



# Minutes

## *FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES SELECT COMMITTEE*

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES SELECT COMMITTEE  
HELD ON TUESDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2017, IN MEZZANINE ROOM 1, COUNTY HALL,  
AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 10.04 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.16 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 C Clare (Vice-Chairman), Mr M Farrow, Mr D Martin and Mr D Watson (Chairman)

### **OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Mr M Adams-Wright, Mr R Ambrose, Dr J Baschnonga, Mr J Chilver and Mrs K Sutherland

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

Apologies were received from Bill Bendyshe-Brown, Tim Butcher and Julie Ward.

### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

### **3 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2017 were confirmed as a correct record.

### **4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were none.

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

The Chairman reported that the Growth Inquiry report, which was a joint piece of work

undertaken by all four Select Committees, had been well-received at Cabinet yesterday with all recommendations agreed. He commented that it was likely that the Committee would undertake follow up work on this topic.

The Chairman also advised that the draft minutes of the special meeting of the Committee held on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2017 to consider the Call-in of the Bucks Sports and Social Club decision would be published on the Council's website today.

## **6 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE**

The Chairman welcomed Dr Joanna Sage, Head of Insight and Business Improvement to the meeting. Members received a PowerPoint presentation detailing the Council's new approach to Performance Management. During the presentation and in answer to subsequent Members' questions, the following main points were noted:

- The Council was introducing a systems change, which would improve the promotion and management of performance information to ensure that employees at all levels embraced performance management (PM).
- A new approach was required in order to tackle a number of challenges including: a lack of consistency across Business units in terms of their PM tools and processes; no clear line of sight across the Council; duplication of effort in recording performance indicators; and performance issues not being escalated quickly enough.
- In April 2017, the Council had 19 different performance frameworks operating with 893 different performance indicators being reported. A new standard Council-wide approach was needed, which would promote the benefits of performance management to staff.
- The Council was introducing the Covalent system for performance reporting. Covalent was already being used effectively for risk management and would enable some automation of data collection.
- The BI team was developing a maturity model to help to track the Council's progress in performance management, based on former Audit Commission work and research into PM. An Outcomes-based Accountability (OBA) approach was being introduced and workshops would be starting in October 2017. Dr Sage advised that although improvements should be evident within a year, this would not be the end of the journey.
- Dr Sage confirmed that work had been taking place with the Organisational Development team regarding training and an Outcomes-based Accountability approach would lead to more people-centred and qualitative performance indicators. The empowerment of staff to own their data would also lead to better quality information.
- In relation to the alignment of performance indicators with their associated cost in order to assess value for money more accurately, Dr Sage explained that work was taking place on an integrated reporting system for Finance and Performance, with improved narratives to aid understanding. Covalent was already used for risk management which would also allow risk to be linked.
- The next phase of the performance management journey would be to extend the new approach to include contract measures.
- In relation to best practice at other Local Authorities, Members heard that Essex County Council had been using an OBA approach and Swindon had a very efficient performance management system, with a user friendly interface for residents which allowed them to further interrogate data on their website.
- Dr Sage welcomed the idea of sharing best practice across the Council, potentially by creating agile teams.

The Chairman thanked Dr Sage for her presentation.

*Following the meeting, the Chairman agreed that the Finance, Performance and Resources Select Committee would play a role in supporting improved Performance Management at the Council by conducting periodic 'deep-dive' assessments of the most persistent performance challenges.*

## **7 UPDATE ON ICT AND DIGITAL**

The Chairman welcomed Mr John Chilver, Cabinet Member for Resources and Mr Mark Adams-Wright, Head of ICT and Digital to the meeting. The Head of ICT and Digital provided Members with an overview of his service and the priorities and challenges. During the discussion and in answer to Members' questions, the following main points were noted:

