

**Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee - 6 January 2015**

Non-confidential minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee held at on 6 January 2015 at 7.30 pm.

**Present:**           **Councillors:**       Gallagher (Chair), Doolan, O'Sullivan, Comer-Schwartz,  
O'Halloran, Parker, Russell and Gill  
**Also**               **Councillors:**       Hull  
**Present:**

**Councillor Troy Gallagher in the Chair**

**65**           **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item 1)**

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillors Jenny Kay, Osh Gantly and Martin Klute

**66**           **DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item 2)**

Councillor Wayne stated that he was substituting for Councillor Kay

**67**           **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 3)**

None

**68**           **TO APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 4)**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 08 December 2014 be confirmed and the Chair be authorised to sign them

**69**           **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (Item 5)**

Termination Payments (Minute 56)

Councillor Doolan stated that he was currently looking into the preparation of a report on this matter, however it would not be able to be prepared for the Committee on 22 January 2015 as envisaged, but would now be coming to a later meeting of the Committee.

**70**           **CHAIR'S REPORT (Item 6)**

None

**71**           **PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item 8)**

The Chair outlined the procedures for dealing with Public questions and for filming and recording of Public meetings

**72**           **INCOME GENERATION (Item )**

The Committee were informed that two of the scheduled witnesses, Sharon Bayliss and John Harrison, were now unable to attend that evening.

The Committee received presentations from Andrew Grant, Chief Executive Aylesbury District Council and David Salenius and Matt West, Housing and Adult Social Services at the L.B.Islington. ( Copies interleaved).

## Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee - 6 January 2015

The Chair stated that the initial draft recommendations of the scrutiny would be considered at the next meeting of the Committee, in order to take more evidence in relation to photovoltaic solar panels.

During consideration of the presentation from Andrew Grant, the following main points were raised –

- Aylesbury DC were anticipating the loss of all Government grant by 2019/20
- Aylesbury had developed an integrated business model approach of income generation, cost reduction and investment in products to support the above
- There was a core team of 3 staff and examples of income generation activities included charging for the garden waste service, a self-certification planning application process which reduced the time taken to process applications from 8 weeks to 2 weeks. The Council were now looking at franchising options to further reduce costs
- Aylesbury had taken a number of measures to rationalise building and accommodation space for staff and using prudential borrowing to fund new developments for businesses to lease
- Aylesbury was looking at options for developing a Universal consultancy trading company and working up a business case to see whether this would be worthwhile. Consultancy work was already taking place but this was mainly Local Authority to Local Authority
- There was a need to establish the services that residents valued and were willing to pay for
- A Member expressed the view that some of the measures adopted by Aylesbury were difficult to apply to a London Borough such as Islington where land values were high and some aspects were subject to the approval of the Mayor of London
- In response to a Member as to how objections were dealt with in relation to planning applications it was stated that Aylesbury would not approve a planning application where there was a material planning objection. If there were no material planning objections and all the required specifications adhered to there was no reason not to process the application quickly and this measure had resulted in £150k in staff savings
- Andrew Grant expressed the view that there was no point in creating a Trading Company if it was not viable given the reputational damage that this may cause to the Council

The Committee then considered a presentation from David Salenius and Matt West and during consideration the following main points were made –

- There was an infrastructure and system ready to provide caretaker services to other private and social rented landlord and local authorities, however extra resources would be required to provide services elsewhere
- At present caretaking is provided to Council owned properties on estates and to another social landlord
- There was potential to provide full caretaking and cleaning services to RSL's and providing small local landlords who have communal spaces with daily checks, health and safety checks and cleaning services and to provide out of hours patrols to private landlords and RSL's
- It was stated that potential markets could include tidying non vulnerable private gardens at a charge, caretakers being trained to issue public space protection orders to offenders on RSL's and private landlord premises
- Receiving and securing deliveries for residents for a small fee
- Providing utility entrance to residents properties for a small fee

## Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee - 6 January 2015

- The caretaking service is well received by residents however it may be viewed as expensive if services were marketed, however customer management costs could be reduced because of the quality of the service and the reduced monitoring that would be required as a result. However, introducing extra duties for caretakers would need negotiation and agreement with the Trade Unions
- In response to a question it was stated that costs were higher due to the quality of the service
- In response to a question it was stated that caretaking services were provided on Bentham Court for a registered social landlord and this arrangement was proving satisfactory and it may be possible to offer a similar arrangement to other RSL's or TMO's
- The view was expressed that some services could be linked up and caretakers could link in with Telecare services, and carry out preventative maintenance work and carrying out minor repairs on voids. In addition packaging of services could be looked at in order to make them more competitive and attractive to RSL's, Partners etc.
- Reference was also made to the creation of the Joinery shop and that there was an opportunity to market this service and to create opportunities for apprenticeships and training for the long term unemployed. The Chair stated that it would be useful to review the position at a later date
- Call out services and other services could be marketed to leaseholders and with the creation of an 'in house' agency the employment of agency staff to manage 'peaks and troughs' could be more effectively managed both financially and resource wise
- In response to a question it was stated that there had been an audit of central stores in Housing and caretakers should be able to be supplied with all necessary equipment
- A Member stated that there was a need to look at the extra resources that would be needed to market services, as the income needed to outweigh the costs and be cost effective. There was also the need to look at all the services that had come back 'in house' to ensure that they are co-ordinating work to ensure it is delivered cost effectively
- We also noted that there may be potential for residents who may not be in or miss courier company deliveries to have their parcels held at libraries or some other Council office for collection and this could be investigated.
- The Chair stated that there was still a problem with lumber on estates that caretakers had to deal with that affected them carrying out their normal duties and was often a health hazard and this needed to be looked at
- The Chair added that it would also be useful for the Committee to receive information in the future as to the profitability of services marketed
- The view was expressed that it was not sensible to bring services back 'in house' if they were not going to be expanded and generate income and there was definitely the opportunity to offer repairs and call out services to leaseholders and promote and market these services effectively
- It was stated that Local Housing Management services could be offered as many RSL's obtained management services from out of the borough and it would be more cost effective and also be more locally based
- It was stated that the repairs service was looking to expand however there was the need to ensure that the 'in house' repairs service was operating effectively before this occurred
- There would be a need if services expanded to deal with 'peaks and troughs' in workload by employing agency staff, however this could be managed more cost effectively and resource wise once the creation of the 'in house' employment agency had taken place

## **Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee - 6 January 2015**

- The repairs service work was based on a schedule of rates so could be effectively and competitively priced
- There was a need to develop and package services in order that they were competitively priced and were services that people wanted to purchase
- A Member stated that tenants were still experiencing in some cases a number of visits before a repair was effectively completed and the call centres did not always operate effectively and it was important to get the core service right before opening up services to the market
- Reference was made to the fact that the Executive Member Housing and Development, Councillor Murray, had recently visited Oxford City Council to look at the repairs service as it had been taken back 'in house' and it would be useful to obtain information as to any services that they had marketed to other organisations/residents
- It was noted that the report on photovoltaic panels would be considered at the next meeting and that staff could be skilled up on installation and there was a possibility that this could be marketed to the private sector and residents

### **RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the written evidence submitted on staff mutual, student tax exemptions and Vanguard systems thinking be noted and that further consideration would be given to the documentation on photovoltaic solar panels at the next meeting of the Committee
- (b) That the proposals above be investigated by officers for inclusion in the final report to the Executive and that these be considered by the Committee on 2 March

The meeting ended at 9.35 p.m.

**CHAIR**