

**CORPORATE AND EXTERNAL ISSUES SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE**

MEETING, 24<sup>th</sup> JULY, 2023

Present – Councillors Galloway (Chairman), Atcha, Bamforth, Chadwick, Dean (as deputy for Councillor Cowen), Fielding, Flitcroft, Heslop, Iqbal, Morgan (as deputy for Councillor Cox), Morris, Mort, Mistry, Price, Priest, Rigby, Taylor, Tighe and Walsh.

Also in Attendance

Councillor Peel	Leader of the Council
Councillor Jiva	Executive Cabinet for Stronger Communities
Ms. S. Johnson	Chief Executive
Mr. L. Fallows	Director of Corporate Resources
Ms. H. Gorman	Borough Solicitor
Mr. A. Williamson	Assistant Director Transformation and Corporate Property
Mr. C. Hart	Head of Digital Customer Service
Ms. N. Connell	Corporate Programme Manager
Mrs. V. Ridge	Democratic Services Manager

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors N. Ayub, Cowen and Cox.

Councillor Galloway in the Chair

**1. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 17<sup>th</sup> April, 2023 and the informal meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> June, 2023 were submitted.

Resolved – That the minutes be signed as a correct record.

## **2. THE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2023/2024**

The Borough Solicitor submitted a report which detailed the proposed work programme for 2023/2024.

Resolved – That the Work Programme for 2023/2024, as circulated, be approved.

## **3. THE COUNCIL'S DIGITAL AND CORPORATE CHANGE PROGRAMMES**

Mr. A. Williamson, Mr. C. Hart and Ms. N. Connell gave a presentation to members which outlined the work being undertaken and the progress made so far in relation to the Council's Digital and Corporate Change Programmes.

Information was provided in relation to the following, viz:-

- The Council's Digital Strategy which was launched in April, 2021;
- The six Digital Strategy Themes;
- The Digital Theme Priorities;
- Some of the highlights from the Digital Programme;
- The Technology Service Underpinning Digital;
- The background to the Corporate Change Programme;
- The role of Change Managers and the anticipated outcomes;
- The aims and potential of the Self Service project;
- Project Management Toolkit and Training; and
- What had been delivered since February, 2023.

Members in their deliberations made the following comments/observations:-

- Had the Digital Programme been accelerated as a result of Covid-19;
- Was age a barrier in terms of those residents who could not access online services;
- The need for services to be integrated to assist

- customers;
- The challenges facing staff as a result of the technological and organisational changes;
  - The use of community centres to facilitate voluntary organisations with the use of technology;
  - The implications for the One Stop Shop and the need for data on the types of calls they currently received as a result of the Digital change;
  - The need for simple processes to enable residents to use online Digital services;
  - How long would it take to reach an acceptable level of residents who were using Digital services;
  - How do we provide services for those people who will not/cannot engage with online services;
  - A request for more detail on each of the individual ten projects that the Change Management Team were currently looking at;
  - The need to look at partnership working with external organisations to provide Digital training for residents;
  - The need to undertake a benchmarking exercise with other GM Authorities and External Partners who had already gone through this process; and
  - The rationale behind using two technologies i.e.: Oracle and Microsoft.

Resolved – (i) That the presentation be noted.

(ii) That officers be thanked for their informative presentation.

(iii) That further details on the ten projects currently being looked at by the Change Management Team be circulated to members of this Scrutiny Committee.

#### **4. BOLTON COUNCIL – SENIOR MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE – JULY, 2023**

Mr. L. Fallows, Director of Corporate Resources gave a presentation to members which outlined the current Senior Management Structure at Bolton Council.

Information was provided in relation to the following areas, viz:-

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- The Bolton Context;
- The work undertaken by the Council;
- The Workforce profile;
- The population and employee numbers for local authorities within Greater Manchester;
- The number of Chief Officers at top three tiers in each local authority within Greater Manchester;
- The appointment of Senior Managers;
- The structure for the Directorate of Corporate Resources and the Core Services;
- The structure for the Directorate of Adults, Communities and Integration; its statutory duties and the areas of work;
- The structure for the Directorate of Children's Services; the numbers of people the service is provided to; the work of the Children and Young People's Board and the corporate parenting responsibilities in relation to Looked After Children and Care Leavers;
- The Leadership Team for the Place Directorate and the Statutory functions and responsibilities for Highways and Engineering, Environment and Regulation and Economic Development and Regeneration; and
- The Leadership Team for the Public Health Directorate and its responsibilities.

Following the presentation, members made the following comments/observations:-

- Were there any issues with recruiting to vacancies at Chief Officer level;
- Concern that some Directors might be dealing with casework which should rather be dealt with by officers lower than Director/Assistant Director level and was the balance right in the expectations of Directors/Assistant Directors;
- How was the Council maximising efficiencies in relation to Personal Assistants to assist Directors/Assistant Directors;
- Concern that the Directorate of Public Health was top heavy in its senior management structure compared to

the number of staff within the division and was there a reason for this;

- It would be useful to undertake a benchmarking exercise with other Greater Manchester authorities to compare the salaries of Chief Officer posts and also were there any of the Chief Officer posts jointly funded with other organisations;
- The new Member Enquiry System for routine case work worked very well; and
- What impact had the reduction in the number of Chief Officer posts since 2009/2010 had on services.

## **5. MEMBERS BUSINESS**

The Committee received the extracts of minutes of other meetings of the Council relevant to the remit of this Committee:-

- (a) The Cabinet held on 17<sup>th</sup> April, 19<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> June and 10<sup>th</sup> July, 2023;
- (b) The Executive Cabinet Member Leader's Portfolio held on 4<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> April and 12<sup>th</sup> July, 2023; and
- (c) The Executive Cabinet Member Culture Portfolio held on 10<sup>th</sup> July, 2023.

Resolved – That the minutes of the various meetings be noted.

(The meeting started at 6.00 p.m. and finished at 7.45 p.m.)