

Performance/Administration Cabinet Committee

Thursday, 2 February 2017

7.30 pm

Present:

Cllr Leslie Hills (Chair)

Councillors: Colin Caller
Brian Francis
John Knight
Peter Scollard
Derek Shelbrooke
Narinder Singh Thandi

Darren Everden Service Manager (IT Services)
Mike Bytheway Service Manager (Revenues & Benefits)
Ben Turner Corporate Performance Manager
Sarah Arding Committee Services Officer

37. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Julia Burgoyne, Bronwen McGarrity and David Hurley and Councillor Shelbrooke attended as his substitute.

38. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2016 were signed by the Chair.

39. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

40. Corporate Performance Update – Quarter Three 2016-17

The Corporate Performance Manger (CPM) advised Members that the Report provided the Committee with information on Performance Measures (PMs) (target-based measures) and Performance Indicators (PIs) (providing important contextual performance information related to the Corporate Plan's Key Objectives). The former related to services essential to the delivery of the Key Objectives whilst the latter are related to factors that the Council has an influence over but cannot control the outcomes.

The Chair noted that a major part of the Portfolio related to the collection of Council Tax and the statistics relating to this area were favourable which was a good sign.

The Committee queried the percentage of audit recommendations implemented as members were concerned that this had fallen. The CPM advised that the Council was working towards the year-end figure and the implementation of some items had been delayed or

deferred. Councillors considered that there was an upward trend but it was problematic if the indicator was red although the service was not performing badly - a more detailed narrative would promote understanding and the Committee asked that this was prepared for the next meeting.

The Chair Observed that the PMs relating to the Revenues and Benefits Service indicated that the Council was performing better than for a number of years and the Committee congratulated Officers.

The Service Manager Revenues and Benefits (SMRB) was asked for an explanation of the PIs relating to Housing Benefits overpayments. He clarified that the figures were '£s' and provided Members with information regarding the raised and recovered statistics. He advised that realistically some money was unrecoverable but the Council is on target to recover an increased amount. The Committee suggested that a more accurate PI would be the '%' of overpayments collected however the SMRB advised that this had been used in the past and was not informative. Due to the nature of the work the service undertakes, more overpayments will be raised than can be recovered in year. He was happy to meet with Members to discuss the PI for future years.

The Chair advised the Committee that the statistics regarding IT were fully covered in the following Report (Agenda Item 41).

The PI indicating the percentage of council tax accounts signed up for e-billing was deliberated in depth. The Committee considered whether this initiative had been adequately advertised and requested information regarding the benefits of e-billing. The SMRB responded that this led to paperless billing and the more residents that sign up the more savings to be made in paper and postage. Residents have the ability to view information online at any time rather than storing paper at home. There was no specific numerical target but as the date for annual billing drew close there would be increased publicity to residents and it was hoped this would result in an upturn in take-up. Given the requirement for the Council to save money it was not possible to offer financial incentives to participate and it was acknowledged there would always be a requirement to produce some paper bills.

The Council is committed to the development of shared services and the Committee was pleased to note the good progress made in this area. Further information would be presented to the next meeting.

The Committee noted the information contained within the report.

41. IT Infrastructure Update

The Service Manager (IT) presented the Committee with a Report detailing progress made on the IT infrastructure update. He advised that there had been a Member Training Session to provide information and this report contained some of the same material. In particular he drew Councillors' attention to the following developments:

- The last legacy database had now been migrated to a modern platform.
- The appointment of a Local Land and Property Gazetteer Officer (LLPG) had improved the quality of data recorded and approximately 85% of addresses were now up to date. In practise this meant inconsistencies had been resolved and inaccuracies identified and corrected. This enabled the data to be used for business

process automation as detailed in the report. He noted that the remaining 15% of data represented more complex cases and would take longer to correct and update.

- Problems with Modern.gov had been resolved. The program had been moved to a new server and Modern.gov had identified a problem and provided a fix. The issue had been confined to offsite users/iPads.
- The project to replace the existing two card payment systems was underway. The new provider could facilitate more methods of payments – Customer Service staff could be provided with tablets which would free up the kiosks for cash payments; payment via mobile phones; the ability to set up recurring card payments; text messaging reminders. There were some audit compliance requirements to meet but it was hoped to go live in March.

Members were concerned about the security of data and Data Protection compliance especially with regard to the adoption of Cloud Services. SMIT assured the Committee that Cloud Providers had to provide services compliant with EU data protection requirements. Before any data could be transferred a privacy impact assessment would be undertaken.

The Chair asked about the live chat on website, cost of implementation and usage. SMIT advised that this was open source software which is provided licence free to the Council. The live chat was available only when a Customer Service Agent was free to facilitate the chat but prevented unnecessary telephone calls.

The Chair further enquired if the work of the LLPG included recording of grass and soft landscaping areas and identifying the agency responsible for maintenance. SMIT explained that this task was not within the remit of the LLPG but Officers at Brookvale had set up a GIS System and loaded KCC data regarding maintenance. The information previously held in hard copy was therefore now digitised and would be available to assist with enquiries. Errors in the data would be corrected as necessary.

The Committee noted the loss of IT was potentially one of the greatest risks to the operation of GBC services. SMIT advised members that should GBC lose the ability to operate out of any of its buildings the Cloud Systems would be beneficial as the new payment system was to be Cloud-based and would therefore still be operational. Other systems are backed up via offsite arrangements and a new facility at the Kent and Medway Data Centre via the Kent Public Service Network. Configuration would take time but would be much more efficient than trying to replace like for like. In response to a member's question about a major fire SMIT reassured the Committee that the backup data was stored off site.

The Chair enquired if the new card payment system would be used in the Market and was informed that this would be implemented. The new system would provide greater flexibility and security and staff would be trained both when it was implemented and with ongoing requirements as necessary.

With regard to the increased use of Social Media by the Council the Chair noted the need for Member Training in this area.

The Committee noted the information contained within the report.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 8.41pm