

STRATEGIC (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE

16th MARCH 2010

PRESENT:

Councillors, Smedley (Chairman), Hogan (Vice-Chairman) Adams, Bamborough, Brookes, Constable, Derrick, Mrs English, Humphreys, Jackson, Lewin, Norman, Tittley, and Wilks.

(In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No.17 Councillors, Mrs Fisher, Flowith, Greatorex, Mrs Stanhope and Wilcox attended the meeting)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Councillor Atkins.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

No declarations of interest were made.

MINUTES OF STRATEGIC (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 8th February 2010 were taken as read and approved as a correct record.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 8th February 2010 be approved as a correct record.

IMPROVEMENT AND EFFICIENCY PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Committee was updated on the Improvement and Efficiency Strategy. It was reported that Strategy was multi priority in nature and supported the Strategic Plan with the intention to deliver efficiencies and improve customer service.

It was asked how many projects were on schedule and it was reported that most were now completed, a few were still continuing but on balance overall the programme was on track. Members asked if any of the projects which were continuing were of importance and it was reported that projects outstanding were not of priority.

Details around the shared waste collection service with Tamworth Borough Council were requested. Members were advised that efficiencies would not just be from potential staff reductions, which was currently under consultation, but from other cost areas including vehicle use, fuel costs and converging policies.

Other shared services were discussed including shared IT Service with Solihull for financial systems. Members requested that a report be submitted to the Committee outlining all shared services the District Council is engaged with and their benefits.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

ICT TASK GROUP RE-PROCUREMENT OF COUNCIL'S OUTSOURCED ICT SERVICE

The Chairman of the ICT Task Group, Councillor Mrs English, provided the Committee with a verbal summary of what was considered by the Task Group at their meeting on the 15th March 2010. It was reported that the Group scrutinised the process undertaken for the selection of the provider of ICT Services to the Council in partnership with Staffordshire Moorlands and High Peak Councils.

The Committee were reassured that, each Authority's requirements were written into the tender process.

It was also reported that the Elected Members ICT programme was working well.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the following resolutions of the ICT Task Group be accepted by the Committee.

(i) That it be noted that the Council is working in partnership with Staffordshire Moorlands and High Peak Councils to deliver a more cost effective service than would be possible working in isolation;

(ii) That the process followed is noted to have been thorough and both quality and price were considered;

(ii) That the conclusion arrived at does represent best value for the Council; and

(iv) That confirmation be given if required that the Task Group is satisfied with the process followed.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO MAJOR INCIDENTS

The Chairman of the Emergency Response Task Group, Councillor Norman, provided the Committee with a summary of the information considered by the Task Group at their meeting held on the 3rd March 2010. Particular attention was given to the role of Elected Members during a major incident and after debate it was noted that the warning notes, as stated in 5.3 of Annex A to the report, are written in the context of whilst the incident is being managed by agencies.

Examples were drawn upon from the floods in 2007 and it was reported that lessons had been learned and as a result processes changed.

The role of the Environment Agency was discussed and that they had done much to help flooding in the area but it was noted that it was felt more could still be done in some areas. It was also discussed whether communication between front line emergency services was a problem and Members were advised that there were tried and tested command and control procedures in which all organisations were trained and had proved to be adequate to the task..

COUNCILLOR TITTLEY DECLARED A PERSONAL INTEREST AS HIS EMPLOYER HAD UNDERTAKEN DRAINAGE WORKS IN ELFORD.

RESOLVED: That the following recommendations from the Task Group be approved.

(i) That the arrangements in place at Lichfield District, in cooperation with our partners, to comply with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 be noted;

(ii) That arrangements be made for Councillors to visit the Environment Agency's incident room at Fradley;

(iii) That arrangements be made to publicise and provide information on major incident planning via In Touch around the third anniversary of the Summer Flooding 2007;

(iv) That consideration be given to publicising the existence of satellite communications equipment for use in emergencies;

(v) That the Elected Members' Guidance, as amended, for dealing with major incidents be endorsed and included in Councillors Induction Pack;

(vi) That an event should be put on every two years for Members to raise awareness of the Guidance and arrangements in place; and

(vii) That the Elected Members' Guidance be circulated to Parish Councils for their information and use at local level, if they consider appropriate and that an item be placed on the Parish Forum agenda.

WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN

Consideration was given to the Work Programme and Forward Plan and it was noted that the earlier request for a report on shared services would be included.

RESOLVED: That the Forward Plan be noted and the Work Programme be noted and amended as agreed.

VOTE OF THANKS

It was proposed, duly seconded and

RESOLVED: That the sincere thanks of the Committee be recorded to Councillor Smedley, as Chairman and Councillors Atkins and Hogan, as Vice-Chairmen for their work during the past year.

(The Meeting finished at 8.25pm)

CHAIRMAN