

CORPORATE SERVICES POLICY AND REVIEW PANEL

Meeting held on Thursday, 4th June, 2015 at the Council Offices,
Farnborough at 7.00 p.m.

Voting Members

Cr. Jacqui Vosper (Chairman)
Cr. D.S. Gladstone (Vice-Chairman)

Cr. D.M.T. Bell
Cr. D.E. Clifford
Cr. Barbara Hurst

Cr. B. Jones

Cr. G.B. Lyon
Cr. P.F. Rust
Cr. D.M. Welch

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN –

RESOLVED: That Cr. Jacqui Vosper be appointed Chairman for the 2015/16 Municipal Year.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN –

RESOLVED: That Cr. D.S. Gladstone be appointed Vice-Chairman for the 2015/16 Municipal Year.

3. MINUTES –

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19th March, 2015 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

4. AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PANEL AND WORK PROGRAMME –

The Panel received a short presentation from Corporate Director, Mr. David Quirk, that reminded Members of the Corporate Services portfolio. It was reported that the Corporate Services Panel's responsibilities covered the provision, planning and management of all issues within the Council's internal administration relating to areas such as financial administration, internal management, personnel and property. Other responsibilities included support for Members, the Mayoralty, civic ceremonial and civil emergency arrangements, as well as corporate planning.

It was highlighted that Members of the Panel could put forward suggestions for the work programme, which would be considered at the mid-cycle meetings.

Members asked for the budget information for the areas in which they were responsible for scrutinising, at the beginning of each Municipal Year. It

was suggested that this information would assist Members of the Panel in prioritising the work programme and making their decisions.

The Panel **AGREED** that all Members of the Panel would all be invited to the following mid-cycle meeting in order to receive and discuss the information requested.

The Panel **NOTED** the presentation and the priorities for the work programme for 2015/16.

5. **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 2015/16 Municipal Year.

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

RESOLVED: That the Chairman and Crs. D.M.T. Bell, A.H. Crawford, D.S. Gladstone, B. Jones, G.B. Lyon and P.F. Rust be appointed to the Customer Services Working Group for the 2015/16 Municipal Year.

(3) **Communications Task and Finish Group –**

RESOLVED: That the Chairman and Crs. A.H. Crawford, Barbara Hurst, B. Jones and G.B. Lyon be appointed to the Communications Task and Finish Group for the 2015/16 Municipal Year.

(4) **Budget Working Group –**

The Panel was informed that a review of the Budget Working Group was underway. It was noted that recommendations had previously been made by the Group to involve the Cabinet in the work and a report was being prepared for a future Cabinet meeting.

The Panel supported the review and **AGREED** to recommend the Cabinet to appoint the previous Members of the Working Group to the new Group, alongside the appropriate Cabinet Members.

6. **CHANNEL SHIFT PROGRESS UPDATE & DEMONSTRATION –**

The Panel welcomed Corporate Director, Mr. Ian Harrison, to the meeting who introduced Mr. Nick Harding, Head of IT and Facilities, Mr. Seamus McAlister, IT Change Manager, Mr. James Duggin, Contracts Manager, and Mr. Philip Roberts, System Administrator.

Mr. Harrison reminded the Panel of the importance of channel shift and the six principles that were being followed. Members were informed that

progress had been made since the previous update and a number of services within the Council had started to carry out their business in a different way. The programme of current and future work was shared, which encouraged a discussion on payment shift; this was described as a mature aspect of the project, an example of success being the number of Council Tax payments made by direct debit, which had increased every year since 2012. It was noted that direct debit payments carried the lowest possible transaction costs.

Reference was made to the Council's webpage that displayed details on how residents could pay their council tax bill. The demonstration showed the Panel that most references to 'cash' as a payment option had been removed from key communications. The website offered a number of other channels, such as the facility to set up direct debits online, a 24 hour payment line and information on other locations in the Borough where residents could make a payment to the Council. Members noted that, while a number of new channels had become available, no older channels had been removed. This indicated to the Panel that people were shifting their own behaviours, as opposed to being forced to channel shift due to a payment method no longer being offered.

The Panel was then shown the Customer Service Unit's service platform that is used to ensure a customer sees the right member of staff, the system then prints out a ticket for the customer and logs the queries received by the reception desk. Another demonstration included the self-service platform that was in the process of being trialled before going live. This facility would enable customers to set up their own account and access council tax and rubbish collection information as well as arranging a bulky waste collection. The self-service platform would be available to residents 24/7 and be accessible on mobile or tablet devices as well as computers. The Panel showed an interest in trialling the service themselves.

During a previous update, Members had received an explanation of the bulky waste processes followed at the time. Collections could only be arranged over the phone and the processes were administratively heavy and involved a lot of paper being passed between a number of different people. The new booking system required customers to answer a number of questions on the items to be collected. This enabled the system to calculate the total cost of the collection, it was also noted that any residents receiving welfare benefits would also receive a discount on the overall cost. Once a collection date had been chosen, customers would receive a confirmation of booking email. The booking could then be accessed by the contractors through tablet devices. This would allow them to record and confirm collections and report any issues.

The final demonstration involved showing how the Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) were able to use mobile devices to carry out their work. The system allowed them to use their devices to search a vehicle registration number, access permit information and, via a wireless connection, print a penalty charge notice. Residents would then have the opportunity to pay their charge online. It was noted that this example of channel shift reduced the

amount CEOs had to carry round with them and enabled information to be sent to the Council Offices instantly; staff were adapting to the new system well.

To conclude, Mr. Harrison confirmed that the removal of old systems and the replacement of the improved systems had been a success. It was also noted that future work was underway.

The Panel **NOTED** the presentation.

The meeting closed at 9.16 pm.

JACQUI M. VOSPER
CHAIRMAN
