



# Minutes

## *FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES SELECT COMMITTEE*

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES SELECT COMMITTEE  
HELD ON TUESDAY 8 MARCH 2016, IN MEZZANINE ROOM 2, COUNTY HALL,  
AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 10.02 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.00 PM.**

This meeting was webcast. To review the detailed discussions that took place please see the webcast which can be found at: <http://www.buckscc.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

The webcasts are retained on this website for 6 months. Recordings of any previous meetings beyond this can be requested (contact: [democracy@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@buckscc.gov.uk))

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Mr W Bendyshe-Brown, Mr S Lambert, Mr D Martin, Mr B Roberts (Chairman),  
Mr D Shakespeare OBE and Mr A Stevens

### **OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Mr C Adams, Mr R Ambrose, Mr M Cain, Mr J Chilver, Mr J Noble, Ms S Payne, Mr M Preston,  
Ms G Quinton and Mrs E Wheaton

### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP**

Apologies were received from Mr B Chapple. It was noted that Mr D Schofield was no longer a member of the Finance, Performance and Resources Select Committee.

### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **3 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 15 December 2015 were agreed as a correct record.



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#### **4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no public questions.

#### **5 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Chairman referred to the Budget Scrutiny Inquiry which took place during January and the final report which went to Cabinet on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> February. Mr Roberts informed Members that the majority of the recommendations were agreed by Cabinet and would be discussed in more detail later in the meeting.

#### **6 REVIEW OF BUSINESS SERVICES PLUS BUSINESS PLAN**

The Chairman welcomed Mr J Chilver, Cabinet Member for Resources, Mrs G Quinton, Managing Director for Business Services Plus, Mr J Noble, Commercial Director and Mr M Preston, Finance Director. Apologies were received from Mr N Cave and Mr L Jeffries.

The following main points were made during the presentation and the discussion:

- Business Services Plus (BSP) was the Council's internal support services unit and included Property, which transferred from the former PLACE service, but not Corporate Landlord and major projects.
- The key issues for the Business Unit were becoming more commercially-minded; realising the digital savings; and improving the customer experience.
- BSP provided services to more than 250 external customers, including schools, academies, charities and other public authorities. As a local authority the Council was not legally able to make a profit on selling its services. In response to a question about setting up a trading company, the Commercial Director explained that this option had been discussed at Cabinet but there were complex issues around corporation tax and VAT which made this unviable.
- The main project for the Business Unit had been supporting the Ofsted Improvement Plan.
- Currently, 20% of the Business Unit's budget came from external income.
- Overheads had reduced from 10p in every £1 to 8p in every £1 and was predicted to reduce to 6p by 2019/20. This demonstrated that the Business Unit was a lean operation compared to other authorities.
- Progress was being made on the digital offering but it was recognised that it would take time to translate this progress into actual savings. The Cabinet Member was confident that the Business Unit could meet the planned digital savings.
- Responding to a request for reassurance that the Shared Services projects were part of a planned and agreed strategy, the Commercial Director explained that it was important to take the time to find the most appropriate authorities with which to develop shared services and that each Business Case was considered on its individual merits.
- In terms of new business, the Business Unit had developed a unique product which integrated the SIM and SAP systems which schools were currently buying and which the team was looking to sell to other authorities. An E-commerce package was also in development.
- Although the Section 151 officer had ultimate responsibility for financial decisions, the Finance Director reported on a day to day basis to the Managing Director of the Business Unit.
- There was a comprehensive training programme across the Council which incorporated contract management and commercial skills.
- The challenges of recruiting to the public sector were acknowledged.

- A Member asked for assurance that when key contracts are up for renewal that sufficient time is given to allow a comprehensive review of the contract and for market testing to be undertaken.
- The idea of setting up a recruitment agency within the Council was discussed and it was agreed to bring this topic to a future meeting for a further in-depth discussion.

**ACTION: Committee Adviser to invite officers to next meeting**

- In relation to recruitment and retention, the Managing Director mentioned the new website “Jobs in Bucks” and the Talent Management programme currently being rolled out which focussed on developing line managers.
- Mr Phillips, Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Public Health, was responsible for the Customer Contact Centre which sat within Business Services Plus.

**SEE PAPERS AND WEBCAST FOR THE FULL CONTENT**

[Mr C Adams left the meeting]

**7 BRIEFING ON DIGITAL SAVINGS**

The Chairman welcomed Mr J Chilver, Cabinet Member for Resources, Mr M Cain, Head of Digital and Mrs S Payne, Head of Customer Experience and Communications.

The following points were made during the presentation and the subsequent discussion:

- The Medium Term Financial Plan identified Future Shape savings of £7.1m of which £2.01m are from digital transformation projects.
- There were around 45 transformation projects in the pipeline and each Business Unit had been asked to submit their plans for achieving their digital savings by the end of March.
- An example of a successful project to date was the migration of the Transport for Buckinghamshire’s website to the Council’s site at no cost.
- The customer journey was at the heart of any service re-design.
- In order to deliver some of the projects, there had been a need to bring specific technical expertise into the Council, although it was noted that ICT does have specialist skills.
- The main challenge with introducing more digital projects was around culture and mind-set.
- A concern was raised around the ability to translate digital efficiencies into savings and being able to demonstrate these efficiencies.
- The progress made so far with the digital projects was acknowledged but the Committee agreed to invite the Head of Digital to a future meeting to provide more details on the progress made to date and digital plans for the Contact Centre.

**ACTION: Committee Adviser to invite Head of Digital to future meeting**

**SEE PAPERS AND WEBCAST FOR FULL CONTENT**

**8 BUDGET SCRUTINY INQUIRY**

The Chairman welcomed Richard Ambrose, Director of Assurance and thanked him for his support with the 2015/16 Budget Scrutiny process.

David Shakespeare, Chairman of the Budget Scrutiny, referred Members to the Cabinet response to the Budget Scrutiny Inquiry recommendations, highlighting that 14 of the 16

recommendations were agreed by Cabinet, either in full or in part. Mr Shakespeare reported that the remaining two recommendations were not agreed by Cabinet.

## **9 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chairman referred Members to the suggested agenda items for future meetings which were listed on the agenda for this meeting. It was agreed that Members would send any further suggestions for agenda items and possible topics for Inquiries to Mrs Wheaton after the meeting.

**ACTION: Committee Members**

## **10 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 3 May 2016 at 10am in Mezzanine Room 2, County Hall, Aylesbury.

**CHAIRMAN**