

EXECUTIVE AND RESOURCES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 13 July 2017

Present

Councillor Simon Fawthrop (Chairman)
Councillors Nicholas Bennett J.P., Ian Dunn,
Robert Evans, William Huntington-Thresher, David Livett,
Russell Mellor, Alexa Michael, Keith Onslow (Vice-
Chairman), Tony Owen, Ian F. Payne, Michael Rutherford,
Stephen Wells and Angela Wilkins

Also Present

Councillor Stephen Carr and Councillor Graham Arthur

28 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies were received from Cllr Mary Cooke.

29 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Simon Fawthrop declared an interest by virtue of employment with BT Group plc.

30 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING

There were no questions.

31 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE AND RESOURCES PDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 14TH JUNE 2017 (EXCLUDING EXEMPT ITEMS)

The minutes were agreed.

32 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Members noted matters arising.

33 FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

Members noted the Forward Plan.

34 QUESTIONS TO THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS ATTENDING THE MEETING

There were no questions to the Portfolio Holder.

35 SCRUTINY OF THE RESOURCES PORTFOLIO HOLDER

The Portfolio Holder for Resources, Cllr Graham Arthur, addressed the Committee outlining progress in a number of areas.

A review had been undertaken subsequent to the recent general election, and following a pilot approach in March 2017 on new measures to combat electoral fraud, it was likely that L B Bromley would be selected to trial new technology for election work. This would include an i-pad for canvassing work and new information technology at elections enabling helpful statistics to be produced. It was also a national intention to progress developments towards electronic identification when voting; the Portfolio Holder suggested that ultimately voting could move to an electronic form on a national basis.

Related to I.T., two new capital funding streams would enable BT to provide new equipment for staff including an upgrade to the Microsoft Lync facility to enable video conferencing.

On HR matters, three new legal officers had been recruited to fill recent vacancies and the Bromley Stars event for 2017 would be taking on a new format. With quality of staff fundamental, it was intended to replace locums with permanent staff particularly in social services. The Council had also been shortlisted for two award categories at the Local Authority Pension Fund awards in September 2017. Additionally, five members of staff were helping in the aftermath of the Grenfell Tower fire disaster.

The Portfolio Holder also highlighted that young people representing the borough at the recent 2017 London Youth Games successfully defended the borough's position as London Youth Games Champions.

On finance matters, reference was made to returns from the Council's property investments. The Council was achieving good revenue returns and the properties being chosen were the correct ones.

The Portfolio Holder also underlined the Council's partnership with health and a sum of £500k per year provided by Bromley CCG to underpin certain children's social care services including Hollybank.

To counter rising homelessness and help address temporary accommodation costs, progress was being made with the Mears Scheme and 200 properties would be provided by 31st October 2017 with 400 properties provided by the end of next year.

36 RESOURCES PORTFOLIO - PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

a BUDGET MONITORING 2017/18 - DRAW-DOWN OF CARRY FORWARDS FROM CENTRAL CONTINGENCY

Report FSD17056

Draw-down from central contingency was sought on underspends carried forward from 2016/17 for the Resources Portfolio - the total sum requested this cycle being £436k, £146k of which is funded by government grant providing a net carry forward of £290k. The total sum comprised individual allocations with details of each and their purpose outlined in Report FSD17056.

Concerning an amount of £81k for merit awards to staff, £200k had originally been set aside in 2016/17 with the unspent amount carried forward to 2017/18. Members felt there was insufficient information to support the draw-down and were advised that the £81k sum could remain in contingency until requested later in the year and this was supported.

In regard to a sum of £50k for Legal Counsel costs related to an inquest, it was suggested that an approach be made to the Council's insurers to cover the costs. Members were advised that the insurers had been put on notice but there was, as yet, no claim against the Council.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to agree draw-down from Central Contingency of 2016/17 carry forward sums totalling £209k (net of grant income) as detailed at paragraph 3.3 of Report FSD17056 with the allocation of £81k related to merit awards for staff remaining in contingency until requested later in the year.

b BENEFITS SERVICE MONITORING REPORT AND UPDATE ON COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT/REDUCTION

Report FSD17057

Report FSD17057 outlined the performance of the benefit services provided by Liberata between 1st October 2016 and 31 March 2017. A letter from Liberata's Contract Director appended to the report provided Liberata's assessment of performance including an update on initiatives to be introduced in the coming months. Liberata were represented at the meeting for the item.

