

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
11 MAY 2017
7.30 - 8.57 PM**



Present:

Councillors Leake (Chairman), Angell (Vice-Chairman), Allen, Mrs Angell, Mrs Birch, Finnie, Harrison, Mrs McCracken, Porter, Mrs Temperton, Tullett, Mrs Mattick (Substitute) and Peacey (Substitute)

Executive Members:

Councillor McCracken, Executive Member for Culture, Corporate Services & Public Protection

In Attendance:

Andrea Carr, Overview & Scrutiny Officer
Kirsty Hunt, Principal Democratic Services Officer (Governance)
Abby Thomas, Head of Transformation and Engagement
Alison Sanders, Director of Corporate Services

48. Apologies for Absence/Substitute Members

Apologies were received from Councillors Brossard, Phillips and Mr Robin Briscoe.

Councillor Peacey was acting as a substitute for Councillor Brossard.

Councillor Mrs Mattick was acting as a substitute for Councillor Phillips.

49. Minutes and Matters Arising

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission held on the 26 January 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

50. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

Councillor Mrs Birch declared a personal interest as the spouse of the Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing.

Councillor Mrs McCracken declared a personal interest as the spouse of the Executive Member for Culture, Corporate Services and Public Protection.

51. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

52. Public Participation

There were no submissions from the public in accordance with the Council's Public Participation Scheme for Overview and Scrutiny.

53. Residents' Survey

The Commission received a report and presentation briefing them on the Residents' Survey results 2017 and communication plan.

The Resident's Survey was undertaken by QA Research in January and February 2017; the report updated members on the outcomes, trends and areas of interest. The 2017 results were fairly static, which was typical of tracking surveys as it was unusual to see significant changes year on year.

The biggest change since the 2014 Residents Survey was the change from a postal survey to telephone survey. 1801 surveys were completed with 1,501 via telephone and 294 face-to-face. QA Research had analysed the responses and were able to generate the findings of different demographic and wards. The results had been analysed at ward level and would be sent to members to use.

Of the findings within the survey:

- 90% of residents were satisfied that Bracknell Forest was a good place to live, with greenspaces, council run sports and leisure facilities and highways amongst the reasons why. It was the first time that highways had been listed in this category.
- 96% of residents said that there was strong community cohesion, this was an upwards trend and a really positive outcome.
- 20% of residents currently participated in regular volunteering which was at the same level as 2014. This was against the national trend which showed volunteer levels as decreasing.
- 19% felt there could be improvements or changes to road maintenance and infrastructure.
- 12% thought there could be improvements or change mechanisms for communicating with residents and acting on their concerns.
- Frequently used services had the highest levels of satisfaction with many residents not forming an opinion on services that were not often used. This did not tally with specific service user surveys.
- Only 9% continued to feel that they were 'not well informed at all'.
- The demand for online and social media outstripped the current usage.
- Popularity for email as a method of communication outstripped its current usage. 32% preferred email communication vs. 10% who actually used email communication.
- Connectivity across the Borough had increased since 2014.

The findings of the survey would be taken to all Departmental Management Teams and would feed into service plans and the transformation programme. The findings would also be shared with the Parish and Town Councils' Liaison Group on the 19 July.

In response to the Members' questions, the following points were made:

- The questions within the survey were open questions which did not prompt answers and allowed residents to respond specifically to the questions.
- The survey asked how often specific facilities such as South Hill Park, were used. Specific information in respect of the arts and culture aspects of the Residents' Survey was sought.

- The voluntary service target had been benchmarked across the Country.
- Some of the indicators were in line with the previous national Place Survey. However national benchmarking was proving harder with many local authorities moving away from undertaking resident surveys.
- 58% of Hanworth residents appreciated South Hill Park.
- Over the past years a number of public consultations had been held where residents could influence decisions. Adult and Children's Social Care had also been working with service users to help develop and design their Communication Strategy. The Council needed to be better at feeding back the changes made through resident influences to the residents.
- The Citizen and Customer Contact project was looking at increasing and pushing email communication to residents. A business case was currently being put together to introduce the Gov Delivery email communication platform. This had been subject to a successful trial in libraries recently with greater attendance at events due to the use of emails. The system allowed anonymous and group specific emails to be sent and fed back whether the email had been opened, deleted and read.
- With the e+ card the Council already had a good email database.
- Work was underway to determine which services were best placed to send email correspondence. It was thought that sending Town and Country electronically could be a good idea as it would be cheaper than distributing paper copies. Paper copies could be made available in public buildings in addition.
- The reasons for satisfaction within Parish and Town Council areas had not been asked for within the survey. This was a learning point for the next survey which would be adapted to include this.
- It was thought that the reasons for dissatisfaction within Binfield could be due to planning and not being able to influence the Council, which were very much linked.
- The participants for the telephone survey were randomly selected to meet the representative demographic sample. The interviews would continue until the representative target was met, this was set out within the source documents from QA Research who undertook the survey on the Council's behalf. The first question asked in the survey filtered whether the resident fitted the required demographic quota or not.
- Political groups were not taken into account at any point in the survey.
- Although South Hill Park was not a service directly provided by the Council, it had been included within the survey under a question regarding facilities supported by the Council.

The Chairman thanked Kirsty Hunt for her presentation and the work that had been undertaken on the Residents' survey and commented that the group were looking forward in seeing the outcomes of the survey filtered down and actioned across the Council's services.

54. **Transformation Programme**

The Commission received a presentation updating them on the progress of the Transformation Programme.

The first year of the Transformation Programme had been completed and the Programme was now two months into year two.

