



# Minutes

## *FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES SELECT COMMITTEE*

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES SELECT COMMITTEE  
HELD ON TUESDAY 6 MARCH 2018, IN MEZZANINE ROOM 1, COUNTY HALL,  
AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 10.02 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 11.40 AM.**

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 T Butcher, Mr C Clare (Vice-Chairman), Mrs A Cranmer,  
Mr M Farrow, Mr D Martin, Ms J Ward and Mr D Watson (Chairman)

### **OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Mrs S Ashmead, Ms F Bashir, Mr J Chilver, Mr R Schmidt and Mrs K Sutherland

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

There were none.

### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

### **3 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2017 were agreed as a correct record.

### **4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were none.

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

The Chairman thanked Members and Officers for their work on the Budget Scrutiny 2018, and confirmed that a report which included 12 recommendations had been presented to Cabinet, all of which had been fully or partially agreed. The final budget was agreed by full Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018.

## **6 BUDGET SCRUTINY 2017 - RECOMMENDATIONS UPDATE 12 MONTHS ON.**

The Chairman welcomed Mr John Chilver, Cabinet Member for Resources, Ms Sarah Ashmead, Executive Director for Resources and Mr Richard Schmidt, Head of Strategic Finance to the meeting. Mr Chilver stated that all but one of the recommendations made by Budget Scrutiny 2017 had been implemented. In answer to Member's questions and during subsequent discussion, the following main points were noted:

### **Recommendation 3 – Alternative Delivery Vehicles (ADV)**

- Cabinet had received a lessons learned report which included an Action Plan that would be followed should another ADV be set up by the Council in future. Lessons learned included the following: a need for rigorous internal audits, greater scrutiny of financial and non-financial indicators, including customer experience, governance and processes, objective monitoring of performance indicators, greater input from service users, assessment of the quality of service). The Cabinet Member commented that it would not be right to reject the idea of ADVs altogether, as some like the Museum Trust had proved to be successful. The Museum Trust and the Adventure Learning Foundation would both provide update reports to Cabinet in Summer 2018.
- In response to a question about the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust (BLT), the Cabinet Member explained that as funding from central government had been reduced, the Council had decided not to renew its contract with BLT. Some services would come back in house but BLT would remain as an entity in its own right and would continue to offer services to Bucks schools and other local authorities and schools, from its base at Green Park.
- A Member commented that there needed to be closer oversight and challenge in the early stages of establishing an ADV. He suggested that a collaborative working relationship between the Council and any ADV was vital in the early days of operation to ensure that governance and procedures were well-established from the beginning.

### **Recommendation 4 – Corporate Oversight of large cross-cutting projects**

- The Corporate Change Register had been introduced to ensure that Corporate Management Team (CMT) had oversight of large scale change programmes. In the early stages of the Change for Children programme, CMT held meetings dedicated to monitor the progress of service changes and the delivery of savings associated with them. This would be replicated for the Communities, Health and Adult Social Care (CHASC) transformation programme.
- CMT would also hold dedicated sessions to oversee Children's Services improvements.
- A Member questioned whether there was a real understanding of the impacts of the risks the Council was managing, particularly in areas such as Children's Services. Ms Ashmead explained that CMT were not operating alone and were promoting greater financial accountability and responsibility across the organisation through introducing Business Unit budget boards, which would report to CMT monthly. A review of financial management was being undertaken and Members of the Committee were part of a broad range of people involved in the Council's financial management, who had been sent a questionnaire as part of that review
- In Children's Services, an additional governance structure for Ofsted Improvement had been established and the case audit process was being reviewed, with the help of external expertise, as this had not provided the correct intelligence ahead of the Ofsted inspection.

### **Recommendation 6 – Additional commercial training**

- An additional £50,000 had been allocated for training in this year's budget for 2018/19 and 2019/20 and an external provider would be commissioned to design and deliver training.
- An assessment framework would be used to evaluate improvements over time as a result of the training, and Contract Managers would have specific targets in their performance objectives.

#### **Recommendation 10 – Home to School Transport**

- This recommendation had not yet been implemented as a review of the financial implications needed to be undertaken, plus a period of consultation with those affected by any proposed changes.
- The Committee had reiterated this recommendation in its 2018 Budget Scrutiny report and whilst Members understood the need to give parents adequate notice of any changes, there needed to be progress on this issue.
- It was agreed that the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills should be invited to the next meeting of the Committee to explain what action was being taken to implement changes to Home to School Transport.

**ACTION: Committee and Governance Adviser**

Following these discussions it was agreed that the Chairman would discuss the RAG rating for each recommendation with the Committee and Governance Adviser outside the meeting and the completed RAG report would be circulated to the Committee for comments.