For the Council Tax Support/Reduction Scheme 2018/19, Members were asked to support an annual public consultation exercise commencing August 2017 based on the minimum contribution of working age claimants to a household's Council Tax liability remaining at 25%.

In discussion it was confirmed that the level of monthly performance for processing new claims from July 2016 could be attributed to optional files received from the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) and a large increase in work necessary at that time.

Concerning a financial error rate for the contractor set at less than 5% of cases, the tolerance was strict compared to many other authorities. The contractor remained within the tolerance throughout 2016/17. It was suggested that other local authorities would do well to follow the L B Bromley tolerance and possibly L B Bromley could set a 4% error rate. Liberata advised that 0% was the aim and there was a drive for no errors.

The local authority is obliged to check 10% of financial assessments. It was not possible to provide figures on what the impact could be of errors but it was not thought they impact on discretionary payments. If overpayments are made through a local authority error, and it is not believed the claimant would have realised they were being overpaid, the payment is not expected to be recovered. Allowance is provided in the system for some non-recovery.

For Liberata's Call Centre, it was noted that the abandonment rate for March 2017 stood at 7% compared to a 5% tolerance. However, a concentration of calls around the period for main Council Tax billing made the target particularly difficult. Resources had been positioned but the capacity was insufficient to cope with the volume of calls. However, with the introduction of self-serve, similar problems were not expected in future. Additional resources could also be provided to the contact centre in peak periods.

In regard to a hardship fund of £100k within the Council Tax Support/Reduction Scheme, it was highlighted that only about 25% of the fund had been spent. This amounted to £22k on 99 cases. A question was asked on how it might be possible to achieve better publicity coverage so that residents are aware of the fund; it was explained that Citizens Advice and other advice agencies are made aware through meetings.

A new claim with all information received could be processed within seven days. However, a number of claims were received without necessary details. Liberata were not aware of losing information and it was possible to process by self-serve reducing time.

It was also possible to provide current information to future meetings.

Referring to data on the number of days to process new claims and change in circumstances, the Chairman noted that it was taking 100+ days to process 13 new claims and 184 cases of change in circumstance. The Chairman asked if the delay was due to the claimant not providing information or a problem with the Council/Liberata. The Chairman asked for a report on the matter at the Committee's next meeting.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) information within Report FSD17057 and the letter provided by Liberata at Appendix 1 to the report be noted;**
- (2) a consultation exercise in August 2017 for the Authority's 2018/19 Council Tax Support/Reduction scheme, based on the scheme being the same as currently in place, be supported i.e. the minimum contribution of working age claimants to a household's Council Tax liability remaining at 25%;**
- (3) a report be provided to the Committee's next meeting on reasons for cases of new claims and change in circumstances taking longer than 100 days to process; and**
- (4) the Portfolio Holder be recommended to agree that the scheme to be recommended in the consultation exercise for the Authority's 2018/19 Council Tax Support/Reduction scheme be the same as currently in place.**

c DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT - AMENDED REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDING

Report DRR17/044

Approval was previously given to release £200k from Central Contingency to meet document management costs with the funding approved for:

- Amey Community Ltd to appoint an experienced Document Management Project Manager for a one-year period (£105k sum); and
- expenditure of £95k for additional work (e.g. scanning and temporary staff boxing and indexing documents for disposal/off site storage) delegated to the Executive Director of Environment and Community Services.

However, in light of recruitment difficulties and other related work by I. T. Services, it was now proposed to deliver the document management work stream differently.

The Civic Centre Programme Board was working with I.T. Services to develop a joint approach to Information Management and Governance, and with the support of In-form Consult Ltd, I.T. Services were already working on a number of initiatives to facilitate better document management and electronic working.

