

**MINUTES of the meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee
held on 21 March 2013 at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors Richard Speight (Chair), Barry Johnson (Vice Chair), Wendy Curtis, Martin Healy, Terry Hipsey and Charlie Key

In attendance: M. Hone – Director of Finance & Corporate Governance
S. Clark– Head of Finance
J. Hinchliffe – Head of HR OD & Customer Strategy
B. Foster – Head of Head of Care and Targeted Outcomes
N. Hebden- Head of Major Projects
R. Harris – Head of Commissioning
R. Parkin- Head of Housing
S. Green –strategic Leader Early Years,
Families and Communities
S. Welton – Performance and Risk Officer
M. Boulter – Principal Democratic Services Officer

28. MINUTES

The minutes of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 22 January and 31 January 2013 were approved as a correct record.

29. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

a) Interests

No interests were declared.

b) Whipping

No interests were declared.

30. CORPORATE SCORECARD PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee asked a number of questions relating to a variety of the performance indicators:

For Children not in education, employment or training, it was confirmed that the relevant team within the Council worked closely with the job centre to work on this issue and that there were plans for co-location with them.

Members discussed a number of housing issues and officers clarified that although Mears had taken over housing repairs, they had a lot of backlog to complete and had a number of challenges in getting the service back up to a

good quality. It was noted that satisfaction in repair work had improved dramatically since Mears had started. Data in the next few months would show how well Mears were doing. It was added that essential repair work was being carried out but any planned enhancement work to housing stock had been frozen as part of a review into value for money.

Officers confirmed that their re-let target for next year was thirty six days. With regards to the quality of private housing, officers stated they were not neglecting those people who were in poor quality private housing and the service was looking to become more pro-active in this area.

The Committee discussed major planning applications and learnt that the council were aiming for 75% completion within the prescribed thirteen week window. This had previously been 50% and the national average was 65%. It was hoped that the council's target would be reduced to align with the national average next year. Officers added that it was sometimes better to miss the target and deliver a well negotiated application. The Council would often have to reject applications to hit the target and this would cause lengthy appeals at a later date.

With regards to Stress related sickness, officers stated that the cause for this absence was individual to the employee and hard to determine one reason that can deal with organisationally There had been a rise in work related stress. The Council has a clear action plan in place and was providing additional training and support to managers. Work was underway to develop and enhance the well-being programme for all employees.

In response to queries on under-24 employment, officers stated this was a small proportion of the staff body and any fluctuations in number, no matter how slight, could easily cause the indicators to go from green to red or vice versa. There was currently no graduate scheme as it was resource intensive but it was being considered as part of the Organisational Development Strategy. One aspect of the pay review was to consider career paths.

There was a brief discussion on long term debt and officers explained this was related to debt tied in with social care and that the money could not be recovered until properties of people in care could be sold. This was often after they had passed away. Officers assured the committee this debt was controlled.

RESOLVED: That:

- i) The committee acknowledge and commend services where there is good delivery against priorities.**
- ii) The Committee notes the performance in areas of concern.**
- iii) The Committee recommend the areas In Focus to be circulated to other relevant overview and scrutiny committee chairs.**

The meeting was finished at 7.49 pm.

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIRMAN

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
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or alternatively e-mail mboulter@thurrock.gov.uk**