The key headlines from the presentation were:

- Good progress had been made with service reviews.
- There had been successful public engagement held particularly for the Leisure and Library reviews.
- The proposals from the plan phase had been approved by the Executive.
- The 2017/18 budget reflected the work that had been done on the reviews, with the funds having been taken out of the budget.
- Time was being taken to review services and investigate different ways and approaches to deliver services to inform budget reductions.
- Both the Adult and Children's Services programmes were re-focussed and the direction of travel reviewed.
- The Adult Social Care programme was in the delivery phase, a Gateway Review had been held earlier in the year.
- The Children, Young People and Learning programmes were currently on pause due to the Ofsted inspection.
- The Citizen and Customer Contact Project along with the ICT Strategy were enabling projects which would underpin the savings from the other transformation programmes.
- The biggest challenge was internal capacity across the Council to both maintain day to day services and deliver the transformation programme.
- IESE and Activist advice had been invaluable and they would continue to be used throughout year two of the programme.
- Mike Allen who was previously CEO at Age UK, had been appointed as the new volunteer co-ordinator. Twenty eight people had already come forward offering to volunteer before the communications campaign had started. Members would be asked to help, support and promote the volunteer communications campaign.
- A four week consultation had been held for library staff, with eight staff directly affected.
- The Executive decision had been made on 9 May to endorse the new blueprint for customer experience.
- The FACE resource allocation system (RAS) for Adult Social Care had been launched on time without any major issues in April.
- The preferred provider had been agreed for the digital marketplace product review.
- The Director of Children, Young People and Learning had been reviewing and repackaging the Service Level Agreements.
- The findings from the Ofsted inspection would be used to move the Children, Young People and Learning's transformation programmes forward.
- The design for the new council chamber in Time Square had been agreed.
- With all staff moving to the Time Square office, staff would need to adjust to a new culture change with there being a 5:3 ratio of staff to desks which would allow for more agile working.
- The core Communications and Marketing team were now focussing on four areas; transformation, behavioural change programme, major political priorities and emergencies, with routine PR working being devolved to departments.

- In year 2 there would be three new reviews; children's services, planning and building control, and parks and countryside. With the analyse phase Gateway review for the parks and countryside review taking place in July and the children's services and planning and building control review analyse Gateway reviews taking place in September.
- The Adults and Children's services transformation programmes would be the main focus for year two.

In response to the Members' questions, the following points were made:

- The scale of the Frimley Health and Care Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) was currently unknown and it was too early to know the impact this could cause. The Director Adult Social Care, Health and Housing had a good working relationship and was working closely with Frimley Health and Care.
- There were mixed feelings amongst staff in regards to culture change. Some staff were thriving on the thought of change whilst others were more resistant. Staff morale in support services was particularly low with the long consultation period impacting morale. There was an emotional nature around change which could often be negative, when staff's future was known they would tend to be more positive to the idea of change.
- Services had been affected but not directly through staff morale. Posts had been kept vacant prior to staff redeployment with temporary staff used to fill these positions, this was particularly the case within Accounts Payable, Receivable and Payroll and had affected performance.
- The Adult Social Care Transformation Project was graded at Amber due to complex external factors, the number of partners involved and the Frimley Health and Care STP issue.
- The procurement process for the new library technology would take place in the Autumn with installation happening over December, January and February ready for the new financial year.
- There would be a programme of training in place for library volunteers for areas such as health and safety and customer services. There would also be training provided on how to use the new technology prior to implementation.
- The Commission would be advised on the potential number of redundancies from the restructure of the library stock management and back office team.
- The Council Wide Support Service structure was the same as the Target Operating Model which had previously been shared with members.
- The labour market in the South East was very competitive and it had been difficult to recruit quality staff for professional roles.
- There had been a lot of interest in the job roles at Coral Reef.
- The Council had a strong process in place for redeployment and it was important to retain staff with good skill sets.
- New market premia payments had not yet had to be paid to any staff.
- More communications and marketing was required with library staff and the public.
- The best approach for installing the new technology was being discussed. Libraries could be closed either in two short phases or one longer phase. There were pros and cons of both approach and the difficulties of installing were not yet known. The dates for the closures had not been confirmed but Members and libraries would be given plenty of advanced notice.
- The leisure sites would not be divided up as the interested outsourcing parties had confirmed that they would be interested in all four sites.

- Councillor McCracken had attended a Bidders Day on 5 May 2017. The feedback and comments from the potential bidders were very positive and they were extremely impressed with the four sites, especially Coral Reef.
- As Bracknell Leisure Centre was an older site the building and maintenance responsibilities would be included in the contract negotiations.
- The technology for Bracknell Library was being planned for the existing site.
- An Officer Board had been set up to look at the future of Easthampstead House, Library, Police Station and Magistrates Court Sites.

The Chairman thanked Abby Thomas for the interesting and detailed Transformation update but expressed concern at the mixed message being delivered to library staff and public as well as the morale of the support service staff.

Abby Thomas informed the Commission that Member Transformation update sessions would run throughout the year with the first being held in July.

55. Quarterly Service Reports (QSRs) 2016/17

The Commission noted the Quarterly Service Reports for the third quarter of 2016/17 (October to December 2016) relating to the Chief Executive's Office and the Corporate Services Department.

56. Executive Forward Plan

The Commission noted the forthcoming items on the Executive forward plan of a corporate nature,

57. Submission to the House of Commons' Communities and Local Government Select Committee

The Commission noted the Council's submission to the House of Commons' Communities and Local Government Select Committee regarding the Committee's inquiry into Overview and Scrutiny in local government.

58. Work Programme and Panel Activity Update

The Commission noted progress against the Overview and Scrutiny work programme for 2016-17.

59. Date of the next meeting

The date of the next Overview and Scrutiny Commission was 6 July 2017.

CHAIRMAN