With a co-ordinated Information Management Strategy and Framework needed, In-form Consult Ltd were asked to submit a proposal for necessary additional work, their fee proposal being £51,150 plus expenses with key deliverables being:

- a comprehensive framework for information governance and management;
- a vision for how information should be managed through an Information Management Strategy;
- an enterprise approach to Information Architecture;
- a Target Operating Model for an information management function;
- how current initiatives including the Civic Centre Programme and the SharePoint Implementation can be improved and how these initiatives can be fitted into a wider programme of information management improvements; and
- a report outlining a series of pragmatic recommendations, detailing where appropriate, the associated estimated costs, effort, impact, risk and benefits of each.

In-form Consult Ltd would not require a long period of familiarisation and the framework would need to be in place quickly before decanting staff from the Stockwell Building. The Information Management Strategy and Framework would, along with the Information Asset Register and Document Retention Policies, provide the basis for an immediate reduction of paper files and introduction of new working practices.

The Implementation Report would provide a roadmap for the Council and identify resource implications for further work to achieve new working practices.

In discussion, Members expressed a number of concerns with the proposals. Contracting with a scanning company was suggested although it was necessary to ensure that any new system does not create paper. Sight of a high level gap analysis of current initiatives and future requirements, identifying the need for a co-ordinated Information Management Strategy and Framework, was also requested. Further concern included the project manager role and increasing the sum given to other work. It was felt that a number of companies could provide a scanning service and it was necessary to consider what the Project Manager does.

It was explained that the Project Manager would need to co-ordinate a reduction in paper. Reference was made to initiatives on document management and the proposed approach would provide a full picture and enable compliance with document management requirements and needs of the Council. Officers had also consulted other local authorities. Progress had been made since 2016 and given the link with the Civic Centre project - for which there was currently a hold - there had been an opportunity to review the previous decision and learn from other authorities, who had already done this.

Speaking from professional experience, a Member suggested it was necessary to spend more than £50k on the Project Manager position and recommended the Council focus on what it needs to hold to meet requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Members were advised that officers are working with colleagues in IT services who

supported the proposal. Another Member felt that indexing was important as well as scanning. The Member also advised against off-site storage – the matter having been highlighted by Audit – and he further understood that the budget for off-site storage continued to rise. Another Member highlighted that National Archives, Hansard, and historic copies of the Times newspaper were all available online.

In light of comments that had been made, the Chairman asked the Portfolio Holder to look again at the recommendations in the report.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to look again at the recommendations in Report DRR17/044.

37 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXECUTIVE REPORTS

The Committee looked at the following reports on the Part 1 agenda for the Executive meeting on 19th July 2017.

(5) Progress in Implementing Children's Services Improvements - Oral Update

The Chief Executive and the Interim Director, Children's Social Care provided a brief progress update and responded to Member questions. The Deputy Chief Executive/ Executive Director ECHS had sent apologies for not being able to attend.

To re-assure Members over budgetary concerns, confidence was expressed that children's services would achieve a balanced budget at year end. The injection of funds provided would assist the service during 2017/18 and 2018/19. A clear improvement plan had been agreed with Ofsted which was on track for delivery. Some placements are complex but value for money was being achieved with the service safeguarding children. Proposals were also being taken forward with fostering agencies (who would become the preferred provider list) and the whole review process was being considered along with commissioning. Agency staff were also being recruited to permanent status and within 18 months to three years it would be possible to see more quality from the service, better intervention, and improved identification of needs. There would be a stronger approach by social workers. The only concern that could cause tension for the budget related to the occurrence of any difficult cases with particularly exceptional circumstances. Children's Services looked to manage budgetary risks as much as possible including the potential for cases going to court. Some contingency arrangements were in place and early intervention was also helpful to reduce difficult circumstances arising. However, the position could only be managed to a point and private law cases related to child safeguarding could be taken to the family court, such cases often causing significant expense.

