

PUBLIC

MINUTES of a meeting of **IMPROVEMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - RESOURCES** held on Thursday, 1 December 2022 at Committee Room 1, County Hall, Matlock, DE4 3AG.

PRESENT

Councillor S Swann (in the Chair)

Councillors J Barron, J Dixon, M Foster, A Hayes, J Innes, D Muller and D Murphy.

Apologies for absence were submitted for Councillor R Ashton.

19/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

20/22 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Improvement & Scrutiny Committee Resources held on 21 July be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

21/22 PUBLIC QUESTIONS (30 MINUTE MAXIMUM IN TOTAL)

Question from D Ingham:

I've raised questions at this Committee before - in December 2021 and May 2022 relating to Equalities and Wellbeing.

In May the draft Wellbeing strategy referenced HSE 2020 national statistics – e.g. 5.8 days sickness per employee. No figures for DCC were included within the report or comparison data available albeit requested.

However, at Full Council, a matter of days after the Scrutiny Committee a figure of 10.1 days was reported for DCC employees.

Furthermore, there were ambiguous points within the report e.g. the Attendance Management procedure was reported as having been updated, not that it still required approval of ACOS and circulation.

There was reference to previously excluded groups now being reported in absence metrics - when in actual fact and for context this was just one group of less than 40 individuals.

By March 2022 the average number of days sickness for DCC employees had increased to 10.66 per year and within ASCH 15.74 per employee, around double the national 2021 sector average.

In the interests of transparency, why were these known facts at the time of the Scrutiny meeting in May 2022 not reported to the Committee and/or made clearer for their benefit and consideration?

Response :

The Wellbeing Strategy is an overarching strategy document. The figure from the HSE that was quoted in the draft Wellbeing Strategy was in the section highlighting the 'National Picture'. This was included to provide national context to the strategy and why such a strategy is beneficial to Derbyshire County Council. There is no direct correlation between the 2020 HSE figure and Derbyshire County Council sickness absence rates, as COVID-19 has had a significant effect on absence levels and the Council has made changes to the way it calculates sickness absence rates.

Furthermore, the report to the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee was to discuss the draft content of the revised Wellbeing Strategy as part of the consultation process and not a report on sickness absence rates. The Council does however report on the progress against the Council Plan to Cabinet as part of a joint Performance and Budget Monitoring Report on a quarterly basis. This includes details of sickness absence performance. Internally, regular performance reports are also shared with corporate management team and departmental management teams.

Supplementary Question:

I also made reference to this at the Extra-ordinary Full Council meeting on 02-11-22. I raised with Cllr Lewis my observations/ concerns around the use of wording within EIAs and how anticipations/reality differ.

The written response to my public question at the time when I came to Scrutiny in December made reference to the fact that Trade Unions had been consulted.

Anybody reading that would be left thinking wrongly everything therefore was fine.

They were consulted but it failed to mention that UNISON were unhappy with the process, how it was handled and the way they were communicated with and that the process didn't meet expectations and was raised by the TU EO Observer.

It didn't make it clear that the Observer didn't see individual application forms –

which was a requirement at the time and still is within the Recruitment and Selection Procedure.

I'm not seeking a reply from officers unless you wish to invite – what I do ask Chair is will the Committee acknowledge my overall detailed concerns regarding what is sometimes presented and agree it's just as important to continue to scrutinise what isn't said than is?

Response:

The Chairman on behalf of the Committee acknowledged the concerns raised.

22/22 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT - PROGRESS STRATEGY UPDATE

Jen Skila, Assistant Director HR, and Sally Pearson, Head of Learning and Development attended the meeting and provided an update on the progress of the deployment of the Learning and Development strategy since approval in April 2021, with focus on: the current learning and development offer; the learning and development budget; and the priorities for 2022/23.

A presentation was provided to compliment the detailed report that had been circulated in advance of the meeting, which gave the background, and the current learning offer, which aimed to develop the individual through both in house and commissioned provision.

Members were informed of a number of Priorities that had been identified for delivery in 2022/23 including developing the individual, the organisation and the talent pipeline.

Extensive consultation had taken place on the Learning and Development Strategy and operating model with stakeholders across the organisation, the Learning & Development Team and the trade unions.

Members were given the opportunity to make comments or ask questions which centred around the centralised learning and development budget; recruitment and retention issues, the need for future measures to evidence how well the strategy was working; and the need for employees to be able to train in area of interest to them. These were duly noted or answered by the officers present.

The Chairman, on behalf of the committee thanked the officers for their most comprehensive and informative report.

RESOLVED (1) to note the work the to date in implementing the Learning and Development Strategy, and

(2) to receive an update report in 6 months on progress including further updates on the Leadership Development Programme.

23/22 CHANNEL SHIFT UPDATE

Julie Odams, Assistant Director Communications and Customers, attended the meeting and provided an update on the implementation of the Council's Channel Shift programme, its achievement and next steps.

