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GOVERNANCE, STRATEGY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY BOARD
18/06/2025 at 6.00 pm



Present: Councillor McLaren (Chair)
Councillors Arnott, Aslam, Chauhan, Cosgrove, Harkness
(Substitute), Ibrahim, Marland and Rustidge (Vice-Chair)

Also in Attendance:

Alex Bougatef	Borough Solicitor
Jack Grennan	Constitutional Services
Steve Hughes	Assistant Director of Policy, Performance and Corporate Leadership
Fran Lautman	Assistant Director of Customer Experience
Leo Morgan	Complaints Management Service OMBC
Chris Rawding	Technology and ICT services
Gail Stott	Performance Improvement Lead
Lorna Urwin	Strategy and Performance - Oldham MBC
Lee Walsh	Assistant Director of Finance

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Kenyon
(Councillor Harkness substituting).

2 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business received.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received.

4 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no questions received from members of the public.

5 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS GOVERNANCE, STRATEGY AND
RESOURCES SCRUTINY BOARD MEETING**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 25th March
2025 be approved as a correct record.

6 **CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Board received and considered the Corporate Performance
Report for Quarter 4 of 2024/25 which covered the period from
1st January 2025 to 31st March 2025. The report provided a
summary of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) across all areas
of the service.

Steve Hughes presented the Corporate Performance Report for
Communications, highlighting the fact that the KPIs were
headed in the right direction. It was noted that social media
engagement with the Council's pages was on the rise on most
platforms apart from X (Formerly Twitter) and that the most
social media engagement tended to come from posts not

directly about the council, but about people or events around the borough. Members asked questions regarding the Residents Survey and sample selection for the survey, the Working for You newsletter and social media engagement. Members were advised that the Resident survey was ongoing and that the sample size was drawn from a cross-section of residents from across the borough, and that the Working for You newsletter was a guaranteed way for the council to communicate with residents.

Fran Lautman presented the Corporate Performance Report for Complaints, and Customer and Digital Experience. It was noted that the methodology for calculating complaints timeliness had been amended, which explained the significant drop in all complaints metrics in Q4, although the new approach would give a more accurate picture. Members asked questions on the abandonment rate of calls, wait times and how complaints are defined. Members were advised that abandonment rates and wait times are monitored, and that there is a legislative definition for formal complaints.

Members also requested a breakdown of phone calls by contact centre, and noted that there had been an increase in complaints and that the complaints team is a small team compared to other GM authorities.

Steve Hughes presented the Corporate Performance Report for Human Resources and Organisational Development, noting the KPIs for the service area. Members noted the positive new apprenticeship figures.

Chris Rawding presented the Corporate Performance Report for IT and Digital. It was noted that an improvement plan was underway to address the issue of breached tickets. Members asked questions on the timescales and criteria for ticket priorities and IT resilience. Members were advised that the timescales for tickets vary depending on the priority of the ticket and that the criteria for priorities are based on the risk and impact of what has been reported. It was also noted that the IT service uses a multitude of tools to ensure IT resilience.

Lee Walsh presented the Corporate Performance Report for Finance. It was noted that the red KPI for Average time taken to process New Claims – Council Tax Reduction was an area of focus and that this was due to more claims coming in. Members asked questions on the difference between change in circumstances and new claims, Invoices paid within 30 days, and how Council Tax Collection compares to other GM authorities. Members also noted the successes within the Finance KPIs. Members were advised that changes in circumstances involve residents already on the system, whilst new claims refer to those being added to the council tax reduction scheme. It was noted that in cases where invoices are not paid within 30 days, they would be paid shortly afterwards, and that Oldham compares comparatively well on council tax collection compared to GM neighbours.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the progress in implementing the business plan objectives, celebrate areas of consistent good performance, note the comments on progress, consider areas for review (good or poor) that could produce learning for the organisation, and note the interconnection of these actions with ongoing activities in other portfolio and Scrutiny Board remits and key projects.

7

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN (LGO) – ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25

Fran Lautman and Leo Morgan presented the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) Annual Report for 2024/25. It was highlighted that this was only an initial report from the LGO and that the full national report would be published in the summer. It was noted that both nationally and regionally, Oldham is performing well.

It was highlighted that Oldham had 61 complaints received by the LGO in 2024/25, which was the lowest figure in Greater Manchester, and this was a decrease from 71 in 2023/24. The areas with the highest numbers of complaints were Adult Social Care (16) and Education and Children's Services (10). The number of decisions upheld by the Ombudsman was 8, down from 12 in 2023/24. There were two servicewide recommendations by the LGO, and these were both accepted by the Council, who were providing evidence of compliance for these already.

Members noted the progress and strong position of the Council, and asked questions on sharing good practice across Greater Manchester, and ECP complaints going to tribunals rather than to the Ombudsman. It was also noted that the quality of responses to complaints was not a resource issue, but the timeliness of responses was. Members were advised that the council shares good practice with other local authorities and that ECP tribunal figures would be provided to the Board.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the Report.

8

TRUTH POVERTY COMMISSION UPDATE

This item was withdrawn with the agreement of the Chair. It was noted that the Board was looking to develop something similar to the item as part of the Work Programme.

RESOLVED: That Item 8 be withdrawn.

9

WORK PROGRAMME

The Board considered the 2025/26 Work Programme, and noted that it was a document that was open to review.

RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted.

10

KEY DECISION DOCUMENT

The Scrutiny Board considered the Key Decision Document which records key decisions that the authority is due to take.

RESOLVED: That the Key Decision Document be noted.

11

RULE 13 AND 14

There were no Rule 13 and 14 decisions to report.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.20 pm