For each child placed into care it was suggested that an analysis is needed of the reason for care placement and it was confirmed that such information would be presented to the Children's Service Improvement Governance

Board. It was also highlighted that should a large variance occur, Members would prefer to be advised as soon as possible.

(6) Budget Monitoring 2017/18
Report FSD17065

Members considered the first 2017/18 budget monitoring report to Executive based on expenditure and activity to 31st May 2017.

Current projections showed an overall net overspend of £1,623k on portfolio budgets and a £200k credit variation on central items. A detailed breakdown was included of the latest approved budgets and projected outturn for each Portfolio along with an analysis of variations. Allocations from and variations in the 2017/18 Central Contingency were also detailed.

Members supported the recommendations to Executive. Noting current variations for the Care Services and Education and Children's Services Portfolios, concern was expressed for the budget position in a further four years. With Children's Services considered under the previous Executive item, the relationship with Bromley CCG was highlighted for adult care and health with L B Bromley helping to facilitate a quicker release of hospital beds through improved social care initiatives. Anticipated policy changes on provision for adults with learning disabilities was also explained; as an invest to save initiative, improvements could be made to the homes of service users through financial support (up to £1,000 per service user) with less reliance then placed upon costly care home provision.

An analysis was suggested to highlight the percentage of each age group needing adult care support with projections undertaken for the next five years. In particular, and given a growth in the very elderly, the Member asked whether the current budget projection was accurate. It was explained that the longer the stay in hospital the more costly it was for the Council. A strategy was being developed to address future challenges in adult care for the elderly with work undertaken to forecast cost projections.

Given a projected shortfall in rent share from the Glades Shopping Centre, an enquiry was also made on the extent to which the Council can work with the new Glades owner, Alaska UK, to ensure that all retail units are rented.

RESOLVED that the recommendations be supported.

(7) Capital Programme Monitoring – 1st Quarter 2017/18
Report FSD17064

Report FSD17064 summarised the 2017/18 first quarter position on capital expenditure and receipts including the re-phasing of £12,504k from 2017/18 into future years. Executive was asked to agree a revised capital programme and approve a number of amendments to the programme (reports elsewhere on the agenda also requested certain amendments to the capital programme). Should the changes be approved, the total Capital

Programme 2017/18 to 2020/21 would increase by £8,660k.

Details of variations were outlined as were details on the position of the Investment Fund and Growth Fund - Appendix D to Report FSD17064. An updated version of Appendix D had been circulated to all Members prior to the meeting.

A first update was also provided on the new earmarked reserve for commissioning feasibility works on potential property disposals - the value of the reserve currently remaining at £250k. An update was further provided on the position with capital Section 106 receipts (excluding commitments) - this being detailed under Part 2 of the meeting agenda.

The Council had also received from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) a capital allocation of £1,838k in Disabled Facilities Grant for 2017/18. Executive was asked to recommend the capital programme increase to Council. The funding provided for Renovation Grants under the Disabled Facilities Programme, enabling the provision of adaptations to the homes of people with disabilities, so helping independent and safe living and reducing admissions to hospital. The Chairman made reference to spending the sum early to invest and save.

RESOLVED that the report be noted including the recommendation at 2.1 (d) (i) related to the increased sum of Disabled Facilities Grant and spending early to invest and save.

(9) Locally Administered Business Rates Relief Scheme Report FSD17040

Results from the consultation exercise (between 13th June and 30th June 2017) on the proposed Business Rates relief scheme were outlined with the Executive recommended to adopt the proposed scheme detailed in Report FSD17040.

Should the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) permit the transfer of funds between years, it was also recommended that a review of the scheme be undertaken in 2018/19 concerning the level of assistance that can be provided from 2019/20 and 2020/21.

Members supported the recommendations. Should the Executive approve the proposed scheme and the Council moves ahead to implement, a Member enquired of arrangements for publicising the scheme. Members were advised that it is possible to identify which businesses would qualify for relief and make contact with those businesses. It was also confirmed that contact could be made with the Business Improvement Districts (BIDS) and Business Associations. It was understood that Orpington BIDS had already contacted businesses in their area about the scheme.

