



Scrutiny Board

Minutes - 17 March 2015

Attendance

Members of the Board

Cllr Peter O'Neill (Chair)
Cllr Barry Findlay (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Ian Angus
Cllr Alan Bolshaw
Cllr Paula Brookfield
Cllr Claire Darke
Cllr Julie Hodgkiss
Cllr Arun Photay
Cllr Rita Potter
Cllr John Rowley
Cllr Stephen Simkins
Cllr Wendy Thompson

Observer

Cllr Philip Bateman

Employees

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Ian Fegan | Head of Communications |
| Adam Hadley | Group Manager - Democracy |
| Keith Ireland | Managing Director |
| Ros Jervis | Service Director – Public Health and Wellbeing |
| Charlotte Johns | Head of Transformation |
| Tim Johnson | Strategic Director - Place |
| Keren Jones | Service Director - City Economy |
| Kevin O'Keefe | Director of Governance |
| Neil Rogerson | Resilience Manager |

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1** **Apologies for absence**
Apologies for absence were received from Cllr McGregor.
- 2** **Declarations of interest**
There were no declarations of interest.
- 3** **Matters arising**
There were no matters arising.

4 **Minutes of the previous meeting (27 January 2015)**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5 **First Impressions of the City**

Tim Johnson, Strategic Director, introduced the tracking and monitoring report of First Impressions of the City scrutiny review. He explained how the marketing the City agenda aims to positively profile of Wolverhampton. The Council's goal is to create a strong brand that can be embraced by business partners. 'Making it happen' branding has already been adopted by numerous stakeholders in the City and reflects fresh ambition for Wolverhampton. This City offer relates to the recently improved Council offer of being a Confident Capable Council. The Strategic Director added that the City Board has set out an agenda of doing a fewer things, but to a higher standard. It will nonetheless focus on promoting the City as a business location, providing high quality amenities for the public and celebrating Wolverhampton's cultural heritage.

Ian Fegan, Head of Communications, gave an overview of the Communication Strategy in place to raise the profile of the City and communicate the work being done to improve service areas. A corporate communications plan will be launched in summer 2015 with a more PR and business focus. Social media will also play an important role for the Council. In April 2015 Kevin O' Keefe, Director of Governance, will provide training for Councillors on social media.

Cllr O'Neill noted the progress of the review and invited Cllr Bateman, the Chair of the scrutiny review, to share his thoughts on the report. Cllr Bateman was pleased to see how the review's work was affecting strategic plans. He praised Wolverhampton Today the Council's Facebook account, as a source of info, but also voiced concern about the lack of social media awareness in parts of the Council. He felt that the review would have benefited from wider participation from other Councillors, and stressed the need for better communication with the public in future. However, he did welcome greater financial backing for the marketing strategy. Cllr Bateman explained that a wealth of information is held by Councillors and that better use of social media would be a fine opportunity for dispersing this information to the public. Cllr Brookfield agreed that channel shift should be embraced and welcomed the proposed training for Councillors, particularly to ensure the right kind of message was being posted on-line. The Director of Governance urged Councillors to embrace social media especially in the light of the decline of more traditional means of communication. He explained that whilst social media should be seen as a tool, ultimately individuals must take responsibility for their on-line comments.

Keith Ireland, Managing Director, commented that growing the use of social media is part of the Council's Corporate Strategy and will allow the Council to celebrate its successes. He noted that the Council's website receives 100,000 hit per month and its Facebook site is one of biggest in country. He also outlined that after the general election there will be a weekly newsletter for Councillors to keep them abreast of information. Cllr Potter added that social media should be used for constructive purposes if reporting on negative issues – it should not have a detrimental effect on the City's profile.

Cllr Simkins queried the Council's long term vision for business development. Tim Johnson, Strategic Director, expanded on his earlier comments by stating the need for a positive narrative for the City, which he felt could be supported by a strong web presence. He also added that the Economic Growth Board would provide feedback about business developments. He concluded that the Council must seize opportunities and make Wolverhampton an excellent place to live and do business.

Resolved:

- 1) To receive a further tracking and monitoring update on the First Impressions of the City scrutiny review in six months' time.

6 **Business Continuity Report**

Neil Rogerson, Resilience Manager, introduced the Business Continuity Report. This was the final item from the corporate risk register to be considered by Scrutiny Board during 2014/15.

The Resilience Manager explained that the Resilience Board is tasked with assessing hazards for Council, and how business can continue in light of threats to the Council. There is a resilience system in place to respond to any major incidents and an exercise programme will be used to train staff in case of a crisis. This resilience system is linked to the data held in Agresso, meaning up-to-date data is held by the system.

