

EXECUTIVE – 27 SEPTEMBER 2016

COMMENTS FROM CORPORATE O&S – 20 SEPTEMBER 2016

To be read alongside the items on the Executive agenda:

6. Local Government Funding Update and Four Year Grant Settlement

The Committee agreed that accepting the Government's offer in principle did at least provide certainty on which Waverley could plan for the future. However, it was noted that the '4-year settlement' was at best 3-years including 2016/17; and the Committee was extremely concerned at the iniquitous proposal to impose a 'negative grant' in 2019/20 linked to the business rate funding reform. In accepting the Settlement, the Committee recommended that the principle of a negative grant should be robustly challenged.

7. Treasury Management Activity 2016/17

Corporate O&S congratulated the Treasury Management team for the good performance achieved in the year to date, and noted that whilst it was expected that budgeted investment income would be achieved in 2016/17 the impact of decreases in base rate would make 2017/18 very challenging.

11. GF Property Investment Strategy

The Committee was pleased to see the proposal to take forward the suggestions made at the Corporate O&S meeting in July, including the establishment of an Investment Advisory Board to enable rigorous and consistent analysis of investment proposals in advance of an Executive decision, and endorsed the proposals to the Executive.

19. Performance Management Report - Q1 2016/17

The Committee noted the good performance overall.

Members discussed the level of Staff Turnover and Staff Sickness, and asked for more in-depth analysis of these indicators including a breakdown of the turnover (retirements, internal moves, external moves, etc) and of sickness (long-term, short-term, work-related).

The Committee also discussed the invoice payment targets. Members were reassured that the down-time in the accounting system (Agresso) had been planned as part of the implementation of the system upgrade and took place over a weekend to minimise disruption to business processes. The Committee was pleased with the overall good performance on invoice payments, and noted that where invoices missed the target this was often only by a matter of a few days. The Committee was reassured that feedback from Waverley's suppliers was very positive about the Council's commitment to paying invoices within 30 days (and 10 days for small businesses) as many had to offer 90-day credit, or more, to their other customers.

Performance Management – Housing Q1

The Committee noted that the average re-let time for Void properties had finally reached the target of 20-days. This had had a significant positive impact on the rent loss budget, and also enabled more households to move into a new home. The Committee congratulated officers across Housing for their hard work and persistence in developing and streamlining processes to achieve this result.

The Committee noted that the method of collecting customer satisfaction feedback on responsive repairs had changed with effect from 2016/17. Previously data had been collected by the contractor's operatives at the time of completing a job. Whilst this had recorded high levels of customer satisfaction, the data was not considered to be credible as it was contradicted by complaints and anecdotal evidence. In 2015/16, Waverley and Mears had agreed to jointly fund an independent market research company to undertake telephone surveys of a sample of repairs customers. These surveys were undertaken in parallel with the contractor's data collection during the second half of 2015/16, and the results showed that customer satisfaction was consistently well below what had been reported by the contractor. This was expected, and although disappointing, the data was credible and provided sufficient detail about the customer experience that it was being used to drive improvements in the responsive repairs service.

Cllr Hesse commended officers for taking the brave step of changing the metric to one which they knew would give a less favourable result, but which could be used to generate improvements to the service.

The Committee noted the continued good performance on Homelessness Prevention, with only 4 households in temporary accommodation since the beginning of April, and none for more than 7 days. Cllr Fraser was assured that the council's duty to re-house homeless people was very clearly defined and a homeless person would need to have a local connection with the area covered by the council to which they were applying. Waverley's Housing Options team worked closely with the private sector and social housing providers to find suitable accommodation for people at risk of homelessness.