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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9 FEBRUARY 2017

Present: Councillors Webb (Chair), Howard, Bacon (until 19:30), Batsford, Charman, Cooke, Rankin, Turner, Wincott and Atkins (until 19:48)

Apologies for absence were noted for Councillor Dowling

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Councillors declared an interest in the minutes:

| Councillor | Minute Number | Interest |
|------------|--|--|
| Webb | 7 – Quarter 3 2016/17 Performance and Financial Monitoring | Personal – he is a member of East Sussex County Council and the GMB Union |

5. MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 30 NOVEMBER 2016 AND THE BUDGET OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2017

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 30 November 2016 and the Budget Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 26 January 2017 be approved as a correct record of the meeting

6. CHANNEL SHIFT TO ONLINE SERVICES AND MY HASTINGS UPDATE

As their annual meeting in July, overview and scrutiny members had noted that an increasing number of council services were being made available online. Members were keen to receive an update on the take up of the online offer, and to monitor the implementation of recommendations from the earlier overview and scrutiny review of digital inclusion.

The Corporate Customer Services Manager presented an update on the channel shift to online services and the development of My Hastings online. She explained that services which generated high volumes of enquiries had been prioritised for transfer to My Hastings online, these included; waste and recycling, reporting a problem and council tax and housing benefit look up. In December 2016, for all services currently available online, 57.8% of cases were reported through a My Hastings self account and 29% via the telephone in the Contact Centre. A review would be undertaken of the services already transferred to My Hastings, to assess whether further improvements can be made.

Members were keen to understand whether the location of the Community Contact Centre in the Town Hall impacted communication with other services departments,

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most of which were based in Muriel Matters House. The Corporate Customer Services Manager replied that Contact Centre staff worked closely with service departments to develop a partnership approach. Staff in the Community Contact Centre gain a broad experience of services across the council, and many go on to work in other teams within the authority.

Members were advised that a number of services, including garden waste, bulky waste collections, and the comments, compliments and complaints module were due to be transferred to My Hastings online shortly.

Discussion took place regarding the triage process for housing options enquiries, which was now undertaken using an online service. The Corporate Customer Services Manager commented that staff in the Community Contact Centre were still available to deal with face to face enquiries from people who may not be able to access the service online. It was hoped that by allowing customers to carry out transactional services online, this would create additional capacity for the Contact Centre to deal with more complex enquiries.

Members were advised that wider marketing and promotion of My Hastings would be undertaken to support the channel shift to online services.

The committee welcomed the update and thanked the Corporate Customer Services Manager for her presentation.

7. QUARTER 3 2016/17 PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MONITORING

The Director of Corporate Services and Governance presented a report which advised members of performance against the 2016/17 targets and performance indicators in the corporate plan for quarter 3.

Discussion took place regarding the target to increase the percentage of council tax collected in year. The committee was advised that, although the target for quarter 3 had not been met, the Revenues Manager was confident that the year-end target was still achievable. Moreover, working practices within the team had been refined, which had resulted in fewer court attendances and less use of bailiffs.

The Director of Corporate Services advised that the purchase of land at Churchfields Estate had now been completed. A second project at Churchfields Estate, in respect of a new factory unit, had been cancelled after a third party decided not to proceed with the scheme.

The Director of Operational Services agreed to circulate a breakdown of the carry forwards set out in the capital programme for operational services.

Members noted delays to the original timescale for the development of a new visitor and interpretive centre at Hastings Country Park. The council and Groundworks South were in the process of bidding to a European fund which supports the development of straw-bale buildings. If this bid was unsuccessful, the council would consider other construction methods for the new building. The committee highlighted

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the importance of keeping members of the public updated about the project; particularly as works were due to begin later this year.

The Director of Operational Services updated members on the development of an action plan to support the improvement of the White Rock area. East Sussex County Council had indicated that they would undertake a review of potential traffic calming measures for the A259. Members added that the development of the action plan also provided an opportunity to review the provision of leisure facilities in the town.

A successful ballot had been undertaken earlier in the year to set up a Business Improvement District (BID) for the town centre, which was an important step in securing the regeneration of the area. A new board was being set up to oversee the work of the BID and replace the existing Town Centre Management Committee; the council would be invited to appoint a Director to the new group.

The committee thanked all those involved, across the organisation, in supporting the ROOT1066 festival.

Discussion took place regarding the waste and street cleansing arrangements. Members were advised that the council's contractor had recently appointed a new contract manager, who was working closely with council officers to improve the service. The committee commented that a number of issues around street cleaning and fly tipping had been experienced on social housing estates, and it was essential that the council worked with local housing associations to ensure they were addressed.

Members acknowledged that the council had recently appointed a new Income Generation Manager. The committee were keen to receive an update on income generation initiatives later in the year.

RESOLVED (unanimously) that: -

- 1. The committees comments on quarter 3 performance be addressed with appropriate action and report back to the committee where necessary, and;**
- 2. Staff be thanked for their hard work and achievements in this quarter**

The reason for this decision was:

To assist the council undertake performance management arrangements.

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8. UPDATE ON 2016/17 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Continuous Improvement and Democratic Services Manager presented an update on the overview and scrutiny work programme for 2016/17. He commented that initial meeting of the review of overview and scrutiny arrangements had taken place in the last quarter.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at. 6.05 pm)