The report which had been circulated in advance of the meeting provided an overview of the programme aims and its expected benefits for both residents and the Council.

After a significant period of procurement, contract negotiation and technical implementation, the CRM system went live in December 2021, and details of the programme achievements to date were given in the report.

The Channel Shift programme continued until March 2025 and there were a range of significant delivery points in Autumn and Winter 2022

- Launch of event booking functionality
- Launch of room booking functionality
- Derbyshire Discretionary Fund application process online – target January 2023
- Childrens' Services use of new Customer feedback process (complaints etc.) – from November 2022
- Launch of the Councillor portal – tbc: dependent on the implementation of the new highways asset management system.
- Place use of new Customer feedback process (complaints etc.) - tbc: dependent on the implementation of the new highways asset management system.
- Enhanced reporting established - Autumn 2022.

Some challenges were being experienced in the implementation and integration of complex IT systems which had led to the movement of intended timescales for Children's Feedback, enhanced highways issue reporting and the Councillor portal implementation. This was consistently monitored by the programme governance board and through performance monitoring.

In August 2022 the Channel Shift team took on a new function related to

customer experience and would now analyse the data from the CRM and selected other systems to identify areas where customer interaction was not optimal and could be improved. It would use this data to work with departments to improve the customer experience, leading to an enhanced service to residents.

Members made a number of comments and asked questions which mainly centred around the reporting of Highways issues for both the public and elected members and the issues with the move from the Confirm system to the Alloy system in the Place department, which were duly noted or answered, and would be taken up with the department. It was also requested that future reports should include past figures to enable trends to be identified.

The Chairman thanked Julie for her comprehensive update, and as this would be her last meeting of the committee, thanked her on behalf of the committee, for her valued contribution to the committee and the authority.

RESOLVED to note the progress of the Channel Shift programme;

24/22 PRODUCTION OF 2023-24 REVENUE BUDGET

Wayne Sutton, Finance Manager attended the meeting to consult with members as part of the process towards production of the 2023-24 budget. Mr Sutton gave a presentation to the committee to compliment the detailed report that had been circulated in advance of the meeting which provided members with an update of the Revenue Budget Forecast Outturn for 2022-23, a summary of the Autumn Statement and Spending Review 2022, an update on Cost Pressure Bids received in respect of the 2023-24 Revenue Budget and Pay pressures for 2023-24

Members were given the opportunity to make comments or ask questions which were duly noted or answered by Mr Sutton, and would be considered as part of the consultation process moving forward.

The Chairman, on behalf of the committee thanked Mr Sutton for his most comprehensive and informative report, and also placed on record the committee's thanks and appreciation to Peter Handford, Director of Finance and ICT , who was leaving the County Council after many years and praised his hard work and dedication and wished him all the best for the future.

RESOLVED to (1) note the Revenue Budget Forecast Outturn for 2022-23 as at Quarter 1 (30 June 2022);

(2) note that was likely to be a significant shortfall in the Revenue Budget 2023-24 based on currently known information;

(3) note the ongoing work to identify further savings options, to reduce the 2023-24 Revenue Budget shortfall and therefore mitigate the use of one off reserves to deliver a balanced budget; and

(4) note the a key announcements in the Autumn Statement 2022 relevant to Local Government.

25/22 CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING & FORECAST AS AT QUARTER 1 2022-23

Wayne Sutton, Finance Manager, attended the meeting and provide members with Capital budget monitoring position as at 30 June 2022.

A detailed report had been circulated in advance of the meeting and included Cabinet approved schemes that had been active during this financial year, including schemes closed in year. Each scheme had a nominated budget holder who was responsible for ensuring the scheme stayed within budget, and who provides the projected spend figures. The schemes had been approved over several previous years in addition to the current year. Monitoring Reports had been considered by Cabinet in accordance with the Budget Monitoring Policy and Financial Regulations.

The 2022-23 capital programme was £101.896m, approved adjustments to this figure reduced this to £95.757m. The budget for active schemes being monitored this year total £624.846m, this reduction reflected the projects closed since 1 April 2022. There was a forecast underspend of £5.309m over the life of these projects, and details were given in Appendix 1 to the report.

Set out in Appendix 2 was a summary of the ten largest current capital schemes, representing approximately 49% of the current budget. These schemes were currently projected to underspend by £1.226m. This was mainly due to projected under spends of £1.557m relating to the LED Invest to Save project. As the project was funded by Invest to Save monies the underspend cannot be recycled or transferred to cover any potential overspends on other projects.

Members were given the opportunity to make comments or ask questions

which centred around mechanisms for planning for inflation, and the future use of reserves, which were duly noted or answered by Mr Sutton.

The Chairman, on behalf of the committee thanked Mr Sutton for his most comprehensive and informative report

RESOLVED to note the current position on the monitoring of Capital schemes as at 30 June 2022 (Quarter 1)

The meeting finished at 3.30 pm