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

The Chairman thanked Mr Chilver, Mr Schmidt and Ms Ashmead for attending the meeting.

## **7 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE**

The Chairman welcomed Mr John Chilver, Cabinet Member for Resources and Ms Sarah Ashmead, Executive Director for Resources to the meeting. The Cabinet Member provided the Committee with an overview of recent changes and developments within his portfolio. In response to Member's questions and during the subsequent discussions, the following main points were noted:

- Ms Ashmead had been appointed as Executive Director and 5 Directors would now report to Ms Ashmead namely Finance, Human Resources and Organisational Development, Customer Relations, Property, and Technology.
- Three of these senior posts needed to be recruited to as they were either vacant or filled by an interim at present.
- Resources had a balanced budget at year end. Going forward it would be important to manage the cost pressures of property maintenance and to continue to increase income generated through the sale of back office services to schools and other local authorities. Revenue was also generated from the Council's property estate for example, via car parking and solar PV installations.
- **Staff turnover:** The Committee had expressed concerns about staff turnover, particularly at senior management level during Budget Scrutiny 2018 and had recommended that exit interviews should be introduced with the aim of improving staff retention. Staff turnover had reduced from 16% to 14% overall in the past 12 months. Among high performing staff members, there was 92% staff retention. If a post was business critical, interims would be used in the short-term but this was monitored closely.
- **ICT and Digital:** A new technology strategy was being developed to present to Cabinet in June 2018. The aim was to have a more centralised and coordinated system to prevent proliferation of micro-websites, ensure network reliability and security and to combine ICT and Digital more effectively. It was agreed that the Committee would discuss the draft strategy at its next meeting.

#### **ACTION: Committee and Governance Adviser**

- It was noted that an advertisement had been for an ICT Director for both the Council and NHS services in Bucks. This joint appointment had enabled a higher salary to be offered and the Council would also appoint a Service Director – Technology and Head of Digital in support of the ICT Director role. Members asked if any consideration had been given to integrating ICT systems with the District Councils, in light of the Unitary agenda. The Cabinet Member explained that this joint appointment had come about as a result of the work to integrate Health and Social Care.
- A Member asked what the NHS revenue budget was for technology. The Council's revenue budget was circa £5million. It was agreed that the figure for the NHS budget would be provided after the meeting.

#### **ACTION: Executive Director for Resources**

- **Income Generation:** The Council had set a target of £6.6m for income generation last year and was on track to deliver £6.8m. This was partly due to investment returns from commercial properties and income from solar PV installations and sales of back office services.
- **Skills:** A skills strategy for Buckinghamshire had been agreed in December. This had been developed in partnership with the Local Enterprise Partnership which has a dedicated Skills Hub. In addition an internal skills board had been established and LGA funding had been secured to promote skills in Health and Social Care. Plans were now being put in place to enable skills training to be offered to local people, which would in turn support the care market in Buckinghamshire.
- Another area of focus was improving skills of vulnerable young people, such as looked after children and care leavers. The Council were working closely with Buckingham University on a stronger offer for these young people.
- Members expressed some concern that skills work seemed to be under the radar and was certainly not well-funded. Ms Ashmead advised that she would be happy to report back to members on the implementation of the Skills Strategy later in the year.

The Chairman thanked Mr Chilver and Ms Ashmead for attending the meeting.

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

Tuesday 8th May 2018 at 10am in Mezzanine Room 1, County Hall, Aylesbury.

**CHAIRMAN**




**Budget Scrutiny Inquiry Progress Update on Recommendations**  
**Interim Progress Report (12 months on)**

**Select Committee Inquiry Report Completion Date:** February 2017

**Date of this update:** February 2018




**Lead Officer responsible for this response:** Richard Ambrose



**Cabinet Member that has signed-off this update:** Martin Tett

Accepted Recommendations	Original Response and Actions	Progress Update	Committee Assessment of Progress (RAG status)
<p><b>1: That Cabinet ensures that all projected savings in future budgets are underpinned by robust business cases.</b></p>	<p>Business cases have been produced for all proposed savings. More detailed plans are being developed where needed.</p>	<p>6-month update: COMPLETE Business Cases have been produced for all new proposed budget savings. These business cases are being reviewed for robustness.</p>	<p></p>
<p><b>2: That Cabinet receives progress reports on Income Generation targets as part of its quarterly Performance and Finance Reports.</b></p>	<p>Progress against income generation targets will specifically be reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis.</p>	<p>12-month update: COMPLETE Regular updates taken to the Select Committee and Business Unit Boards around income generation. Income targets being achieved.</p> <p>6-month update: Income Generation updates are provided to the Select Committee regularly. Progress against income generation targets are reported to BU Boards and will be reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis going forward.</p>	<p></p>
<p><b>3: That Cabinet agrees an action plan on how to ensure that the Council learns the lessons from previous Alternative Delivery Vehicles, prior to establishing any ADVs in future.</b></p>	<p>The Cabinet has commissioned a review of the various Alternative Delivery Vehicles which will include the lessons learned from these models and actions as appropriate.</p>	<p>12 month update: No new ADV's. Annual report on remaining ADV's to go to Cabinet.</p> <p>6-month update: COMPLETE The Cabinet considered a report on lessons from ADVs at its meeting on 24 July 2017. A series of recommendations in relation to the development of current and future service models were agreed and a progress report on the implementation of the recommendations will go back to Cabinet in six months (Jan 2018).</p>	<p></p> <p>However, the Committee would like to see further information on the financial implications of bringing Bucks Care and BLT in-house.</p>

