

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (SBDC)

Meeting - 30 January 2018

Present: M Bradford (Chairman)
P Bastiman, M Bezzant, D Dhillon, P Hogan, M Lewis and
D Saunders

Apologies for absence: T Egleton

25. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2017 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (IF ANY)

There were no declarations of interest

27. REVIEW OF HOMELESSNESS MANAGEMENT UPDATE

The Committee received a report which updated Members on the progress in implementing the Homelessness Management Task and Finish Group recommendations and informed Members of the revised Homelessness Case Management process and proposed additional Performance Indicators.

At its meeting on 16th October 2017, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a presentation by Councillor Philip Bastiman, Chairman of the Review of Homelessness Management Task and Finish Group, which set out the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group following the review of Homelessness Management. The final recommendations of the Task and Finish Group were subsequently submitted to Cabinet and Cabinet provided a formal written response. This report updated the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the progress in responding to the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group.

The Committee received the following appendices to the report and where given the opportunity to comment on them:

- **Appendix 1** - the Action Plan which updates the progress to date on each of the recommendations.
- **Appendix 2** - the overall revised Homelessness process map which was reported to Task and Finish Group and covers case management, temporary accommodation and charging.
- **Appendix 3** - the draft revised and updated procedure for managing homelessness applications (which is covered in the "Housing" column of the overall Process Map). This procedure specifically covers the process operated by SBDC for receiving, managing and determining requests for assistance under Part 7 (Homelessness) of the Housing Act 1996.
- **Appendix 4** - the additional Performance Indicators that were due to be introduced to support the monitoring of the homelessness management service in response to

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the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group. These would be incorporated onto Covalent in addition to the existing homelessness Pls.

RESOLVED that the following be noted:

- the Action Plan update
- the draft revised Homelessness Case Management Process; and
- the adoption of the proposed additional performance indicators.

Note: Councillor Saunders entered the meeting at 6.04pm

28. **REVENUE BUDGET & COUNCIL TAX 2018/19**

The Cabinet on 7 February 2018 would be receiving a report on the Council's Budget Proposals and Council Tax for 2018/2019 and, in accordance with the Council's Constitution, the Committee was invited to comment on the proposals.

The Committee were advised that since the Cabinet considered the Budget in December, the Government had announced the grant funding decisions affecting the Council. In December, the Cabinet agreed for further work to be done to eliminate the proposed use of general reserves in the draft budget.

The Committee's attention was drawn to the following key points:

- The New Homes Grant allocation was £207k less than anticipated.
- The Budget reflects the impact of the proposed local pay award for 2018/19, £54k.
- Funding is provided for the creation of a new Economic Development Team, the cost to be shared between CDC and SBDC, with the SBDC element being £42k, to be funded from reserves.
- Additional savings or additional income, have been identified totalling £294k.
- The main financial risks for 2018/19 are:
 - Shortfall on income targets.
 - The cost of major planning inquiries, enforcement actions or responding to national infrastructure proposals that impact on the area.
 - The costs of temporary accommodation, and supporting solutions to the temporary accommodation issue.
 - Letting income for the Capswood offices
- The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) shows a funding gap of between £400k and £960k per annum over the period to 2023. Given the financial gap indicated in the MTFS it would be important to start the review of the MTFS as soon as possible and to focus on the savings plans within the Strategy and their robustness and whether they could be added to. It was being proposed that a Task & Finish Group be set up to consider the Medium Term Financial Strategy and savings options.

Members asked a number of questions and sought clarification and explanation of certain issues surrounding the revenue budget and use of reserves. This included clarification on the creation of a new Economic Development Team, the national increase in planning fees and the referendum threshold with regards to Council Tax increases. Members were supportive in undertaking the proposed work to look at the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

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It was noted that if Cabinet agrees the proposed new car parking charges at its meeting on 7th February 2018, the fees and charges schedule set out in appendix C would need to be updated before being presented to Full Council.

Following the discussion, the Committee **RESOLVED** that

- 1) the Cabinet be informed it had no comments to make on the 2018/19 budget proposals; and
- 2) a Task & Finish Group be set up to consider the Medium Term Financial Strategy and savings options.

Note: Councillor Bastiman and Councillor Bezzant entered the meeting at 6.10pm

29. **CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2018/19 TO 2022/23**

The Committee received a report on the Capital Strategy and the proposed Capital Programme for 2018/19 – 2022/23. The Committee were asked to comment on the strategy and proposed programme before it was presented to Cabinet on 7 February 2018 for onward submission to Council on 27 February 2018.

As part of the Council's budget process the Capital Programme is reviewed in order to assess, as part of the overall financial strategy of the Authority, what the scale and composition of the programme should be and the consequential funding implications for the financial strategy. In recent years decisions have been undertaken to embark on a number of significant capital projects. These projects have changed the scale and composition of the capital programme, creating the need to finance these projects from borrowing.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and that the Cabinet be informed that the Committee had no comments to make.

30. **FRIMLEY HEALTH NHS FOUNDATION TRUST**

Sir Andrew Morris, Chief Executive, Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust, attended for this item to provide an update on the work of the Trust.

The update included the following areas:

- Performance from April 2017 to December 2017
- Frimley Health Wexham Park – Objectives
- The redevelopment of Maternity at Wexham Park
- Investment in a new Emergency Department at Wexham Park
- Investment in the High Dependency Unit at Wexham Park
- The vision for Heatherwood Hospital by 2020.

Following the presentation, a number of issues were discussed including the following:

- Car parking at Wexham Park Hospital.
- The issue of staffing and the importance of apprenticeships.
- Treating patients with mental health issues, in particular elderly patients with dementia.
- How residents were being kept informed of all the improvements being carried out by the Trust.

