

CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 28 February 2023 at the Cabinet Suite - Shire Hall, Gloucester.

PRESENT:

Cllr John Bloxsom	Cllr Jeremy Hilton
Cllr Ben Evans	Cllr Vernon Smith
Cllr Andrew Gravells MBE	Cllr Lisa Spivey
Cllr Terry Hale	Cllr Chloe Turner
Cllr Colin Hay	

Substitutes: Cllr Susan Williams

Officers in attendance: Rob Ayliffe and Steve Mawson

Apologies: Cllr Phil Awford, Cllr Matt Babbage, Cllr Stephan Fifield and Cllr Dr Andrew Miller and Paul Blacker

Cllr Bloxsom as Vice-Chair of the Committee Chaired the meeting in Cllr Awford's absence.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes from the meetings held on 7 December 2022 and 4 January 2023 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

4. WORK PLAN

- 4.1 Members were advised that the items shown in red on the work plan were suggestions from this month's lead member meeting.
- 4.2 A member suggested that it would be useful at the next meeting to invite Cllr Mark Hawthorne (Leader of the Council) and Cllr Lynden Stowe (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Change), to give an overview of plans for this next financial year. They highlighted that it was common for Lead Cabinet Members to attend other scrutiny committees and felt this should be reflected at this Committee.
- 4.3 There was a request for an item on Communications, particularly looking at how members were informed and updated on issues arising, and whether this was timely enough to allow them to provide support to and advocate for their communities.

Minutes subject to their acceptance as a correct record at the next meeting

- 4.4 It was agreed that an item on cyber security would be inappropriate to hold in public due to the sensitivities, but officers were always happy to update members in a private session.
- 4.5 An item was requested on recruitment and retention issues affecting the council as a whole. It was agreed this would be raised at the next lead members meeting to discuss format and associated timescales.

ACTION: DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

5. FINANCE UPDATE

- 5.1 Steve Mawson was invited to present this item in Paul Blacker's absence. He stated that this was the latest finance monitoring position which had been considered by Cabinet in January.
- 5.2 A member questioned the Community Safety projected overspend, noting the report stated this was largely due to staff related costs and the member was unaware that there was a vacancy management savings target for this Directorate. It was advised that specific information would be sought but the officer suspected that normally, the Directorate would assume a general 1-2% turnover of staff during a financial year, which would allow in-year savings to be used to meet their overtime budget. What this appeared to flag was that there weren't sufficient savings in vacancy management turnover, due to low staff turnover and/or posts being filled, to meet the overtime budget.

ACTION: Steve Mawson

- 5.3 The Chair of Fire Scrutiny requested this issue be covered at their next scrutiny meeting in more detail, assuming that most of this overspend was specific for the Fire Service.

ACTION: Democratic Services

- 5.4 It was confirmed that the Investment and Transformation Fund was a capital, self-funded scheme that the Council set aside for large transformation projects that could generate additional income or create savings for the Council in the long term. An example of this was the NHS arrangements for Quayside House, GCC provided the building to rent out and used the rent received to pay for the borrowing.

ACTION: Steve Mawson – Confirm whether a list of this financial year's large resurfacing schemes would be published

- 5.5 Members noted that Public Health activity was funded by a ring-fenced grant which meant any underspend highlighted in this report would be carried forward for Public Health activities only and not used to balance overspends in another service. Quite often the service worked on an estimated demand,

and where this did not come forward, officers would review why, whether anything could be done better or differently. What was harder to predict was the long-term impacts. Generally Public Health benefits did not come back to Local Government, and money spent locally reflected a very small amount in comparison to what would be needed to solve the entire problem e.g., smoking. Authorities therefore focused on, with the resource they had available, where could they make the greatest impact.

5.6 It was questioned to what extent the Public Health team looked at those areas that did directly affect council services, such as elderly residents being able to stay in their own homes. Officers confirmed there were a number of mandated services the team had to deliver but there was some opportunity to look at long-term preventative approaches e.g., investing in Children and Family Centres which looked at early intervention for family health and wellbeing. What was difficult to demonstrate though was causality and tracking whether these interventions would create a longer term saving for the Council.

