the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation were also looking at the website and would give feedback on their findings.

A few members commented that from a members perspective they found the new website harder to navigate than the old one. They wondered if members could have their own corner of the website for information significant to them only. They would also like to have another presentation on the new site and perhaps a training session for members.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the progress made on the ICT systems were noted; and
- (2) That a presentation be arranged when practical to review the possible mobile working equipment available and also to review the new website.

41. SICKNESS ABSENCE

The Assistant Director (Human Resources), Paula Maginnis, introduced the sickness absence report for quarter 3. It was noted that they were still below the target set for the year; the target being an average of 7.5 days. The council's average figure for quarter 3 was 1.85 days, with the cumulative total for Q1 to Q3 being 5.21 days. Figures for each directorate was set out in the report. It was noted that two thirds of staff had taken no sick absence this quarter.

Members noted the continued year on year improvement and debated whether they should receive a six monthly report or keep it as is, a quarterly report. They agreed that the Panel was better suited to reviewing activities that were not going so well and causing problems other than constantly reviewing things that were improving. They agreed that this would now be a six monthly report.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the current position of the authorities sickness absences be noted; and
- (2) That this report now be presented to the Panel on a six monthly basis.

42. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2012/13 - QUARTER 3 - PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Performance Improvement Manager, Mr S Tautz, introduced the report on the Council's performance against its adopted Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for the third quarter of 2012/13. This report reviewed the target performance for this year and the indicator targets for 2013/14. The meeting noted that most of the annual indicators had been removed, to be returned at the end of the year review in June for a final sign-off.

Councillor Mohindra noted that there was no specific corporate KPI target listed. He was told that Management Board thought that a target would be counterproductive as the Council should be achieving 100%. They would still see the direction of travel by reviewing the quarterly figures.

It was noted that 15 (55.6%) of the indicators achieved the cumulative third quarter target and that 12 (44.4%) did not achieve their cumulative target. It was anticipated that 13 (48.1%) of the indicators would achieve their year end performance target and 7 (25.9%) were not anticipated to achieve their target. The achievement of the year end performance targets for 7 (25.9%) indicators was uncertain.

The meeting went through the KPIs as listed in the report.

KPI 21 - *% of household waste sent to be recycled, reused or composted* – the Panel were unsure of the mark for quarter 2; was it a cross or question mark? They were told that it should be a tick.

KPI 24 – *how well have we done in reducing flytipping and taking action against those believed to be responsible* – it was noted that this was proving to be a bit of a problem as they were using an old indicator to satisfy DCLG Monitoring. This indicator may never be achieved. A more constructive indicator was being proposed elsewhere on this agenda.

KPI 30 – *what % of the invoices we receive were paid within 30 days* – Councillor Mohindra asked officers to comment on a 20 day turnaround. It was noted that housing (who have the largest volume of invoices) now had an electronic system for their housing repairs invoices which had an average of a 2 day turnaround, but they could not be responsible once an invoice had left them. The Council as a whole received around 15,000 invoices per annum. Essex County have an automated system but their volume was much larger. Our system operates on a 30 day turnover once the invoice had been registered. In the near future housing would only generate one invoice per month for materials used. It may be possible to go to a 20 day cycle. A report about this will be going to a future meeting.

KPI 31 – *what % of the district's annual Council Tax was collected* – it was noted that Council tax collection was 2% up at the end of February and officers were hopeful that they would achieve their target. Councillor Watson asked how many people would have to pay Council Tax for the first time from April and was told about 3,000.

KPI 32 – *what % of the district's annual business rates was collected* – officers did not think this indicator would be achieved this year.

KPI 33 – *on average how many days did it take us to process new benefit claims* – it was noted that officers were now catching up after a slow beginning.

KPI 46 – *How many affordable homes were built in the District* – it was noted that this was a difficult indicator to achieve as we were in the hands of the Housing Associations and developers. Some houses had been delayed and they were 5 short of achieving their target. Councillor Jacobs commented that they should consider deleting this KPI. Councillor Watson suggested that they monitor the numbers that have planning permission; we can then say they should be completed within three years. We can also monitor how many times they come back and ask for extensions. The Director of Housing said that this the same problems would apply if they did this. This was more of an information item than for monitoring. He could supply the information to the panel as a quarterly or end of year report.

