



Cabinet **2 December 2009**

Report of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 26 October 2009

At this meeting the Committee also considered a revised Risk Management Strategy, and a separate report appears on this agenda.

1. Bitesize Training: National Fraud Initiative

- 1.1 The Committee has chosen to receive regular training on various aspects of its responsibilities in the form of "bitesize" presentations prior to the commencement of the main business on the agenda. The Committee received a presentation on the National Fraud Initiative.
- 1.2 The Committee was advised what the Council had done to comply with the Initiative, as well as the benefits of the exercise. This training was relevant to the Committee, as one of its terms of reference is to review the anti-fraud and corruption controls and arrangements.

2. Council Improvement Plan 2009/2010: Update

- 2.1 In June 2009, the Cabinet approved the Council Improvement Plan for 2009/2010. This Plan brings together a range of actions to help the Council achieve further improvements in performance.
- 2.2 The Committee reviewed progress against the Plan, and was pleased to note that overall good progress had been made against the three priority themes. The Council is on track to deliver against the Plan, which will continue to be closely monitored by the Council's Management Team.

3. Key Performance Indicators: Second Quarter 2009/2010

- 3.1 Members considered the second quarterly report for 2009/2010, covering the period July to September 2009. A total of 33 indicators were reported this quarter, of which 22 were green, 3 amber and 3 red. The final 5 were contextual indicators.
- 3.2 Members discussed a number of the indicators, including indicator 5, improved street scene and environmental cleanliness, and were pleased to see that the levels of reported fly tipping incidents had improved.

4. Biannual Complaints and Compliments Digest

- 4.1 Twice yearly the Committee receives an overview of the quantity and range of corporate complaints received over the previous half year, which the Committee uses to monitor the Council's effectiveness at responding to and learning from any mistakes which have been made. For the first half of this financial year, 20 corporate complaints had been received compared to 44 having been received in the whole of the previous year.
- 4.2 The Committee considered a detailed breakdown of the complaints received, and as in previous years, was pleased to note that the number of compliments received, 50 for this first half-year, continued to outnumber the complaints.

5. Budget Monitoring Report: 1 April to 30 September 2009

- 5.1 The Committee received the quarterly budget monitoring report which informed Members of the Council's financial position for the first half of the 2009/2010 financial year, and highlighted significant variances. Overall an underspend for the period of £656,000 was being reported, and all budget variances over £10,000 were explained in the report. Favourable variances included underspends on the budget of £720,000 and income above budget of £434,000, the reasons for which were discussed by Members. Adverse variances included budget overspends of £265,000 and income below budget of £173,000, and again the reasons for these variances were discussed.
- 5.2 The Capital Budget Monitoring Report showed a net expenditure of £3.7 million for the period compared to a full year revised capital budget of £17.737 million. As in previous reports, the underspend was partly due to slippage in the programme, but also due to the fact that many of the budgets were not profiled, and a number of the projects were due to commence later in the financial year. The capital disposals programme showed capital receipts for the period of £1.876 million against a full year disposal estimate of £2.779 million.
- 5.3 The Committee discussed a number of elements of this report, but did not wish to bring any issues to the Cabinet's attention at this time.

6. Corporate Risk Register: Quarterly Monitoring Report

- 6.1 The second quarterly risk register monitoring report for 2009/2010 had been prepared using the revised Risk Management Strategy considered by the Committee at this meeting. The Strategy now included more detailed information in terms of named officers who were responsible for mitigating actions, and clear timelines for the start and completion of each action.
- 6.2 Three new risks had been added, two residual risks had moved from amber to red, and two residual risks had moved from red or amber to green. Reasons for these amendments were set out in the report and discussed.
- 6.3 The Committee asked for clarification on some of the risks, including what public feedback had been received about the new West Suffolk House building, when the refurbishment of the Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre was likely to be completed, and the provision of affordable housing. Members' comments will be taken into account in the next version of the Risk Register where appropriate.

7. 2009/2010 Mid Year Internal Audit Progress Report

- 7.1 This report advised Members of the work of the Internal Audit Section for the first six months of 2009/2010, and progress which had been made towards achieving the 2009/2010 Audit Plan, which had been approved by the Committee at its meeting on 27 April 2009. The report also sought to provide Members with an understanding of the variety of projects and corporate activities which were supported through the work of the team.
- 7.2 There were no areas of significant concern presented to the Committee, and the report showed that a significant amount of the planned work had been carried out in the first half of this financial year, including work on the Annual Governance Statement and contribution to Use of Resources, the Committee took the opportunity to again congratulate the Chief Finance Officer and her team on the excellent Use of Resources score which had been achieved.
- 7.3 The Committee noted that the Internal Audit Team was on track to achieve the timetabled audit plan by the end of the financial year.

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