5.7 The overspend in Children's Service was raised, particularly noting the number of children in care and the amount of out of county/external placements which were causing such massive pressure on the budget. Members wanted to ensure that if the Council was paying over the odds for external providers, that these were actually delivering the best outcomes for children under their care.

6. STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE REPORT 3RD QUARTER

6.1 Rob Ayliffe presented this report and members noted the following:

- There were no new major performance issues emerging in this quarter.
- The Council continued to exceed its targets for reducing its own carbon emissions but recognised that this was only a small part of the overall picture, the more challenging target was reducing emissions across the county and hence this remaining as an 'amber' performance.
- Environment, Economy and Infrastructure Directorate had good performance against road safety defect targets, but it was recognised this had not resonated with public feeling as of yet.
- There continued to be a high level of demand for Children's Services which was causing pressure on areas such as timeliness of initial visits. This performance was directly related to demand levels and not drift and delay as had previously been seen. The quality of social work continued to improve and so did the reduction in the number of children on Child Protection Plans longer than 2 years.
- The Education Health and Care Plan assessment backlog and an increase in complaints due to the backlog was a significant national problem at the moment. Budget provision had been allocated to try and keep with demand but there was no easy solution.
- Adult's Services showed good performance by brokerage over the winter period with low levels of delays in timely discharge from hospital.

- The target for safe and well visits by the Fire Service was not being met, although fire inspections of high-risk premises remained on track which meant the prioritisation was right.
- This performance data was now being presented in advance of Cabinet which gave members of this Committee a good opportunity for pre-scrutiny.

6.2 A member questioned why, in relation to the highways network satisfaction survey, the sample size had not been increased considering how important feedback on this area was for the Council. It was advised that even though it was a relatively small sample size, it was statistically significant enough to give officers a sense of where satisfaction lay and in comparison to its neighbours, what was missing however, was knowledge around what was driving those levels of satisfaction or not, and therefore what could constructively be drawn from the survey results. The survey was part of national benchmarking and therefore could not be shaped or changed.

ACTION: Rob Ayliffe – Request an update on Apetito from Sarah Scott

ACTION: Rob Ayliffe – Request that the delivery of Levelling Up Together grant programme be reviewed for learning opportunities.

6.3 A member raised concern regarding the delivery of the B4063 'cycle spine' route, and how the strategic aim linked with its delivery. The member shared that it had to date caused chaos in their local area and felt the timescales agreed for delivery at a strategic level had left officers on the ground trying to deliver something within unrealistic timescales. In response, it was stressed that it was a key role of senior officers to explore, challenge and understand what any strategic delivery plan looked like and meant for those who had to deliver it, they would be very concerned if this was lost sight of during decision making, and officers should be held account if this was the case. The member asked to work with officers to understand how to raise and address the issues experienced during this scheme in a constructive manner and in order to learn lessons for future projects. Another member added whether there was effective oversight of the scheme as a whole, and not just per section which had been separated into individual delivery projects.

6.4 Officers confirmed that the reference to 'draft' Contract Procedure Rules on page 43 was a mistake, the review had been completed in July 2021. A member asked that the issue of 'copying and pasting' be raised with the teams to ensure these reports were being adequately updated before coming to Committee.

6.5 In reference to Strategic Risk 12.1 a member raised that there needed to be more reference to adapting council services to deal with the 'here and now' of climate change, operating within increasingly frequent adverse weather conditions and to ensure they remained accessible.

ACTION: Rob Ayliffe to ask risk owners to update their comments in light of this feedback.

7. CORPORATE RESOURCES PERFORMANCE REPORT

- 7.1 The report was taken as read and members received an additional update presentation on ICT, the detail of which has been published as an annex to the minutes.
- 7.2 A member queried whether there had been consideration of councillors being trained as Digital Smarties. It was advised that the level of training and activity needed for staff at the moment would not be suitable for members, but officers would take this point away and consider how it could be adapted.
- 7.3 In addition, there was a discussion about support for members using IT in general. Some members suggested the need to have additional training available for members who wanted to make better use of the new systems and programmes being rolled out, targeted member development training for councillors at a more basic level, and also some form of resource available for general IT queries and learning.

