

**Minutes of a Meeting of the
Performance and Finance Scrutiny
Committee held at Council Chamber
on 17 June 2015**

+ Cllr David Allen (Chairman)
+ Cllr Wynne Price (Vice Chairman)

+ Cllr Dan Adams	+ Cllr Max Nelson
+ Cllr Bill Chapman	+ Cllr Robin Perry
- Cllr Edward Hawkins	+ Cllr Chris Pitt
+ Cllr Paul Ilnicki	+ Cllr Darryl Ratiram
+ Cllr Oliver Lewis	+ Cllr Victoria Wheeler
+ Cllr Jonathan Lytle	+ Cllr John Winterton
+ Cllr Alan McClafferty	

+ Present

- Apologies for absence presented

Substitutes: Cllr Valerie White

In Attendance: Andrew Crawford, Cllr Ruth Hutchinson, Robert Fox, Sarah Groom, Julia Hutley-Savage, Katie Jobling, Karen Limmer, Kelvin Menon, Sarah Parmenter and Richard Payne

1 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman welcomed Members to the first meeting of the Committee and thanked the newly elected Councillors for attending the pre-meeting briefing. He referred Members to additional documents which were available on their Tablets and in hard copy, to assist in developing the work programme for the ensuing year.

2 Minutes - 25 March 2015

The minutes of the Scrutiny meeting of the previous Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, held on 25 March 2015, were agreed and signed by the Chairman. Members agreed a vote of thanks to the Chairman of the previous Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, John May.

3 Scrutiny of Portfolio Holders - Transformation

Councillor Colin Dougan, the Transformation Portfolio Holder, provided an outline of the work streams within his portfolio. As part of his briefing, and in response to Members' questions, he noted the following:

Building Control – Despite private inspectors being able to provide building control inspections, the Council continued to carry out 70% of inspections in the Borough.

Business and Community Development - The Council had recently developed an Economic Development Strategy with a significant action plan, focussing on inward investment. This included a new service provided jointly with Base Point and the Surrey Chambers of Commerce aimed at making free business start-up clinics for new businesses in the Borough. The Council had also been instrumental in re-invigorating the Yorktown and Watchmoor Business Association and establishing the Frimley Business Association.

Corporate Property – The Council own and managed a number of properties, including the Depot, the Arena, the freehold of the Mall and Atrium and a number of buildings leased to community groups. Nearly 20% of Surrey Heath House was occupied by external users, notably Surrey Police, Surrey Heath Clinical Commissioning Group, Surrey County Council, with the Department for Works and Pensions having agreed to lease part of the Ground Floor. Each organisation paid rent, reducing the burden on Council Tax Payers.

In response to a Member's concerns on usage, it was confirmed that Pembroke House, which was owned by the Council, had ceased to be occupied in 2003 and following substantial fire damage in 2008, had been exempted from Business Rates.

Freedom of Information/Data Protection – The Council had seen a significant increase in Freedom of Information requests during the previous year, though the bulk of these were business rates enquiries from commercial concerns which carried no charge, but were used for commercial purposes.

ICT – One of the main recommendations of the Digital Services Working Group was that Members should use Tablets to access agendas and minutes which would result in savings on paper. Members' e-mails had also been migrated to the Cloud. In addition to the introduction of a new telephone system, the Council was working on an upgrade to its web site.

Internal/External Service Review – The Council had recently undergone a peer review by members and officers of the Local Government Association (LGA). The LGA had subsequently submitted a very positive report and most of their recommendations had already been implemented ahead of a further visit in November 2015. Internal reviews had been carried out on a number of projects, notably including the Joint Waste Project.

Key Projects/Partnerships/Regeneration – The Council's top priority was the redevelopment of the A30 London Road Frontage. In addition, the Council had ongoing projects involving the Land East of Knoll Road (LEKR), plus the development of Pembroke House on the Frimley Road. The Council had recently bought St Georges, a light industrial site next to the Toolshop building, off the Frimley Road, which the Council already owned, and Ashwood House, on Pembroke Broadway.

The LEKR project involved the landowners (this Council, Surrey County Council, Surrey Police and Portesbery School) investigating their aspirations for the site, but the Council's top priority remained the London Road Frontage.

Councillor Dougan agreed to draw the Corporate Property Team's attention to Ward Councillors' concerns over the condition/ future viability of the shopping mall in Heatherside and whether or not there were opportunities to purchase and improve the site.

Budgets – with the exception of licence costs, expenditure on budgets within the Portfolio were either on or under target.

Resolved, that the presentation be noted.

4 2014/15 End of Year Performance Report

The Transformation Team Manager presented a report on the Council's performance against the targets set in the 2014/15 Annual Plan. She noted that the Council had met 83% of Corporate Key Priorities and 91% of all service milestones, with 85% of performance indicators having reached or exceeded their targets.

The Council's Key Priorities were:

1. To deliver an improved Camberley Town Centre for the benefit of the Borough;
2. Working with partners to make Camberley a destination of choice with improved transport in the Borough;
3. Securing the future of local public services in Surrey Heath through a variety of strategies; and
4. Delivering with partners the sustainable Community Strategy priority action plans to improve community safety, transport, health, children and young people and economic wellbeing.

Although the Council had reached or exceeded many targets, some, such as developing Camberley Rail Station or the Library, which involved or were in the ownership of other organisations, had to be aspirational.

Whilst recognising that where targets were easily achieved, this could be because more stretching targets were needed, members were informed that the Transformation Team acted in the challenger role to push targets. Some of the targets, notably in digital communication, were probably unrealistically high and would need to be re-assessed.