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Minute Item 6

<p><b>4: That Cabinet ensures that there is an effective management mechanism in place for increased corporate oversight of large scale cross-cutting reviews (i.e. those which cross different portfolios and/or Business Units).</b></p>	<p>The Chief Executive's team has developed a series of management mechanisms, including a detailed programme tracker, which will provide the One Council Board with increased corporate oversight of cross cutting reviews and transformational projects with high value savings. Any issues will be escalated to Cabinet, as appropriate.</p>	<p>6-month update: COMPLETE The Council's Corporate Management Team reviews the Corporate Change Register on a quarterly basis. This provides a detailed account of progress in delivering those projects with high value savings or significant impact. Where appropriate, further reports are commissioned on individual projects/programmes as required. For example, the CMT review the delivery of the Change for Children programme at the Budget Board on a monthly basis.</p>	 <p>Whilst a mechanism is in place, Members are not convinced that it is working effectively in light of the recent Ofsted report.</p>
<p><b>5: That Cabinet postpones a decision about the installation of a third lift in New County Offices until both the existing lifts are fully operational; thereafter a detailed usage study should be undertaken to assess the need for an additional lift.</b></p>	<p>A detailed usage study will be undertaken after the first quarter of 2017/18 to assess the need for an additional lift.</p>	<p>12-month update: COMPLETE Recent survey on usage / waiting times indicates that a third lift in NCO's is not currently required. Funding for a third lift has been removed from the capital programme.</p> <p>6-month update: A detailed usage study is currently being undertaken and the results will be reported to Cabinet Members in the Autumn.</p>	
<p><b>6: That comprehensive training plans are developed and delivered with more urgency to ensure an improvement in commercial skills across the Council. These plans should focus on developing staff skills and knowledge in Procurement, Commissioning, Contracts Management and the identification and exploitation of Commercial Opportunities.</b></p>	<p>The council is already doing much in this area. It has a programme of activities (e.g. commercial awareness, contract management, applying commercial capability, effective bid writing, risk analysis &amp; management etc.) and all platinum and gold contract managers have been trained.</p> <p>Further work will be undertaken to ensure that the right people are accessing the training to help further develop commercial skills across the Council.</p>	<p>12-month update: COMPLETE The budget now includes funding for further training around commercial skills (£50k p.a.).</p> <p>6-month update: The County Council has delivered a range of commercial skills training programmes aimed specifically at Contract Managers and Commissioning Officers. Generic commercial skills courses have also been made available to other staff. In order to develop enhanced level skill's plans are currently being developed to establish a Commercial Academy with possible sponsorship from a commercial organisation. This activity is considered to be a high priority by the Corporate Management Team and a business case for further investment will be considered by Cabinet as part of the next budget round.</p>	


