

Lancashire County Council

Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 10th March, 2015 at 9.30 am in Cabinet Room 'C' - The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor Jennifer Mein (Chair)

County Councillors

D Borrow
B Winlow

M Tomlinson

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor Tony Martin and County Councillor Geoff Driver.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None declared

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 February 2015

Resolved: - That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2015 be agreed as a true and accurate record and be signed by the Chair.

4. Quarterly Corporate Performance Monitoring and Improvement Quarter 3 2014/15 Report

Michael Walder, Senior Policy and Performance Officer, presented a report setting out details of corporate performance monitoring for the third quarter of 2014/15 (October - December) which showed that 70% of the total number of Directorate Key Performance Indicators were performing relatively well and were on track/target and/or improving.

Reference was made to three areas of under-performance, i.e. the proportion of Children Looked After with an up to date Health Assessment and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, both of which had been previously considered by the Cabinet Committee, together with the level of debt owed to the County Council, which was the subject of a recovery plan on the agenda for this meeting.

Lisa Kitto, Deputy County Treasurer and Damon Lawrenson, Interim Director of Financial Resources, attended and presented a recovery plan in respect of debt owed to the County Council.

It was reported that, since the previous quarter, the total debt owed to the County Council had increased by £7.1m to £37.44m as at 31 December 2014. Debt consisted of care debt (social care) and corporate debt. It was reported that the level of debt for the most recent quarter had risen due to a number of factors as follows:

- A typical spike in outstanding debts in October due to invoices raised by schools at the start of the academic year;
- The impact on direct debit take-up of the introduction of Liquidlogic with a steps being taken on address the issues;
- Care debt being the primary reason for increases in the outstanding debt amount.

It was reported that a review of processes and working practices had been undertaken by the Internal Audit Team and it had been agreed that there would be six distinct areas of focus. The recovery plan set out in detail the work that had been undertaken on each of those areas of focus together with information regarding the appointment of Rossendales as the County Council's new external Debt Collection Agency.

In addition, a number of other actions were in place to address the underperformance as follows:

- Establishment of a Debt Management Programme Board;
- Additional resources allocated to the Debt Management Team;
- Utilising Information Technology to Improve Collection Success;
- Increased Resources for Budget Holders.

Resolved: - That the report, now presented, be noted.

5. Customer Access Performance Report

Phyl Chapman, Head of Customer Access Service, attended and presented a report setting out an update on the operation of the County Council's Customer Access Service.

Specific reference was made to the Blue Badge Service and the work undertaken to analyse why call volumes to the Blue Badge line had increased. It was identified that over 40% of the calls monitored were from customers chasing up applications. In October 2014, there was 2,500 pieces of work outstanding in respect of Blue Badge applications with a processing time of five weeks. In order to address this, six advisors had been trained to process applications and processing time had been reduced to five days.

It was noted that the Blue Badge system was a national system with no face to face facilities. In order to support the very small number of individuals unable to use online processes, the Customer Access Service provided 1:1 appointments which were 30/40 minutes in duration. There were 12 Telly Talk units across

Lancashire but it was noted that the IT equipment was now in need of replacement.

The introduction of the 0300 telephone number had been a success with uptake having reached 78%. The report also set out a number of other areas with which the Customer Access Service had been involved, e.g. the introduction of the Care Act and the Integrated Wellbeing Service.

Resolved: - That the report, now presented, be noted.

6. Key Stage 4 Achievement in Lancashire

Bob Stott, Director for Universal and Early Support Services, and Jonathan Hewitt, Head of Quality and Continuous Improvement, Directorate for Children and Young People, attended and presented a report on the achievement of pupils in Lancashire at the end of Key Stage 4.

It was reported that the performance of all pupils was generally in line with, or above, the national average and compares favourably with the North West average.

The report highlighted the performance of pupils eligible for Free School Meals which was below the national and North West average. In order to address this, a recovery plan was set out at Appendix 'B' to the report.

It was noted that previously there had been a focus on the achievement of White British boys in English and, as a result, attainment in English in 2014 improving. There had, however, been a fall in attainment for Maths which had impacted on the overall attainment figures.

Reference was made to the decision by the Secretary of State that vocational qualifications would no longer count in terms of measuring attainment and that this had had a significant impact.

It was reported that, overall, Lancashire secondary schools were improving at a faster rate (15 - 16%) than the national average (7 - 8%).

Resolved: - That the report and recovery plan set out at Appendix 'B', now presented, be noted.

7. Implementation of the Procurement Service Improvement Plan

Lisa Kitto, Deputy County Treasurer, attended and presented a report setting out an update on the progress made to date in implementing the Procurement Service improvement plan and the current performance of the service against key performance indicators.

It was reported that, since returning to the County Council from the former strategic partnership, the procurement service, together with the Service Improvement Plan, had been a key area of focus for the County Council.

Reference was made to two key areas within the plan, namely the Procurement Strategy and the Procurement Board. An updated Performance Dashboard now included data on payment performance; procurement performance; supporting suppliers and savings.

It was reported that the majority of work in relation to the plan was progressing well and reference was made to those areas deemed to have an amber status where there had been delays and the work undertaken to progress them.

Resolved: - That the report, now presented, be noted.

8. Urgent Business

There was no urgent business to be considered.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The Cabinet Committee noted that the next meeting would be held on Monday 8 June 2015 at 2.00pm in Cabinet Room 'B' - The Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall.

I Young
County Secretary and Solicitor

County Hall
Preston