During consideration, Members raised the following:

- (i) Benchmarking – Consideration should be given to benchmarking, both against like organisations and in terms of residents' levels of satisfaction. In terms of the Contact Centre targets and in particular, the red areas, the Corporate Portfolio Holder would be asked to address these in her presentation to the Committee's 2 December 2015 meeting.

- (ii) Transport – There was a need to maintain pressure on Network Rail for more direct fast trains from Camberley to London. However, Members also recognised that improving transport links extended beyond rail services and the Town Centre. It was suggested that the targets should be expanded to include improved links from the Villages. The Regulatory Portfolio Holder would attend the Committee’s next meeting, on 29 July 2015.
- (iii) Web Site – It was noted that free web management software had been used as part of the ongoing upgrade to the Council’s web pages. Members sought a breakdown of the overall costs of the recent upgrade.
- (iv) Car Parks – Members reported a lack of reliability in the current car park payment packages in Camberley Town Centre and noted a query on the town centric focus to the exclusion of the rest of the Borough. This would be raised with the Business Portfolio Holder at the Committee’s 27 January 2016 meeting.
- (v) Leisure Leases – Members requested an e-mailed update on outstanding leisure leases.
- (vi) Waste Collection - The Joint Waste Project involved this and 4 other Councils with contracts due to end in similar timescales, tendering with a view to achieving significant economies of scale. Consideration was being given to issuing a 10 year contract with a clause for a possible further 5 years. The Community Portfolio Holder would be invited to attend the meeting on 30 September 2015.
- (vii) Finance – Members welcomed the changes in the investment strategy to allow greater scope for placement of investments, including into property, but noted a request for more quantifiable targets. The Finance Portfolio Holder and the Council Leader would attend the Committee’s 23 March 2016 meeting.
- (viii) Community Events – Members welcomed the success of the recent Engagement Event covering Bisley and West End, organised by the Surrey Heath Partnership. A further event was planned for later in the year, though the venue had still to be clarified.
- (ix) Targets - The Committee requested further information on those performance indicators which had missed predetermined deadlines and why.

Resolved, that the report be noted and

- (i) electronic updates be provided on performance indicators which have missed predetermined deadlines; and**
- (ii) Portfolio Holders be asked to address the points raised above during their presentations to future meetings, including the reasoning behind any deadlines missed.**

5 Expenditure on Professional Advisors

The Committee considered a report detailing expenditure over £500 on professional advisors for the year to 31 March 2015. The vast majority of the money spent had been used to “buy in” specialist services for areas such as planning and property management, with £500,000 being allocated in the previous year towards advice and work related to the Camberley Town Centre Development.

In response to Members’ questions, the Executive Head of Finance explained measures taken in selecting external professional assistance and ensuring value for money. The Council bought in services from other Authorities with necessary skill sets, but also provided arboricultural and drainage expertise to others.

Resolved, that the report be noted.

6 Working Groups

The Chairman informed Members that there was provision in the Committee’s terms of reference to set up task and finish groups to target specific pieces of work. He referred to the work done by the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on attracting inward grants.

7 Committee Work Programme - 2015/16

The Democratic Services Officer reported that, under Part 4 of the Constitution, Committees were expected to agree their work programme for the ensuing year at the last meeting of the previous year. The exceptions were in election years and when a new committee was formed, both of which applied.

The Executive Head of Finance had drafted a possible work programme based on each meeting being themed on a Portfolio and services under each.

Following consideration of options and where possible, linking reports to Portfolio responsibilities, the Committee agreed a work programme for 2015/16, as attached at Annex A.

Resolved, that the Committee Work Programme for the remainder of the municipal year, as attached at Annex A, be agreed.

Chairman

ANNEX A**ANNEX A**

**PERFORMANCE AND FINANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16**

DATE	TOPIC	OFFICER
29 July 2015		
1	Scrutiny of Portfolio Holders - Regulatory	Andrew Crawford
2	Update report on the work of the Housing Team	Jenny Rickard
3	Reserves and provisions	Sarah Parmenter
4	Progress on Surrey Heath Partnership Projects	Sarah Groom
5	Committee Work Programme	Andrew Crawford
30 September 2015		
1	Scrutiny of Portfolio Holders - Community	Andrew Crawford
2	Update on Emergency Planning and Business Continuity	Tim Pashen
3	Update on the Joint Waste contract	Tim Pashen
4	Update on Independent Living	Tim Pashen
5	Air Quality Monitoring	James Robinson
6	Annual Report on the Treasury Management	Katie Jobling
7	Committee Work Programme	Andrew Crawford
2 December 2015		
1	Scrutiny of Portfolio Holders - Corporate	Andrew Crawford
2	Half Year Treasury Management Report	Katie Jobling
3	Half Year Finance Report	Katie Jobling
4	Report on Equalities	Belinda Tam/Sarah Groom
5	Report on Complaints and Report of the local Government Ombudsman	Lyn Smith
6	Committee Work Programme	Andrew Crawford

DATE	TOPIC	REPORT AUTHOR
27 January 2016		
1	Scrutiny of Portfolio Holders – Business	Andrew Crawford
2	Update on the Car Parks Strategy	Leigh Thornton
3	Update on the Theatre Performance to end December	Leigh Thornton
4	Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000	Jessica Hooton-Harris
5	Committee Work Programme	Andrew Crawford
23 March 2016		
1	Scrutiny of Portfolio Holders - Leader and Finance	Andrew Crawford
2	Third Quarter Finance Report	Katie Jobling
3	Corporate Risk	Kelvin Menon
4	Committee Work Programme 2014/15	Andrew Crawford