RESOLVED that the recommendations be supported.

**(18A) Safeguarding – SLAM
Report CS18041**

Following the introduction of the Care Act 2014 and additional safeguarding responsibilities for the Council, safeguarding had been reviewed (with particular reference to the Bethlem Royal Hospital site provided by South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust). In relation to mental health, current gaps existed in provision to manage safeguarding investigations effectively within community and hospital settings.

L B Bromley had responsibility for managing and where appropriate, investigating all Adult Safeguarding referrals from all organisations within the borough and those that come through to the Council's early intervention service. Of the mental health hospitals in the borough, Oxleas were managing safeguarding in Green Parks House only – the Council having an agreed S75 policy for this.

To create a safe holding position, additional resources were required for ongoing work with Oxleas and SLAM, and as an interim measure a small team was to be created to manage Mental Health (MH) safeguarding casework ensuring that L B Bromley is compliant with safeguarding duties and delegations. Details were provided of staff grades and costs for the team with approval sought to draw-down resources for L B Bromley to be compliant with responsibilities under the Care Act 2014. In the first instance funding would come from the Improved Better Care Fund (IBCF) but as the funding is time limited, consideration was necessary for longer term funding of the project. The report had not previously been considered by the Care Services PDS Committee. The Chairman sought a more comprehensive update at the Executive meeting - the recommendation in the report being accepted subject to the provision of more information to Members.

RESOLVED that the recommendation be supported (in principle) subject to more comprehensive information being provided for the Executive meeting.

**38 CUSTOMER SERVICES - CONTRACT PERFORMANCE
 REPORT**

Report CSD17098

Members considered Liberata's performance for the Customer Services contract between 1st December 2016 and 31st May 2017. A letter from Liberata's Contract Director was appended to Report CSD17098 - Liberata was also represented at the meeting for the item.

Overall, Liberata was considered to have performed well throughout the monitoring period. Telephone Calls had also reduced and web activity increased. Additionally, visitor volumes and e-mails had reduced slightly and were expected to reduce further as more on-line alternatives are developed.

The new Revenues and Benefits web portal (ADP), launched in April 2017, had so far received over 2,000 registrations. Officers were working to maximise customer functionality through the MyBromley Account as part of the web upgrade programme. Customer accounts would merge into a single system, providing easier on-line access to a wider range of Council services. The portal had been promoted *inter-alia* via a stand at the Glades Shopping Centre and through information provided with bills.

Liberata understood the current number of MyBromley subscriptions to stand at approximately 39,400 and the position at 31st May 2017 was believed to be 35,000 subscribers. Liberata offered to report the movement in subscriber levels between January and May 2017 together with the current position.

With the new MyBromley account (Capita product) based around the main council tax system and a portal allowing more services to be added and automated, a greater channel shift would be enabled with some lines of business moved to digital only, including many Housing Benefit functions. Transfer to the new portal would be completed in the last quarter of 2017/18 and significant movement was anticipated when the full range of services is available through MyBromley. A Member suggested it was necessary to go beyond having a choice of payment methods for services and instead enable all Council services to be paid for solely online.

Acknowledging an application for a service was suggested when the fee had been paid, including confirmation of a successful transaction. Members were advised that transaction alerts will be introduced.

Concerning a new web booking system for Registrar appointments, the system was in the final stages of testing and would be available online at the end of the summer.

An increase in calls to the Contact Centre for March, April and May 2017 and an increase in abandoned calls during the same period may have resulted from a higher number of weekend calls received during those months. It was confirmed that queuing systems are provided for incoming public callers.

RESOLVED that information contained within Report CSD17098 be noted including the Liberata letter detailed at Appendix 1 to the report.

39 REVENUES SERVICE MONITORING REPORT

Report FSD17058

Members considered Liberata's performance for Revenues Services in the six months to 31st March 2017. A letter from Liberata's Contract Director appended to Report FSD17058 provided an update on each service. Liberata representatives were also present for the item.