- There were just over 100 staff within Technology Services, split over four service areas – Operations, Technology, Commercial, Digital. A new Technology Services Strategy would be published in the Autumn, which would include an investment plan aligned to the current medium term financial plan (MTFP) to deliver the vision.
- Technology Services areas of focus included: to improve the stability and quality of current technology service; to create a new corporate digital work plan; to review Technology Services contracts; and to develop next generation devices.
- A number of digital projects had been implemented which had produced savings and made processes more efficient. 120 out of 700 processes had so far been put online including School Admissions and Waste Permits.
- The right skills and resources were needed to move the digital agenda forward – currently the Council lacked digital design skills.
- Members expressed concern about the number of service issues which had been experienced in the last 12-18 months – 7.5 serious issues per month, as compared to an average of 3 or 4 serious issues in the market generally. The Head of ICT and Digital explained that the network provision was the main cause of this instability, due to ageing infrastructure. In addition there were also issues with older technology not connecting smoothly to newer systems.
- The Council invested heavily in security of ICT systems and had taken necessary steps to safeguard data when the NHS was targeted by cyberhackers earlier in 2017.
- A programme was underway to look at how best to increase mobile working and ensure a secure and stable service for mobile workers. Tablets were being tested as an alternative to laptops and a new approach to mobile working would be tested over the next two years. From a technology point of view, it was envisaged that a fully functioning mobile Council could be achieved within 18 months to two years, if the funding was approved through the MTFP.
- The Head of ICT and Digital explained that as the Council had decentralised the technology budget it was not possible for him to provide a figure on the percentage of the Council's funding spent on legacy rather than Cloud-based systems.
- In relation to digital savings for the Communities, Health and Adult Social Care Business Unit (CHASC) being significantly below target, Mr Adams-Wright advised that the CHASC operating system was inhibiting its transformation, therefore a new ICT system was being introduced. He acknowledged the challenging target and suggested that this be revisited by the new CHASC management team.

The Chairman thanked Mr Chilver and Mr Adams-Wright for attending the meeting.

## **8 BUDGET SCRUTINY 2017 - 6 MONTH PROGRESS REPORT**

The Chairman welcomed Mr John Chilver, Cabinet Member for Resources and Mr Richard Ambrose, Director of Finance and Assets to the meeting. Mr Ambrose took Members through

the six month progress report on the implementation of the 2017 Budget Scrutiny Inquiry recommendations. The following main points were noted:

- **Recommendation 1** – Business cases were already being tested for robustness by the Corporate Management Team (CMT) who had requested that performance indicators should be included. Equalities Impacts Assessment screening was also included on the template as standard.
- **Recommendation 3** – There were no plans to establish any further Alternative Delivery Vehicles (ADVs) at present, but the recommendations in the report which went to Cabinet in July would be followed up again in early 2018.
- **Recommendation 5** – A usage review of the lifts in the tower block would be undertaken during October 2017, which would take into account the potential future usage in light of the Council's drive to more agile working.
- **Recommendation 6** – A proposal to add a further £50,000 to the training budget was being considered in the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- **Recommendation 8** – A review of foster carer allowances had been undertaken and Buckinghamshire County Council was in line with other local authorities. Members commented that there was evidence to suggest that an increase in allowances could lead to more foster carers coming forward and it was therefore important to strike the right balance.
- **Recommendation 10** - Had been implemented.
- **Recommendation 13** – Whilst the Committee welcomed the commitment to retain Local Area Technicians in the medium term, it was suggested that improved effectiveness of the road resurfacing programme could reduce the need for Local Area Technicians in the future.

The Chairman thanked Mr Ambrose for this update and it was agreed that the Chairman and the Committee and Governance Adviser would assign a RAG status to each recommendation, in light of the discussions and share this with the Committee via email.

**ACTION: Chairman/Committee and Governance Adviser**

On a matter that had arisen from the last meeting, Mr Ambrose confirmed that the 7p in the pound spend on back office included staff salaries.

Mr Ambrose confirmed that the net revenue budget was approximately £330million and 70% of that figure was spent via third parties. The Committee would be provided with a breakdown of the contracts the Council had and it was suggested that contract management might be an area to consider at a future meeting of the Committee.

**ACTION: Director of Finance and Assets**

## **9 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

Mrs Kelly Sutherland, Committee and Governance Adviser reminded Members of forthcoming agenda items as follows:

November 14<sup>th</sup>

- Project and Programme Management
- Budget Scrutiny 2018 Scope for agreement
- Income generation Inquiry – 12 month recommendation monitoring
- LASR Property Review Update

December 19<sup>th</sup>

- Cabinet Member update following Call-in
- Budget Scrutiny 2018 briefing

**10 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2017 at 10am in Mezzanine Room 1, County Hall, Aylesbury.

**CHAIRMAN**