

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Room 15, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Tuesday, 23 August 2016.

PRESENT

Cllr P A Duckett (Chairman)
Cllr J Chatterley (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs	Mrs C F Chapman MBE	Cllrs	D McVicar
	N B Costin		T Swain
	J Kane		

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs R W Johnstone

Members in Attendance:	Cllrs K M Collins	Deputy Executive Member for Corporate Resources
	S Dixon	Executive Member for Education and Skills
	J G Jamieson	Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Executive

Officers in Attendance:	Mr D Galvin	– Head of Financial Performance
	Mrs R Preen	– Scrutiny Policy Adviser

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CROSC/16/13. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 28 June 2016 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

CROSC/16/14. Members' Interests

None.

CROSC/16/15. Chairman's Announcements and Communications

The Chairman announced that the Corporate Accommodation Plan listed as Item 10 on the agenda had been deferred until a future meeting.

CROSC/16/16. Petitions

None.

CROSC/16/17. Questions, Statements or Deputations

None.

CROSC/16/18. Call-In

None.

CROSC/16/19. Requested Items

None.

CROSC/16/20. Executive Member Update

None.

CROSC/16/21. Corporate Accommodation Plan

AGREED to defer the Corporate Accommodation Plan to a future meeting.

CROSC/16/22. Fees & Charges 2017

The Head of Financial Performance and Support delivered a report detailing proposed changes to Fees and Charges for 2017, the income generated each year, outlining the rationale behind the advisory 1% increase and highlighting those charges which had a significantly differing revision to that of 1%. Members were informed that the Council could only charge according to costs incurred and were not permitted to generate a profit, with any increase over and above the advisory 1% being ratified by full Council. Those charges which reflected a zero increase were confirmed as being cost reflective and at the maximum level of charge.

- In light of the report Members requested that material costs over and above officer time be taken into consideration and it was confirmed that this would be reflected during the next cyclical review.
- Members agreed that benchmarking against neighbouring Authorities would be useful, in particular in relation to taxi license charges and requested that additional detail was provided in future reports, suggesting that the method of calculating fees and charges be revisited.
- A query arose in relation to a variance in leisure centre charges to which it was agreed that Members would receive a written response.
- Members queried the rationale behind the inclusion of figures which did not relate to fees and charges but were income related and it was confirmed that the system of identifying costs for each service would be improved in future, with a post recruited to in order to focus on the process.
- Members received confirmation that due to the outsourcing of the legal department, forecast savings were in the region of £200k.
- Outsourced services such as pest control often remained static due to the length of contract agreed with the service provider.

RECOMMENDED:-

1. That the Committee agree the new charges in relation to the Sunday service provided by the Registrars office.
2. To explore the viability of taxi licensing fees reflecting those of neighbouring authorities.
3. That future reports reflect improved data around cost association in relation to fees and charges.
4. That the Executive consider the Fees and Charges prices for 2017 and recommend that the areas highlighted by the Committee be a focus for future reports.

CROSC/16/23. Schools Trading 2017/18

The Committee received a report which outlined the proposed revised prices for services traded to schools and Academies for 2017/18. The Executive Member for Education and Skills provided details of locality workshops taking place across the region which would identify improved ways of offering services to schools, acknowledging the need to revisit the process for future years. The Head of Financial Performance and Support advised the Committee of a consultation which would change funding for schools, with the Department for Education reducing local authority funding, thus creating a pressure.

Members queried the value of the booklet, the format in which it was presented to schools and that it would be helpful to understand the volume of take up in relation to services bought from the Council by schools. Officers confirmed that it was a useful document in determining where the Council would provide services, agreeing that an exercise to determine volume could be explored in future. Members discussed the price differentials between schools in relation to the amount charged for Governor training and the quality of Chairmanship skills to which the Executive Member agreed was a focus for the directorate.

RECOMMENDED that the Directorate analyse the volume of services provided to schools and the associated buy in, in order to evaluate the viability and if necessary re-evaluate the process in future.

CROSC/16/24. Budget Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan

The Head of Financial Performance and Support delivered a report which set out a framework for the Budget Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). Consideration was given to changes to local government funding in light of the impact of 'Brexit', acknowledging the associated challenges.

The Chairman highlighted the economic impact across the country and expressed the need for the Council to ensure flexibility within the MTFP in order to be able to react swiftly to the impact of change.

NOTED the report and AGREED that a further report be delivered to the Committee at a future meeting.

CROSC/16/25. Work Programme 2016/17 & Executive Forward Plan

AGREED the work programme subject to the addition of the following:-

- 1. Corporate Accommodation Plan – 29 November 2016**
- 2. Budget strategy and MTFP Update – 29 November 2016**
- 3. A Review of Car Parking at Council Offices – 25 October 2016**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.03 a.m. and concluded at 10.52 a.m.)

Chairman.....

Date.....