ACTION: Steve Mawson

- 7.4 In terms of the IT critical user support that was currently provided for councillors, the Committee noted that the longer-term idea was to expand this into general service management where members would raise a call and then be flagged as a critical user in the system. This would mean the workload would be shared across a wider team, but members would still be prioritised in follow up.
- 7.5 It was confirmed that when IT were aware of system outages, these were advertised via the Service Now dashboard. This was a programme available to all staff and members to report IT issues but could also be accessed via a webpage if the network was down. It was raised that this was a key example of information and IT support that could be better communicated with members.
- 7.6 Officers shared that in terms of the Council's IT improvement journey, by May this year, they will be 80% where they wanted to be by the end of 2022. At that point, the focus would change from IT improvements to a Digital Strategy, which focused more on systems that staff were using day to day and how these could be improved. This Committee would be kept up to date on the journey and in time receive an overview item on the Digital Strategy.

CHAIR

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Meeting concluded at 12:07.

ICT improvement plan

COSC update

February 2022

Living our values every day



Accountable



Integrity



Empower



Respect



Excellence



What has changed during 2022:

Achieved

- Rollout of M365 Teams availability for all Staff
- Completed network in Shire Hall and all county buildings, Library network complete,
- Servers at Shire Hall and Data Centre moved to new network
- Teams collaboration and Sharepoint rolled out
- Significantly improved security through Microsoft toolset
- Whole council ongoing training to use M365 – digital smarties and all staff– Phase 1 complete

Still to come in this phase:

- Network tidy up with review of WiFi access points and UPS provision
- Exchange Online migration, BYOD: Email and calendars in the cloud – now aiming to complete May 2023 (was Oct/Nov 2022)
- Member roll out of Exchange, BYOD and updating mobiles – planned to commence w/c 27 Feb
- New BT homeworking connection being tested (FortiClient) ready to start load testing Mid March (was Nov 2022)



What is already better ...

Despite recent issues, outages or Priority 1 (P1) incidents remain low and within targets - P1 4 hour resolution target has been met 100% for 12 successive months.

New starter kit readiness continues to improve with majority ready at day 1, with 2 to 5 day turnaround for known start dates.

Liquidlogic Children's System (LCS) is on the latest release (V16) with latest vendor hotfix in test during February. LCS performance has remained stable.

People's Network in libraries replaced and public kit completely replaced.

Customer survey feedback averaged 95% Good and Neutral across Q3, with January results 92% Good and Neutral; exceeding the target of 90%.



Training and communication

- Regular comms regarding basic practice to get the best out of ICT, regular restarts and upgrades, minimising use of citrix etc
- Another round of sessions with adults and children's social care teams to update on roadmap and understand any further issues
- 200 Digital Smarties across the council active and answering questions
- Staff pulse survey regarding current ICT experience – May 2023 (was October 2022), Children's user group in place, wider user group in development



What will be different by end of Spring 2023

- Rollout of Exchange online which reduces the need to connect to our servers – in progress, reviewing issues logs and slight delay
- New connection from home – quicker and more stable, the project will commence on completion of exchange online
- OneDrive and SharePoint removes the need to connect to on-premise servers and improves collaboration – technically complete, service take up in progress
- Staff can use own mobiles for Teams, emails and access to files via OneDrive and SharePoint – in progress, aligned with Exchange online
- Liquidlogic hosted for Adults and Children's Social Care with Adults customer portals live – Upgrades complete, hosted technical environment developed by Liquidlogic, proof of concept and user testing during February and March



What will be different by Summer of 2023

	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March
Yammer, Personal Teams, OneDrive	Completed							
Teams for collaboration	PoC Completed		Rollout Completed					
Teams (Unified Comms)			UC Discovery		Planning		Rollout Summer '23	
SharePoint	Poc/Pilot	Rollout Completed						
Exchange Online			Rollout through to May '23					
Self Service Password Reset (SSPR)								Rollout
New Virtual Private Network (VPN)	Awaiting BT Upgrade before testing can commence - likely April for Testing							
Additional M365 Apps						Request through ServiceNow		
Change & Adoption (Changing Social)	Functional Training		Art of the Possible			Phase 2 planning for delivery '23/'24		

Teams / Sharepoint for collaboration was complete by October, user change and roll out is ongoing.