
Membership

- absent

Councillors

Joyce Bosnjak (Chair)
Martin Wright (Vice-Chair)
Michelle Gent (Vice-Chair)
Chris Barnfather
Steve Carroll
Ged Clarke
Wendy Quigley
Sue Saddington
Liz Yates

Officers

Martin Gately – Scrutiny Co-ordinator
Ruth Rimmington – Temporary Governance Officer
Caroline Baria Service Director, Joint Commissioning Quality and Business Change
Deborah Hinde – Programme Director, Policy, Planning and Corporate Services
Kate Revell - Group Manager, Performance Complaints and Research

1. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 October 2011, having been circulated to all members, were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

2. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

3. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Delivering the Strategic Plan – Progress up to September 2011

Kate Revell, Group Manager, Performance Complaints and Research presented the report which updated the committee on the outline performance and progress made against the strategic plans priorities during the first half of 2011/12.

The last quarter's performance information showed that 40% of indicators had performed better and 60% showing an improved performance. There had been improvements in Children's Social Care with Ofsted's reporting an adequate rating. Ms Revell pointed out that the levels of children becoming the subject of more than two protection plans in the year remained higher than the target and that work was being

undertaken to reduce these numbers. No actions were considered as not happening, and, of the 53 actions, only nine were considered as happening but behind schedule. These included; the implementation of a county wide strategy to reduce child poverty and reducing reliance on landfill for waste disposal. Officers continued to closely monitor performance against these strategic actions and performance indicators and ensure that robust management processes were in place to address any underperformance.

In her presentation to the committee, Ms Revell focussed on some of the improvement actions in place to reduce sickness absence within the authority. These included; training for managers on absence management and the introduction of new management competences also to deal with periods of stress related absence; raising employees own awareness of the responsibility to look after themselves; the authority was working with an external counselling service; Occupational Health had driven down waiting times and the introduction of workplace champions to improve health and wellbeing within their own teams.

It was explained that the Performance Team were driving forward improvements and working with senior managers on a new performance management framework learning from best national practise. Members asked questions and made comments as follows:

What was happening to reduce the reliance on landfill for waste disposal? The matter would be explored with managers and reported to a future meeting of the committee and include available alternatives.

The committee asked for the following information to be included in its next update on the strategic plan:-

- Future performance information to be produced by way of a chart that showed the progress made and included reasons for those falling behind schedule.
- Information on reducing reliance on landfill for waste disposal, including alternative methods.
- The work taking place on child poverty.

5. Improvement Programme Overview.

Deborah Hinde Programme Director gave a presentation on the progress made by the programme of improvement for the authority which was appended to the report. Over half of the £76m 2011/12 savings target had been delivered with the majority of remaining projects on target to deliver in full. A small number of projects experiencing degrees of threats to delivery were being dealt with through the Programme Directors' Board and Corporate Leaders team. A handout showing a list of compromised targets as at September 2011 was tabled. It was pointed out that some projects appeared more than once where discrete amounts of savings under threat had a different status; red, yellow and amber.

In terms of the key achievements for the Improvement Programme, departments had reported that support from the Improvement Project added value both in terms of diagnostics, design and implementation. 93% of projects were either complete or on track to deliver the target savings of £76.3m for 2011/12.

Following the presentation members commented and asked questions as follows:-

- Had the authority sought to sell BMS on to other authorities yet? The authority's primary focus was to get it set up and working properly before marketing it elsewhere. There was potential for income generation.
- What was taking place ahead of the go live date? There were contingency plans in place to mitigate risks when BMS went live 29 November 2011, that included funds in the event of urgent payments being required, a number of support arrangements in place for employees including a huge training programme with a number of online e-learning packages.

The committee thanked Ms Hinde for her comprehensive update on the Improvement Programme.

6. Supported Employment.

Caroline Baria, Service Director, Joint Commissioning Quality and Business Change had been invited to inform members of the factors considered with regards to the proposal to consult on the closure of Sherwood Industries.

During her presentation she referred to:-

- The Department for Work and Pensions published consultation document based on an independent review "Getting In, Getting On" and the central theme that, the resources used to support disabled people in employment should be focused on disabled people themselves, rather than on specific institutions that were not financially viable.
- The four business reviews over the last 18 months to determine a financially viable operating model for Sherwood Industries. Each of the reviews had concluded that it required significant changes in the way it operated and identified the option of closure of the factory due to the competitive nature of the furniture market and wide availability of low cost furniture and wider economic climate. In addition, even with a reduced staffing structure and with sustained increases in sales, Sherwood Industries would continue to require a significant subsidy due to its high fixed costs.
- The measures put in place to reduce the costs wherever possible, review of its marketing strategy and the alternative services developed over recent years.
- The authority's own independent review that found that too much was being spent on buildings and sheltered schemes were making a loss and should be more targeted to support the individual.
- The redeployment opportunities to all staff at risk of compulsory redundancy should the decision taken at Full Council be to close Sherwood Industries.

Members asked questions and made comments as follows:-

- It was a sad position to be in, but with the economy as it was, it was fortunate to have been sustained for this long. Hopefully the authority and Shaw Trust could help them to be absorbed into new posts elsewhere.

- Why had money continued to be spent on Sherwood Industries when its sales were declining? The authority had liaised with schools in recent years when orders were dropping to see if they could produce more cost effective furniture. The change to schools budgets had led them to buy more cheaply from elsewhere.
- What had the authority done in dealing with this problem? There had been discussions with families and HR support offering voluntary redundancy. A skills analysis had been carried out to determine suitable employment opportunities. The Meals and Horticultural Services staff with technical skills would receive training in other areas of work. The authority did not want to provide false jobs.
- What support was being offered to these individuals? The authority had identified their individual needs and paid for adaptations to support them in mainstream employment. Part of the budget would be retained for this. There was confidence that those left would receive a tailored package. The authority paid for adaptations to support the individual in mainstream employment and could include a support worker.
- Members were concerned that individuals received one to one interviews as soon as possible and basic information on the options available to them including voluntary redundancy.

Following discussion it was agreed to:-

- not initiate a full scrutiny review of the issues associated with Sherwood Industries but to take a further update in the New Year.
- have a future piece of work on support available to disabled persons
- respond to the Independent Group's request to include the matter on the Overview Committee work programme.

7. Programme of Scrutiny.

Councillor Saddington, Chair of the Communities and Environment reported that the Seasonal Canine Illness Study Group had had an extremely interesting meeting at Rufford Mill where it heard from the animal Health Trust. It was thought that a disease transmitted by harvest mites might be the reason for the dog deaths/illnesses. The committee had also received a presentation from Jen Spencer Chief Executive of Experience Nottinghamshire on Tourism in the County. They had also received feedback from the Robin Hood festival held over the summer.

Councillor Liz Yates, Chair of the Education Standing Committee reported that it had received a briefing on GSCE results that had improved for Looked after Children, the Cabinet response to the review of Inclusion issues, whose eight recommendations had been accepted. The Recruitment and Retention of Governors was to meet that afternoon and would receive a briefing on local authority governors.

Councillor Ged Clarke, Chair of the Social Care and Health Standing Committee reported that the review group had met on 8 November 2011 to examine the proposed merger and relocation of five GP surgeries in West Bridgford, following which it agreed that the proposed changes were in the interests of the local health service. It would now consult with its patients.

The Standing Committee was due to receive the response to the Care to Independence Review and a briefing on Joint Commissioning Strategy.

The meeting closed at 11.55am.

CHAIR

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