In order to help make South Bucks residents aware of all the developments taking place at Wexham Park Hospital, the Committee agreed that information on the work being carried

out should be put on the Council's website, and the Council's Communications Manager be asked to liaise with the Trust's communications team to see how we can assist with getting information out in the South Bucks area.

The Committee thanked Sir Andrew for his interesting presentation and asked that the Committee continue to receive, on an annual basis, updates on the work of the Trust.

Note: Councillor Dhillon left the meeting at 7.10pm

Note: Councillor Bezzant left the meeting at 7.35pm

31. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2018/19

The Committee received a report on the proposed Treasury Management Strategy 2018/19 and related documents and were asked to comment on the strategy and related documents before they were presented to Cabinet on 7 February 2018 for onward submission to Council on 27 February 2018.

The Council was required to formally review its treasury management policies each year as part of determining what level of returns will be achieved from investments. The format of the treasury management policies was defined by the Code of Practice adopted by the Council, and was required to be approved by the Council on recommendation from the Cabinet.

The treasury management policies underpin the strategy for the year in question, which seek to achieve a level of investment return and efficiently manage any borrowing. The Committee were advised that external borrowing which was planned in 2017/18 to facilitate a major capital project would not be required. However, in order to facilitate the planned capital programme in 2018/19 it would be necessary to borrow funds, and this would be in accordance with the Capital Strategy. The Council has been debt free for many years so this would represent a substantial change in approach.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and that Cabinet be informed that the Committee had no comments to make.

32. SERVICE PLAN SUMMARIES 2018-19

The Committee received a report which provided a summary of the service plans produced by service areas within the Council.

The service plans, which were jointly produced per service area for both Chiltern and South Bucks, provided a summary of achievements from the current year and an overview of what each service aims to deliver for 2018-19. As well as looking at aims and achievements, services were asked to look at a range of areas including:

- Shared Services Programme
- Know your customer and equalities
- Performance indicators and risks
- Costs and cost comparison information.

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The Committee were advised that this year in order to ensure that the Service Planning process had been more robust than in previous years, the internal consultation process had been extended to include all managers within service areas, plus other staff as appropriate, prior to sign-off from Heads of Service. This process would continue to be refined in coming years.

Following a question, the Committee were advised that the service plans set the content which goes into the performance and appraisal system for staff.

The Committee agreed that service plans for next year should contain key actions on what has changed only and that all the appendices were not required. It was noted that a one page dashboard per service area would be sufficient.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

33. **PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 2 2017-18**

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report outlining performance of council services against indicators and service objectives during Quarter 2 of 2017-18.

Members noted from the report that of the total 48 PIs, 2 were seen to be off target (of these was a priority PI) with further details of these within the two detailed performance tables accompanying the report:

- Appendix A – Priority indicators Q2 2017-18
- Appendix B – Quarterly corporate performance indicators Q2 2017-18

With regards to long term sickness absence being over target, the Committee were advised that the long term sickness absence figure should improve going forward as some of the employees who were off on long term sick have now left the Council.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

34. **CDC AND SBDC WEBSITES - HOW INFORMATION IS STRUCTURED AND MANAGED**

The Committee received a report which provided an overview of how information was structured and managed on the CDC / SBDC websites.

The Committee were advised that the recent changes made to the website had not changed the structure, but had changed the appearance of pages. A lesson learned had been to carefully consider how to make users of the website aware of any forthcoming changes to appearance and structure. There were a number of key services where the website takes users into external portals over which the Council has differing levels of influence over how they are displayed and structured.

The Committee were pleased to note that there were now more tools available to the Council to monitor use of the website in order to inform future change.

The Committee noted that the Customer Experience Programme would have a significant impact on the website in terms of how it would be structured and managed, and that was why there were discrete workstreams in the Programme dealing with the website.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

35. BUCKS HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE SELECT COMMITTEE

Members received the Minutes of the meetings of the Buckinghamshire County Council Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee held on 19 September and 28 November 2017.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Buckinghamshire County Council Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee be noted.

36. BUCKS CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE AND LEARNING SELECT COMMITTEE

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Buckinghamshire County Council Children's Social Care and Learning Select Committee held on 17 October and 5 December 2017.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Buckinghamshire County Council Children's Social Care and Learning Select Committee be noted.

37. MEMBERS QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

There were no questions.

38. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme.

It had been agreed that Sir Andrew Morris was to be invited to provide a further update to the Committee on the work of Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust in a year's time.

RESOLVED that the work programme, with the addition of the invitation to Sir Andrew Morris in a year's time, be noted.

39. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

40. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

41. **REVENUE BUDGET & COUNCIL TAX 2018/19 - APPENDIX D FARNHAM PARK TRUST BUDGETS 2018/19 FEES AND CHARGES**

This was considered under item 6 of the agenda.

42. **HOMELESSNESS DEBTS**

The Committee received a report on the current homelessness debt position following the recommendation of the Overview and Scrutiny Homelessness Management Task and Finish Group that a report showing the current debt position be circulated to the Resources PAG and Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The report set out the statutory background, the Council's current debt position, including a breakdown of all the current outstanding debts and the options going forward.

The Committee noted that Appendix A showed that there were a number of debts that were unlikely to be recovered and that all of these except one, fell below the level that requires Members Authority for write off. These debts were still being chased, however if no progress on recovering was made by the end of March the debts would be written off. The Overview and Scrutiny Homelessness Management Task and Finish Group had recommended that historic debt with a zero or very low probability of recovery (before the flat rate charge) be written off to start afresh with the new process.

RESOLVED that the report and the debts that are likely to be written off in the current financial year be noted.

The meeting terminated at 7.47 pm