CORPORATE SERVICES POLICY AND REVIEW PANEL

Meeting held on Tuesday, 5th July, 2016 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 p.m.

Voting Members

Cr. P.J. Moyle (Chairman)
Cr. D.S. Gladstone (Vice-Chairman)

Cr. D.M.T. Bell	Cr. Marina Munro	Cr. A.R. Newell
Cr. R.L.G. Dibbs		Cr. P.F. Rust
Cr. B. Jones		Cr. J.E. Woolley

153. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN** –

RESOLVED: That Cr. P.J. Moyle be appointed Chairman for the 2016/17 Municipal Year.

154. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN** –

RESOLVED: That Cr. D.S. Gladstone be appointed Vice-Chairman for the 2016/17 Municipal Year.

155. **MINUTES** –

The Minutes of the meeting held on 31st March, 2016 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

156. **APPOINTMENT TO GROUPS** –

(1) **Mid-Cycle Group** –

RESOLVED: That the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Crs. D.M.T Bell and B. Jones be appointed to the Mid-Cycle Group for the 2016/17 Municipal Year.

(2) **Customer Services Member Review Working Group** –

RESOLVED: That the Chairman and Crs. D.M.T. Bell, A.H. Crawford, R.L.G. Dibbs, D.S. Gladstone, B. Jones and P.F. Rust be appointed to the Customer Services Working Group for the 2016/17 Municipal Year.

157. **DIGITAL STRATEGY** –

The Panel welcomed Michael Gates, from MGS Consulting Ltd, and Nick Harding, Head of ICT and Facilities Services, who gave a presentation to the Panel updating on the development of the Council's Digital Strategy and the changes made since the Members' Seminar in September 2015 (copy available on the website page for the meeting).

By way of introduction, the Panel watched a short video with real-life examples of how digital technology had improved the delivery of public services in Edinburgh from the perspective of both residents and service providers. The key messages included how digital services had enabled enhanced accessibility to services, increased engagement and sharing of information, more personalised services and real-time updates. Significantly, the digital evolution was moving quickly, and local government could achieve significant savings from digitisation.

Michael Gates then outlined the process for the development of, and content of, Rushmoor's digital vision and its eight supporting digital ambitions. With reference to the points raised at the Members Seminar, the Panel highlighted the need to ensure that no one was 'digitally excluded' from services, as there were a large number of people in the Borough who did not access the internet or use mobile devices. It was noted that the Council's digital ambitions reflected the need to design services to be fully accessible.

The Panel noted that the Digital Strategy itself would be built around six key themes, as described in the presentation, with projects identified within each theme. Nick Harding then outlined the current Phase 1 projects, which included:

- transactional website re-design
- mobile working for frontline services
- channel shift – applications
- Modern.gov - committee papers and members webpages
- Hampshire Superfast Broadband Programme
- cyber security

The Panel considered and discussed the content of the proposed digital strategy, and it was asked whether there should be a greater emphasis on income generation. In response, it was stated that, while the strategy was focused on delivering service transformation, the introduction of new technology had made a positive difference to income in a number of areas. For example, in the car parks service, a large proportion of parking fines were now paid within a few hours of an offence. Following further discussion, it was advised that the introduction of technology to enable credit card payments in Council owned car parks would be investigated in a future phase.

Panel Members also indicated support for greater use of, and standardisation in accessing, electronic agendas, committee reports and meeting calendars, and it was confirmed that improvements in this area would

be delivered through the introduction of Modern.gov software in Autumn 2016. In response to a question, it was confirmed that robust IT security arrangements were in place to protect the Council, and that the cost of contracts for cyber security had reduced.

The Corporate Director, Ian Harrison, confirmed that the Panel's comments would be taken into account as part of the development of the Strategy, and that the approach to public engagement on the Strategy would be carefully considered.

The Panel **NOTED** progress on the preparation of the Digital Strategy.

158. **HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE** –

The Panel welcomed Rachel Gray, the Interim Human Resources Manager, who gave a presentation to the Panel updating on issues related to the workforce profile and the human resources' work programme (copy available on the website page for the meeting).

By way of context, the Interim Human Resources Manager presented an overview of the national picture for public sector employers, which suggested an increasingly complex future with financial pressures and impacts of the EU referendum for future employment legislation.

The Panel then noted the key data related to staffing at Rushmoor Borough Council, including headcount, part-time workers, age, turnover and sickness. Turnover had remained steady over the past four years at around 13.5% each year, which was lower than private sector levels. The number of days lost to long-term sickness had reduced significantly in 2015/16, compared to figures in 2014/15, which reflected the work carried out to address some long-term cases. In 2015/16, an average of 6.24 days per full-time employee had been lost to sickness, which was lower than the public sector average of 7.9 days.

The Panel considered the information related to the reasons for employee sickness and highlighted that the combined figure for depression and anxiety/stress was higher than any other single category including colds and flu. The Interim Human Resources Manager confirmed that support was available to employees through Occupational Health and the Employee Assistance Programme and that the Council would be seeking to improve understanding of the reasons behind the statistics and developing a Well-Being Strategy.

On recruitment, it was noted that 48 posts had been advertised in 2015/16 and that the 'hard to recruit' posts included IT network engineers, building control surveyors and civil enforcement officers. Recruitment strategies had included the use of social media and professional association websites as well as the usual Hampshire Jobs website. During discussion, it was suggested that ex-service personnel could be interested in civil

enforcement roles and that contact could be made with the Army's Career Transition Partnership (CTP), whose regional office was based in Aldershot.

Members were advised that, from April 2017, public sector employers would be required to employ 2.3% of their workforce as apprentices and that, based on a headcount in Rushmoor, this would mean seven apprentices. These posts were likely to be in areas including economic development, bereavement services and engineering, and it was recognised that it would be challenging to find training providers who could provide courses in technical trades to match the roles. The Panel agreed with the proposed approach to collaborate with other local authorities to influence colleges.

The Panel **NOTED** the presentation.

159. **WORK PROGRAMME** –

The Panel **NOTED** that the work programme for 2016/17 would be considered at the mid-cycle meeting, with all Members invited to contribute in advance.

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm.

P.J. MOYLE
CHAIRMAN