

**VALUE FOR MONEY SCRUTINY
 COMMITTEE
 21 SEPTEMBER 2015**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR MRS A M NEWTON (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors Mrs J Brockway (Vice-Chairman), P M Dilks, I G Fleetwood, C E D Mair, Mrs M J Overton MBE, R B Parker, M A Whittington and P Wood

Officers in attendance:-

Steve Blagg (Democratic Services Officer), David Forbes (County Finance Officer), David Hair (Team Leader - Scrutiny and Member Support), Brian Goodwin (Contracts Manager), Kevin Kendall (County Property Officer), Sylvia Mercer (Senior Programme/Project Manager, VINCI Mouchel), Pete Moore (Executive Director of Finance and Public Protection), Jasmine Sodhi (Performance and Equalities Manager) and Karen Tonge (Treasury Manager)

10 COUNCILLOR MARK WHITTINGTON - NEW MEMBER

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Mark Whittington to his first meeting of the Committee.

11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A G Hagues and S F Kinch.

12 DECLARATION OF COUNCILLORS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest declared at this stage of the meeting.

13 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE VALUE FOR MONEY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 23 JUNE 2015

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Value for Money Scrutiny Committee held on 23 June 2015, be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

14 COUNCIL BUSINESS PLAN 2015/16 PERFORMANCE REPORT, QUARTER 1

The Committee received a report and a presentation of Quarter 1 data in a new style performance report against the Council Business Plan. Officers stated that the Council Business Plan 2015/16 was developed as a simple, easy to read document with a view to using infographics to "bring the plan to life" as part of the new style of

**VALUE FOR MONEY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
21 SEPTEMBER 2015**

reporting. Feedback on the new style of reporting from Members had been positive and had been taken into consideration in the preparation of the new format. Officers stated that due to the extent of changes in suppliers of information and systems all of the available data to report on Quarter 1 for the measures within the remit of the Committee was not available.

Officers stated that the dissemination of information to Members and the public presentation of the information on the Council's website were currently being progressed.

The Committee welcomed the new format for the presentation of performance information.

RESOLVED

That the new format for the presentation of performance information against the Council's Business Plan, be welcomed.

**15 TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE 2015/16 - QUARTER 1 UPDATE
REPORT TO 30 JUNE 2015**

(Note: Councillor R B Parker arrived in the meeting)

The Committee received a report in connection with the Council's treasury activities for the 1st quarter of 2015/16 to 30 June 2015 and a comparison of this activity to the Treasury Management Strategy for 2015/16 which had been approved by the Executive Councillor on 23 March 2015.

During the discussion, the following points were noted:-

1. The effect on liquid and short term deposits would be small if there was a reduction in the Base Rate.
2. The return achieved on the Council's investments reflected the prudent approach taken on creditworthiness as stated in the Council's Strategy on the Council's investment position.
3. Despite the recent announcement by Germany to allow numerous immigrants to settle in the country, the inclusion of German financial institutions on the Authorised Lending List was due to their excellent credit rating.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and the comments made by the Committee be passed onto the Executive Councillor with responsibility for finance.

16 PROPERTY SERVICES CONTRACT UPDATE

The Committee received a progress report and presentation on the Property Services contract with VINCI mouchel.

The Committee also received a presentation on the property database (Concerto) which gave details of individual contracts and proposals to let Building Managers have access to the database.

Officers stated that performance of the contract was linked to payments, they stressed the importance of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) being delivered and the importance of Contract Notices in flagging up issues that might affect the project.

The following points were noted during consideration of the report:-

1. Every property which the Council owned or had an interest in was included on Concerto including the County Farms.
2. Concerto provided up to date details of the cost of project but this area was still being developed.
3. Concerto did not have any problems receiving statistical information.
4. With regard to access to Concerto on the internet work was still on-going to ensure officers could access the information.
5. The configuration of Concerto with Agresso was explained.
6. The County Property Officer had a threshold of £25,000 to spend on an individual property before the need to seek further approval.

RESOLVED

That the report and comments made by the Committee be noted and that the County Property Officer be requested to submit a progress report to the Committee on 22 February 2016.

17 VALUE FOR MONEY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME
2015/16

The Committee received a report in connection with its Work Programme.

RESOLVED

That the Work Programme be noted and updated accordingly, subject to the following:-

- (a) The consideration of Budget Options for the 2016/17 Budget – 24 November 2015 (Following a seminar on the Budget for all Members of the Council arranged for 22 October 2015)
- (b) An assessment of financial risk (to be programmed after the Chancellor of the Exchequer had made his statement to Parliament on the Budget for 2016/17)
- (c) Regular update report on Serco's performance and Agresso (exempt nature of the report to be examined so that information could be considered in the public domain)
- (d) Quarter 1 performance – 24 November 2015
- (e) Property Services Contract update – 22 February 2015

**VALUE FOR MONEY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
21 SEPTEMBER 2015****18 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

Before the motion for the exclusion of the press and public was considered the Committee discussed the reasons for exemption with some Members stating that due to wide spread interest by the public in the report there was a need for less secrecy and more transparency. Therefore, it was agreed in future, that where appropriate the report should be in the open part of the agenda.

RESOLVED

(a) That under Section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 of the Act.

(b) That when the Committee considers this matter in the future every effort should be made to consider this item in the open part of the agenda.

(c) That, in the meantime, consideration be given by officers to those areas of the report, at today's meeting, that could be made available to the public.

19 SERCO CONTRACT PERFORMANCE - OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee discussed a report which had been considered by the Audit Committee on 21 September 2015, and to which members of this Committee had been invited to attend and participate in the discussion. The purpose of this Committee was to consider the key messages arising from the discussion at the Audit Committee in the context of scrutinising the performance of the Serco contract.

RESOLVED

That in respect of future reporting to scrutiny on the performance of the Serco contract, it was agreed:-

(a) That performance be scrutinised at every meeting.

(b) That, where appropriate, reports should be considered in the public part of the agenda.

(c) That it be recommended that Councillor R B Parker be appointed to the Recovery Group.

The meeting closed at 4.50 pm