The in-year Council Tax collection rate for 2016/17 was 97.93%, a 0.14% improvement on achievement the previous financial year. This was

considered particularly good given an increase in the minimum contribution of working-age Council Tax Support claimants to 25% of a household's liability.

Although the 2016/17 in-year collection rate for Business Rates at 98.87% was 0.18% lower than achievement the previous year, Retail Relief was removed in April 2016. Improvements were made to the collection rate in latter months.

The level of transactions at central reception, Civic Centre, reduced In 2016/17 with payments taken to the value of £1,939,408 (17,217 transactions) compared to £2,044,515 (18,462 transactions) in 2015/16.

A Member was aware of two cases in a couple of years where action for council tax collection had led to bankruptcy for the individuals concerned. Clarification was sought on why such action was necessary for relatively small sums rather than place a charge on property. Liberata referred to the needs of policy and legislation; it was also necessary to look at the level of debt and assets owned by an individual as well as their vulnerability. Engaging with an individual is key. Some 60% of debtors normally pay in advance or by increments in line with a bankruptcy order. A charging order can be applied to a property as a further option with an amount recovered upon its sale - court action would be necessary to force a sale.

The Member advised that individuals in such circumstances often ignore correspondence, being unable to deal with it; in such circumstances individuals could ultimately become homeless. The Chairman asked that this be brought back to the Committee for Members to review the policy.

RESOLVED that information contained within Report FSD17058 and the letter from Liberata at Appendix 1 to the report be noted and the matter referred to above be brought back to the Committee for Members to review the policy.

40 EXCHEQUER SERVICE - CONTRACT PERFORMANCE REPORT

Report FSD17062

Members considered Liberata's performance in the provision of Exchequer Services for the period 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017. A letter from Liberata's Contract Director appended to Report FSD17062 provided an update on individual services.

The collection rate for in-year sundry debt at 31st March 2017 was 87.51% (88.76% excluding CIL), against a target of 91%, representing a £1.75m shortfall (or £1.15m excluding CIL). Adjusting the in-year collection rate for debts which cannot be pursued, the revised collection rate amounted to 91.44%, 0.44% over target.

The out-of-year (aged debt) collection rate across all financial years was 99.45% with £3.85m collected in 2016-17. A number of factors continued to affect out-of-year collection - sums remaining in dispute, sums secured by Charging Orders (realised on property sale), and sums to be written-off. If the collection rate was adjusted to take such factors into account, the collection rate would increase to 99.73%.

The total debt for utilities at 31st March 2017 comprised £484.7k representing a 26% increase on the previous year. Although the debt had reduced with most utility companies the BT debt remained high at £251.5k.

The Income Team raised 13,212 sundry invoices with a value of £55.43m from 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017 (with 1,485 invoices valued at £3.66m subsequently cancelled). A decreased number of invoices raised compared to previous years was attributed to a change in the billing process for the Carelink service which moved to annual April billing for each client.

The outstanding Trade Waste debt at 31st March 2017 amounted to £161k, a reduction of 30% compared to the same time last year.

For Nightly Paid Accommodation Charges, the outstanding debt at 31st March 2017 was £3.77m for current and former occupiers (compared to 2.6m at 31st March 2016) with the number of clients in temporary accommodation increasing (the collectable rent debit for current clients increased by 22% since March 2016, and 60% when compared to March 2015).

For the Accounts Payable service, undisputed invoices paid within 30 days remained at 99%, 1% above target. Invoices paid within 20 days increased from 97% at 31st March 2016 to 98% in March 2017.

For Financial Assessment and Charging, a slight drop in the time taken to complete financial assessments is normally caused by work undertaken each March/April to complete uplifts for over 2,500 clients; income is not affected as the charges can be backdated to the start of the service.

For Appointee and Deputyship, 97% of applications were referred to the Panel within 14 working days (target 100%) and all invoices for charges were raised within two months of the anniversary of the Court Order (meeting the 100% target).

Overall, Liberata was considered to have performed well throughout the period; where there had been dips in performance recovery plans were put in place and monitored resulting in improved performance. Liberata had also undertaken to improve the quality of data provided.

