

CABINET MEMBER (STRATEGIC FINANCE AND RESOURCES)

5th December, 2012

Cabinet Member

Present: - Councillor Duggins

Shadow Cabinet Member

Present: - Councillor Blundell

Employees Present: -

J. Barlow (Customer and Workforce Services Directorate)
J. Crawley (Customer and Workforce Services Directorate)
J. Evans (Finance and Legal Services Directorate)
T. Savill (Finance and Legal Services Directorate)
S. Symonds (Customer and Workforce Services Directorate)
J. Venn (Customer and Workforce Services Directorate)

Public Business

34. Apologies

There were no apologies.

35. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

36. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th October, 2012 were signed as a true record.

37. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

38. First Quarter Hospitality Statement for the Mayoralty of Councillor Tim Sawdon 2012/13

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Customer and Workforce Services which summarised the actual expenditure for the first quarter of Councillor Sawdon's Mayoral year from 17th May, 2012 to 16th August, 2012, together with the estimated expenditure for the second quarter from 17th August, 2012 to 16th November, 2012.

The report indicated that the start year budget for the Mayoralty was £65,595 and total actual expenditure to 16th August, 2012 was £14,594, which was slightly under budget. Estimates for the second quarter covering the period 17th August to 16th November, 2012 indicated spend within budget despite a busy mayoral schedule. At this stage of the year there was no cause for concern.

RESOLVED that after due consideration of the report and the matters raised at the meeting, the Cabinet Member approved the contents of the report which described how the hospitality budget was spent on an event-by-event

39. Performance of the Benefits Service for the period April 2012-September 2012

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Finance and Legal Services which provided information about performance and developments within the benefits service. The service administered more than £150m of housing and council tax benefit (HB and CTB) to more than 41,000 households. During the period April to September the service processed the average new claim for benefit in 26.3 days and for change in circumstances in 23.4 days.

During the period 1st April to 30th September 2012 the benefits service had processed new HB/HTC claims in an average of 26.3 calendar days. This is 3.6 days faster than the same period in 2011/12. The final total achieved in 2011/12 was 26.5 days. The service remained confident of similar improvement in the second half of the year, which would mean meeting the operational target of 23 days.

Change of circumstance notifications for the same period were dealt with in an average of 23.4 days, which was above the operational target of 12.5 days and higher than the same period for 2010/11 (19.4 days) and was disappointing given the general improvement in the service and was due to the ongoing implementation of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) initiative Automated Transfer of Data to Local Authority Systems (ATLAS) and to prioritising work to reduce local authority error payments, of which the year end total was expected to remain below the lower threshold for the fifth consecutive year.

The number of people making enquiries about benefit had increased. Phone calls relating to HB and CTB rose from 37,952 in 2011/12 (first half year) to 42,015 in 2012/13 – an increase of over 10 percent. Personal visits to Spire House also increased from 23,541 to 14,579. The view of staff was that enquiries were becoming increasingly more complex and taking more time.

RESOLVED that after due consideration of the report and matters raised at the meeting, the Cabinet Member:

- (1) Note the performance of the Benefits Service for the period 1st April to 30th September 2012;**
- (2) Agree to receive a further report at the first meeting of the new municipal calendar 2013/14 to provide an update for the period April 2012 to March 2013.**

40. Performance for the Revenues Service for the period April-September 2012

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Finance and Legal Services which provided information on performance and developments within the

revenues service during the period 1 April to 30 September 2012. The service was responsible for the collection of more than £106m of council tax from 134,000 domestic properties, more than £117m of non-domestic rates from 8,000 properties and more than £90m of corporate income. At the half year stage the service had collected 55.4% of council tax and 58.6% of business rates and had made significant progress in reducing the amount of corporate debt which was more than six months old. The service was projected to collect 96% of council tax and 98% of business rates by the end of March 2013.

RESOLVED that after due consideration of the report and matters raised at the meeting, the Cabinet Member:

- (1) Note the performance of the revenues service for the period 1 April to 30 September 2013**
- (2) Agreed to receive a further report at the first meeting of the new municipal calendar year 2013/14 to provide a review of the performance for April 2012 to March 2013**

41. Agency Workers and Interim Managers – Performance Management Report (July-September 2012)

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Customer and Workforce Services regarding performance information on the use of agency workers procured through the Master Vendor Contract for the second quarter, 1 July to 30 September 2012; the comparison of expenditure between quarters one and two; and Interim Manager spends for the same period.

Cabinet Member noted that spend was up £72k this quarter, which and been due to covering for holidays and the increased expenditure to support the Benefits Service and ICT technical assistance

The report set out summary information on employee headcount, full-time equivalent (FTE) and compared the years 2010/11 and 2011/12 on a number of equality measures.

The Cabinet Member noted that the headline workforce profile data for the year 1st April, 2011, to 31st March, 2012, which was taken from a snapshot of data on 31st March, 2012. The detail was included in Appendix 1 to the report. However, this information did not take account of any employees leaving under the ER/VR whose employment ended after 31st March, 2012,

The reductions relating to schools were inflated due to 5 secondary schools converting to Academy status in the 2011/12 year and therefore their employees will no longer be included in the analysis contained within future reports.

The report included the following summary equality data:-

- More than half of the Council's workforce was employed on a part-time basis (59.8%)

- The leaver rate for all employees was 20.7% and had increased from that reported last year (12.9% (adjusted)) this included employees leaving within the ER/VR programme
- 77.9% of the workforce was female
- At senior management level (above Grade 10) over half the workforce was female (67.8%)
- Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) representation in the workforce was 12.7%, this was an increase on last year's figure of 12.5%. The Core Council/Schools breakdown was shown in Appendix 1 to the report.
- The number of employees who had declared a disability had decreased to 3.99% from 4.16% (This was an area that was potentially under-reported, with over 23% of the workforce where their disability status was unknown. This under-reporting could hinder the Council's ability to meaningfully address issues for disabled staff and would be addressed through the next employee data gathering exercise). The Core Council/Schools breakdown was detailed in appendix 1 to the report.
- The largest age group (41%) in the Council's workforce was 45-59 years and the representation of young people (16-24) in the Council remained low at 5.7 %.

The information in the report and the statistical information in Appendix 1 to the report would be used to support the City Council's workforce planning objectives over the coming year. An Action Plan detailed in Appendix 2 had also been developed for 2012/13 with the purpose of improving the diversity of the workforce.

RESOLVED that after due consideration of the report and the matters raised at the meeting, the Cabinet Member noted the workforce profile information contained in the report and approved the Action Plan set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

33. **Outstanding Issues**

There were no outstanding issues.

34. **Any other Business**

There were no other items of business.

(Note: the meeting closed: 2.25 p.m.)