Councillor Jacobs proposed that this be deleted as a KPI and brought to the Panel as an information item.

The Panel next considered 2013/14 KPI targets.

KPI 20 – *how much non-recycled waste was collected for every household in the district* – noted that this did not have a target as yet – a higher target would be set before quarter four figures were in.

KPI 24 - *% of the recorded incidences of flytipping* - A revised KPI 24 was tabled at the meeting along with a new KPI on the out of hours noise services. If consistent complaints were received on a property then it would go on a register for immediate action.

KPI 35 - *% of benefit fraud cases investigated by the Benefits Investigation Team, where fraud was proven* - a revised version was tabled. Councillor Mohindra commented that it was more useful to track the number of investigations. Officers commented that it was difficult as they did not know how many fraud cases were out there. The present indicator did not show what was happening with the cases so they came up with this new description. The Panel discussed the merits of keeping both the indicators as they complimented each other and in the end decided to do so.

AGREED: to keep both indicators.

KPI 46 – *how many affordable homes were built in the district* – the Panel agreed to delete this indicator and report back in a different way. Mr Hall proposed that a comprehensive report be provided on this to the Panel.

KPI 48 – *what % of council homes were not in a decent condition* - Councillor Mohindra questioned the value of keeping this indicator. Officers argued that it was a check to assure them they were doing this work and also it would be superseded when the modern homes standard came in, so it should stay until then. This was agreed.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the performance for the third quarter of 2012/13 be noted;

- (2) That subject to the concurrence of the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee that the proposed KPIs and targets for 2013/14, subject to the Panel's amendments, be agreed; and
- (3) That no specific corporate KPI performance target be set for 2013/14.

43. EQUALITY PROGRESS 2012/13

The Performance Improvement Manager, Mr S Tautz, introduced the report reflecting progress against the Equality Objectives, the duty to publish equality information and systems to evidence due regard. It was noted that in future progress reports would be made on a quarterly basis, rather than at the start of the municipal year. Periodic review of progress to meet the Council's equality duties provides an opportunity for the authority to consider how it can better meet its equality duties and improve outcomes.

The Panel would receive the action plan at the start on the new municipal year.

RESOLVED:

That the progress against the achievement of the Council's Equality Objectives and other work to ensure compliance with equality duties be noted.

44. QUARTERLY FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

The Assistant Director of Finance, Peter Maddock, introduced the quarterly financial monitoring reports, on key areas of income and expenditure. The report provided a comparison between the probable outturn for the period ended 31 December 2012 and the actual expenditure or income as applicable. This was the third quarterly report for 2012/13 and covered the period from 1 April 2012 to 31 December 2012.

The Panel noted that:

- The salaries schedule showed an underspend of £112,000 or 0.8%;
- The investment interest levels in 2012/13 were in line with expectations, and significantly below the prior year;
- The Council received £1.872m of the original £2.5m investment placed with Heritable Bank as at 30 December 2012;
- Development Control income at Month 9 was £6,000 above the updated position;
- Building Control income was £4,000 higher than the probable outturn figure, though this was a significant reduction on the original position;
- Both Hackney carriage and other licensing was ahead of the revised expectations;
- Income from MOT's was in line with the probable outturn. It was noted that some dealerships now do their own MOTs. Our MOT work was safe enough for the next two years, but it would have to be kept under review;
- Local Land Charge Income was in line with the revised expectation, which was £20,000 higher at £190,000;
- The Housing Repairs Fund showed an underspend of £185,000. Due to seasonal factors this underspend was expected to reduce as the final quarter progresses;
- The Waltham Abbey Payment Kiosk was to be installed before the end of the current financial year and would be kept under review to see if it could be extended to other sites.

RESOLVED:

That the revenue and capital monitoring report for the third quarter of 2012/13 be noted.

45. REPORTS TO BE MADE TO THE NEXT MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

To report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a general update on the reports considered at this meeting.

The meeting set up a sub-committee consisting of Councillors Lion, Watson and Mohindra to look in depth at interdepartmental recharging and to report back to this Panel with their recommendations. They will have an initial scoping meeting and report their deliberations back to the Panel for their agreement and for it to be put on next years work programme.

The Panel would also like to look at the Business Planning Process and would like to add it to their terms of reference and work programme.