Report FSD17062 also outlined plans for ongoing improvements and officers had worked with Liberata on a number of projects to streamline processes and make them more efficient. Liberata also conducted a Customer Satisfaction survey last August of a selection of customers/service users using the Accounts Payable and Sundry Debtors service. A total of 56 surveys

were returned, 37 complete and 19 partially completed and the report briefly outlined outcomes including:

- a need to review communication - 19.5% of responses referred to not finding Liberata/Council communication easy to understand e.g. confusing calculations and insufficient information on invoices; and
- 6.98% not being satisfied with a response upon contacting Liberata.

Positive comments were also received, some outlined in the report.

Numbers of justified and unjustified complaints received over the previous three years were also listed, the number of complaints being considered relatively low for the range of services provided.

In discussion, concern was expressed at the level of increased utility debt with the BT debt in particular remaining high. The matter had been raised with the Environment and Community Services Department and it was suggested the Director be asked to attend the Committee's next meeting. It was suggested that contracts include wording to cover the withholding of a payment sum (e.g. to BT) for any amount owed to the Council. Another Member asked why the utility debt had been outstanding for so long. The issue had been included as a matter arising at a previous Environment PDS meeting and it was understood the debts remained outstanding as the sums are in dispute.

As data in the report was provided to 31st March 2017, a further request was made for more up to date information (in future reports).

Concerning Nightly Paid Accommodation Charges and tackling the increasing debt level, all concerned were working together so that benefit can be paid quickly to cover the charges. Universal Credit will also be looked at to help recover debt. A broader approach to reduce the need for temporary accommodation was covered in the Council's Revised Homes Strategy. Universal Credit had a significant impact for temporary accommodation and it would be removed from nightly paid charges. Officers also looked to continually try and convert nightly paid charges to other schemes.

RESOLVED that:

(1) information contained within Report FSD17062 on performance to 31st March 2017 be noted along with action taken to address any performance issues; and

(2) the Director of Environment and Community Services be asked to attend the Committee's next meeting concerning the matter of outstanding utility debt.

41 SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS: UPDATE

Report FSD17063

Members received an update on s106 agreements.

Appendix 5 to the report was presented under Part 2 proceedings, the appendix updating progress on financial contributions received to date that are outstanding together with target spend dates.

Supplementary Part 2 information was also circulated prior to the meeting (and tabled) related to housing s106 payment in lieu contributions. The information covered details subsequently included within an urgent Part 2 report to the Executive meeting on 19th July 2017. Members supported the urgent inclusion of the item for the Executive meeting.

RESOLVED that Report FSD17063 and the contents of Appendices 1 to 4 of the report be noted.

42 WORK PROGRAMME

Members agreed the Committee's latest 2017/18 Work Programme.

43 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (VARIATION) ORDER 2006, AND THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

44 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14TH JUNE 2017

The exempt minutes were agreed.

45 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY - EXEMPT REPORT FOR RESOURCES PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION

a DISPOSAL OF LAND AT TETTY WAY, BROMLEY

Report DRR17/039

Members supported a proposed freehold disposal of land.

RESOLVED that the recommendation to the Portfolio Holder be supported.

46 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXEMPT EXECUTIVE REPORTS

Members considered certain reports on the Part 2 agenda for the Executive's meeting on 19th July 2017.

47 POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY

a SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS: UPDATE

Members considered an update in Part 2 proceedings on the progress of s106 financial contributions received to date which are outstanding.

Supplementary Part 2 information was also circulated prior to the meeting (and tabled) related to housing s106 payment in lieu contributions. The information covered details subsequently included within an urgent Part 2 report to the Executive meeting on 19th July 2017.

Members supported the urgent inclusion of the item for the Executive meeting.

RESOLVED that:

(1) the contents of Appendix 5 to Report FSD17063 be noted; and

(2) recommendations within the Part 2 Supplementary Information be noted and supported.

The Meeting ended at 10.00 pm

Chairman