<p><b>7: That any business case for building new residential care homes for children is subject to rigorous scrutiny by the relevant Boards e.g. Asset Strategy Board and the relevant Select Committee, prior to a key decision being taken.</b></p>	<p>AGREED IN PART</p> <p>The business case will be subject to internal review and challenge initially. Depending upon the outcome of this review it will then be considered by Cabinet. The Select Committee can then scrutinise the business case if required.</p>	<p>6-month update: COMPLETE</p> <p>Cabinet approved business case to prudentially borrow up to £2m to fund additional 20 residential places (4 homes) in county. Asset Management identified 2 existing corporately owned properties in Aylesbury and a plot of land in Wycombe for development. The remaining home will be located in Buckingham, purchased on the open market. First home due to open early next year.</p>	
<p><b>8: That processes for recruiting and retaining foster carers should be streamlined and the schedule of allowances reviewed. Fostering and Adoption should be more actively and effectively encouraged and Children's Services should simplify as much as possible, (within legal and safeguarding requirements) the application processes for prospective Foster Carers and Adopters.</b></p>	<p>The Fostering Service has had an improvement partner, Core Assets, undertaking a diagnostic review which has included the development of an action plan that addresses recruitment and retention processes including fostering allowances.</p> <p>Significant improvement has been made within the Adoption Service on its performance in timescales for recruiting and matching children with adopters.</p> <p>Buckinghamshire is also part of the Regional (Central East) Adoption Agency Innovation Programme where this activity will transfer to Fostering and Adoption.</p>	<p>6-month update: COMPLETE</p> <p><b>Fostering</b></p> <p>Meetings with current foster carers are underway to widen the range of children that they can foster. Processes and recruitment priorities reviewed and monthly case progression meetings now in place. Closer working between the fostering teams is leading to greater specialisation and simplified processes. Fostering allowances are being benchmarked and reviewed. Recruitment campaign underway; currently targeting foster carers for teenagers</p> <p><b>Adoption</b></p> <p>Adopters now experience consistency of social worker. Adopters approved since April 2015 with our new process wait on average twelve months less for a match than those approved before that date. We have maintained our clear adoption recruitment criteria. This has reduced applications but improved our conversion rate and matching. This was recognised as outstanding practice in another authority. We have run a Facebook campaign for adoption recruitment.</p>	



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<p><b>10. That the provision of Home to School Transport, both mainstream and SEND, by the Council meets national statutory guidelines only, and that parents/guardians are provided with reasonable notice for any policy changes.</b></p>	<p>We will only provide the statutory provision for transport and ensure changes are communicated to parents with reasonable notice.</p>	<p>12-month update: CARRY FORWARD Whilst the Council does currently offer some home to school transport provision that goes beyond our statutory obligations we are committed to achieving full cost recovery. We will also ensure clear consultation with parents and carers when considering any further changes in this area. Further work is needed to fully understand the financial model of the discretionary provision and to establish alternative options for parents and carers.</p> <p>6-month update: Two elements of Post-16 charging reviewed: SEN transport for colleges brought in line with mainstream transport arrangements. Post 16 charging benchmarked with other authorities. Business case being prepared to outline realistic levels of savings to be achieved and options for delivery.</p>	
<p><b>12. That Cabinet should provide funding from outside of the portfolio, to extend the Wellbeing Project into Aylesbury.</b></p>	<p>The Cabinet Member is strongly of the view that the success of the Chesham project should be repeated in Aylesbury in recognition of the demographic pressures. However, this needs to be subject to a rigorous business case.</p>	<p>6-month update: COMPLETE A business case has been produced and agreed on a one year basis. Continuation of the project would be subject to a strategic review of the learning and impact from all the wellbeing projects and their alignment with the Early Help strategy and Adult Social Care transformation programme.</p>	
<p><b>13. That there should be no further reduction in the number of Local Area Technicians and that funding for this should be reinstated in the MTFP, given that they are a key access point for both Members and the public.</b></p>	<p>There will be no reduction in Local Area Technicians from the current establishment for at least the next 3-years.</p>	<p>6-month update: COMPLETE As per the original response, the funding for Local Area Technicians has been incorporated into the MTFP for 2017/18 to 2019/20. No further reductions are proposed in the 2018/19 MTFP.</p>	







<p><b>14. That the Council's approach to gully cleansing is urgently reviewed and if appropriate, further resources reallocated to ensure there is full provision across the County. This should be considered as an invest to save approach.</b></p>	<p>Cabinet recognise the funding challenges to maintaining highway drainage across the county and will be increasing the budget by £300k per annum for a period of at least 3-years. This funding will be used for a range of drainage maintenance activities to support improving the condition of the drainage asset.</p> <p>An implementation plan will be signed off by the Portfolio Holder by the end of the first quarter of the 17/18 financial year.</p>	<p>6-month update: COMPLETE</p> <p>A programme of works has been viewed and approved by the Cabinet Member for Transportation and contains a variety of work types that will show steady improvements in the standard of highway drainage across the County.</p> <p>Works have now commenced on the ground with an immediate focus on small element works. Design of larger scheme type work is ongoing. It is anticipated that the majority of the programme will be completed by the end of December with a small amount of budget being carried forward into Q4 to deal with any other issues as they arise.</p>	
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**Please note – Recommendations 9 and 11 were not agreed by Cabinet**

*RAG Status Guidance (For the Select Committee's Assessment)*

	<p><i>Recommendation implemented to the satisfaction of the committee.</i></p>		<p><i>Committee have concerns the recommendation may not be fully delivered to its satisfaction</i></p>
	<p><i>Recommendation on track to be completed to the satisfaction of the committee.</i></p>		<p><i>Committee consider the recommendation to have not been delivered/implemented</i></p>

