

Executive Committee

22nd September 2009

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Carole Gandy (Chair), Councillor Michael Braley (Vice-Chair) and Councillors P Anderson, J Brunner, B Clayton, W Hartnett, C MacMillan and M Shurmer

Also Present:

M Collins (Standards Committee)

Officers:

K Dicks, S Garratt, S Hanley, A Heighway, T Kristunas, S Mullins, Jackie Smith, J Staniland, A Walsh, K Watkins, L Bellaby and D Taylor

Committee Services Officer:

D Sunman

130. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Hicks.

131. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

132. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair advised that she had accepted the following matters as Urgent Business:

Item 6 – Quarterly Performance Monitoring – Quarter 1 (April – June 2009)

Item 7 – Quarterly Monitoring of Formal Complaints – Quarter 1 (April – June 2009)

Item 8 – Abbey Stadium Sports Centre

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Chair

133. BENEFITS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN - QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT

The Committee received a report on progress against the Benefits Service Improvements Plan from April to June 2009.

Members were informed that the Benefits Service Improvement Plan had been developed in response to the Audit Commission's Inspection in 2008/09.

A Performance Development Team (PDT) of Officers from the Council's Benefits Team and the Department for Works and Pensions had been set up to progress the aims of the Improvement Plan.

Officers reported that the number of claims for Housing Benefit had reduced during the quarter when compared with previous periods. However, claims remained high and were from people who had not previously made claims.

Between April 2009 and the end of June 2009 1916 claims had been processed. Of these 1160 were processed within 14 days and only 64 claims took longer than 50 days to process.

The Committee were informed that overpayment recovery remained disappointing with an overall increase in debt outstanding and below target recovery rates. The PDT had concluded that the processes in place to recover over allowed benefit were satisfactory but that additional resources would be required to allow the rate of recovery to be improved.

Officers were requested to provide a supply of leaflets regarding claims for benefits for the Roadshows. Officers were also requested to prepare a press release regarding claims for benefit highlighting the calculator on the Council's website for those affected by the current economic climate.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the report be noted; and**

RECOMMENDED that

- 2) £15,000 be allocated from General Fund balances in 2009/10 to provide additional resources within the Benefits Service, as recommended by the Performance Development Team (PDT), to improve the recovery of over-allowed Housing Benefit; and**

- 3) **the cost of an additional post for this purpose be included in the base budget from 1 April 2010.**

134. QUARTERLY BUDGET MONITORING - APRIL TO JUNE QUARTER

Members received a report that provided an overview of the budget, including the achievement of approved savings, for the quarter ending June 2009.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

135. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE MONITORING, QUARTER 1, APRIL 2009 - JUNE 2009

The Committee considered a report that provided a view on aspects of the Council's overall performance for Quarter 1 of the 2009/10 financial year when compared to the same quarter in 2008/09.

Each Portfolio Holder made a report on their area of responsibility.

Officers reported that the total number of corporate performance indicators providing outturn data for Quarter 1 was 35. Of these, 21 showed improvement in performance, 9 showed a decline and 5 showed no change. Those that showed no change were at optimum performance and, therefore, impossible to improve.

Members noted the improved Performance Indicators in each Directorate as follows:

Deputy Chief Executive

NI 020, NI 155, NI 180, NI 181, BV 008, BV 174, BV 175, ET 015, HH 016

Environment and Planning

NI 157 (b), NI 182, NI 191, BV 012

Housing, Leisure and Customer Services

NI 156, WMO 003, WMO 004, WMO 008, WMO 010, BV 213, HIP 001, HIP 002

Members agreed that overall the report was positive and asked that staff be informed of their comments.

Officers were asked to change the order of columns in the Corporate Performance Exception Report relating to current information. Information on Recovery Plans and the pilot project on Smart Cards for Concessionary Fares was to be circulated with the minutes.

RESOLVED that

the update on key performance indicators for the period April to June 2009 be noted.

136. QUARTERLY MONITORING OF FORMAL COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS - QUARTER 1, APRIL-JUNE 2009

Members considered a report that provided a view on aspects of the Council's Formal Complaints Procedure and the number of compliments recorded for Quarter 1 of the 2009/10 financial year. The report also included the Ombudsman's 'Annual Review 2008/09'.

Officers reported that this was the first report of such information to the Committee.

RESOLVED that

the update on complaints and compliments for the period April to June 2009 be noted.

137. ABBEY STADIUM SPORTS CENTRE

Members received a report which detailed proposals for the long-term sustainability of the Abbey Stadium and Hewell Road Pool following deferral of the previous scheme by this Committee in January 2009.

Members were informed that a Leisure Contract Advisory Panel (LCAP) had been set up to work with Officers that would determine the best way forward. Further reports would be presented to the Executive Committee at relevant milestones.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the scheme as detailed in the present report be approved in its entirety and that Officers be authorised to progress it to completion, subject to reporting to Members at appropriate 'milestone' stages;**
- 2) the Council allocate funding, as detailed in the confidential Appendix to the report, to provide a new**

swimming pool and to sustain the current Abbey Stadium facility for a period of at least ten years; this approval to include the release of the consultants' fees detailed in the report as being necessary to progress the scheme; and

- 3) the Capital Programme be amended accordingly and revenue implications noted/approved; and**

RESOLVED that

- 4) expenditure of up to the sum allocated by the Council for the purposes stated in the report be approved in accordance with Standing Order 41.**

(During consideration of this item, Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to move to exclude the press and public prior to any further debate on the grounds that information would be revealed which would significantly affect the Council's ability to achieve the best solutions for the Borough in relation to the Abbey Stadium redevelopment.

There is nothing exempt, however, in this record of the proceedings.)

138. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 2nd September 2009 be received and noted.

139. MINUTES / REFERRALS - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, EXECUTIVE PANELS, NEIGHBOURHOOD GROUPS ETC.

There were no minutes of referrals under this item.

140. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED that

under S.100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matter(s) on the grounds that it/they involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act, as amended.

Executive

Committee

22nd September 2009

**Abbey Stadium Sports Centre – (as detailed in Minute 137
above)**

The Meeting commenced at 7pm
and closed at 9:15pm

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Chair