Cllr O'Neill voiced concern about an over reliance on technology. The Resilience Manager explained that the Council can recover all of its data in case of an emergency. He added that the Resilience Team have their own risk register based on regional standards - this helps the team manage their risk. Both Cllr O'Neill and Cllr Simkins questioned how Councillors can be involved in resilience management. There is training for new Councillors and an eLearning package. Ros Jervis, Service Director – Public Health and Wellbeing, added that a bespoke programme would be designed for Councillors, outlining basic info about how to respond during a crisis.

Resolved:

- 1) To note the Business Resilience report.

7 **Complaints Report Quarter 3**

Sue Handy, Head of Service - Customer Services, introduced the Complaints Report. She noted the following themes from the report:

- All stage one complaints were responded to within 14 days.
- There were 13 stage two complaints - one of which was upheld- but there were no trends.
- There were two local Ombudsman referrals.
- A 100:100 programme idea has rebranded complaints and compliments to 'feedback'.
- Complaints are not prioritised when being processed unless it is a major incident.
- More compliment data will be fed into the next report update.

Cllr O'Neill queried the service improvement group's function. The Head of Service for Customer Services explained that the group meet quarterly to discuss outcomes from service focus groups.

Whilst Councillors welcomed more compliment information in this report, Cllr Findlay asked why there was a discrepancy in positive feedback in certain areas. Keith Ireland, Managing Director, explained that certain areas such as Waste Management were receiving more complaints due to changes in policy, not a poor delivery of a service. In such cases, education is required to inform the public. Cllr Brookfield agreed that context was necessary when analysing data, and praised areas that had done well. Cllr Rowley added that the Council should not fear criticism, and that efforts should focus on responding appropriately to feedback. The Managing Director gave assurances to the Board that whilst the Council will now be using the collective terminology 'feedback' for complaints and compliments, these two areas will function as per usual.

Cllr Thompson voiced concern about City Direct and asked for further information about City Direct related complaints.

Resolved:

- 1) To provide all Councillors with complaint data relating to City Direct.

8 **Corporate Performance Report - Quarter 3 2014/15**

Charlotte Johns, Head of Transformation, introduced the Corporate Performance Report. She noted that a red rated indicator (GCSE performance) was a national issue affecting all Councils, but would be monitored closely.

Ros Jervis, Service Director for Public Health and Wellbeing, gave a verbal update for several of public health indicators. There have been some marginal improvements for life expectancy, but it is still below the national average. The Service Director for Public Health and Wellbeing stated a key Public Health goal is to improve the rates of disability through life expectancy in the City. She voiced great concern about the quality of life for older men and women, and also alerted the Board to the equally pressing concerns of infant mortality. The Service Director for Public Health and Wellbeing also focussed her attention on the obesity endemic in the City, noting Wolverhampton has much higher rates than the national average. Childhood obesity is of great concern with particularly high numbers of children under five years old being determined obese - these problems then continue as children grow up.

Cllr Simkins noted the need for robust scrutiny of governance arrangements to ensure services were delivered properly. Both Cllr Brookfield and Cllr Bolshaw praised the drop in teenage pregnancy rates in Wolverhampton, but expressed the need for significant progress in other areas as well. The Service Director for Public Health and Wellbeing explained that behavioural change will be a long term challenge.

Cllr Thompson stated the childhood obesity issue could be improved by better education for parents. She felt that mothers and fathers had important roles to play in promoting a healthy lifestyle for their children. Cllr O'Neill added that supporting fitness and wellbeing in the community would also be of benefit.

Resolved:

- 1) That the scrutiny panels consider amber indicators from the Corporate Performance Report, which relate to their terms of reference.
- 2) That all Councillors receive the Public Health challenges information document.

9 **Information Governance Performance Report - Quarter 3 2014/15**

Adam Hadley, Group Manager for Democracy, introduced the Information Governance Report by noting improvements in both FOI and SAR performance. He explained that the protecting information training for new starters was currently at 83%. Following Councillor comments about benchmarking, the Group Manager for Democracy added that current FOI performance is better than other councils for whom benchmarking information is available, and SAR performance is relatively strong. Cllr Simkins queried why SAR performance was not higher. The Group Manager for Democracy explained that due to the complexities of collating and then redacting large files, in certain circumstances it would be very difficult to process a request within the timescale. He agreed that the Council should strive for 100% completion rate.

Resolved:

- 1) To note the Information Governance Performance Report Quarter 3.

10 **Work programme**

Adam Hadley, Group Manager for Democracy, introduced the work programme and welcomed comments. Cllr Thompson queried the Enterprise and Business Scrutiny Panel work plan. She added that notes about the business week held by the Council had not been sent to the Scrutiny Panel.

The Group Manager for Democracy gave a brief update on the scrutiny reviews noting that they had either been completed or were nearly complete.

Resolved:

- 1) To send information about future business events and their outcomes in Wolverhampton to the Enterprise and Business Scrutiny Panel.