

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held at Committee Room 1, Council Offices, High Street North, Dunstable on Thursday, 3 September 2009

PRESENT

Cllr M Gibson (Chairman)
Cllr R W Johnstone (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs R A Baker
J A E Clarke
D J Hopkin

Cllrs J G Jamieson
J Murray

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs Mrs A Barker
Ms J Nunn

Substitutes: Cllrs P N Aldis (In place of Ms J Nunn)
J Kane (In place of Mrs A Barker)

Members in Attendance: Cllrs T Nicols
R Stay

BT/09/10 **Minutes**

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Business Transformation Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 6 July 2009 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

BT/09/11 **Members' Interests**

(a) **Personal Interests:-**

None.

(b) **Personal and Prejudicial Interests:-**

None.

(c) **Any Political Whip in relation to items on the agenda:-**

None.

BT/09/12 Chairman's Announcements and Communications

The Chairman informed the Committee that the order of the agenda would be varied to consider item 11 – Website Transformation Project prior to item 10 – Total Place – Progress Report.

BT/09/13 Petitions

The Chairman announced that no petitions had been referred to this meeting.

BT/09/14 Questions, Statements or Deputations

No questions, statements or deputations from members of the public were received in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Annex 1 of Part A4 of the Constitution.

BT/09/15 Call-In

No matters were referred to the Committee for a decision in relation to call-in of a decision.

BT/09/16 Requested Items

No items were referred to the Committee for consideration at the request of a Member under Procedure Rule 3.1 of Part D2 of the Constitution.

BT/09/17 Customer Service Strategy Task Force

The Committee received an update from the Overview and Scrutiny Manager regarding the Customer Service Strategy Task Force. It was noted that the Task Force had met once and would be meeting again during the week commencing 7 September 2009. A report and draft strategy would be presented to this Committee at its next meeting.

RESOLVED

that the progress of the Customer Service Strategy Task Force be noted.

BT/09/18 Website Transformation Project

The Committee received and considered the report of the Assistant Directors for Communications and ICT and Property, which provided an outline of the ambitions of the Web Transformation Project in order that Members could consider whether they wished to be involved in scrutinising the work, or engaging with the proposals for improvement.

The Central Bedfordshire Council website was developed between December 2008 and March 2009. The site whilst containing a vast amount of information does not provide easy navigation around the system. In addition the merging of content from the three legacy authorities has caused difficulties in content management.

The project would have a two phase approach:-

- A short term technical audit is being undertaken by the Society of Information Technology management (SOCITM) in advance of their national assessment of all local authority. The audit will provide the council with immediate and practical recommendations for improvement, based on the Society's unique and comprehensive knowledge of comparative sites.
- A more fundamental project is planned to determine the future function and design of the website, which will be informed by stakeholder preferences, needs and expectations.

Members noted that some changes had already been made to the website which had proven helpful.

Members questioned why the report suggested it would take 5 years to achieve excellence in our website when the Council's stated ambition was to be an 'excellent council' long before that date. The Portfolio Holder for Business Transformation confirmed that it was his intention to deliver an excellent website well within 5 years.

Members questioned the authorisation process for releasing funds to finance the project. The Assistant Director Communications confirmed that a strict set of sign off procedures were in place. The money for the project was part of the corporate "invest to save" fund which was overseen by Management Team. There was a required 2:1 investment return. The project is reviewed every two weeks and reported to Management Team, and the Portfolio Holder (Business Transformation) receives regular updates from the Director on activities.

It was agreed that a Task Force be established to support officers develop the CBC website, and Cllrs Gibson and Aldis volunteering to sit on it. The Overview & Scrutiny Manager would ask other Councillors if they would like to be part of the task force.

RESOLVED

- (1) that the two phased approach to the web development as detailed in the report of the Assistant Directors Communication and ICT and Property be accepted.***
- (2) that a Task Force be established to work with officers to improve and develop Central Bedfordshire Council's website.***

BT/09/19 Total Place - Progress Report

The Committee received and considered the report from the Director of Business Transformation which provided a background to the Total Place Pilot and the progress to date.

In June 2009, the guidance for the pilot project was received. The first submission to the Department for Communities & Local Government (DCLG) and Treasury would be made in mid September and the full report in February 2010. Central Bedfordshire would be working with Luton Borough Council and its key partners, as one of thirteen pilot programmes nationally. There were two key strands to the work:-

- 'Counting methodology' – identification of all public service funds being applied to a particular area and in support of key themes. Approximately £2.5bn of local spend had been identified not including jobs, Department of Works and Pension (dwp) and highways.
- 'Counting methodology' – review of service delivery from the customer perspective. Challenging the areas which are not working efficiently.

The Total Place Programme Director, Robin Porter, informed the Committee that there was a £250,000 budget to deliver the project.

The project had identified four sub themes which were:-

- Offender Management
- Single access to benefits
- 18-25 long term unemployment
- Health and Social Care – 'Independence for our ageing population' and 'a speedy recovery from hospitalisation'.

Two of these themes would take precedence and be developed in full, being:-

- Offender Management
- Single access to benefits

Members expressed a wish to be engaged in the process but also wanted to ensure that they were not hindering progress given the tight deadlines imposed by Central Government for the initial submission (September 2009) and final report (February 2010). The Programme Director confirmed that Member input would be welcome and suggested that the Committee receive a further report in February 2010, which would provide Members with details of the findings flowing from both reports and outline proposals going forward.

It was noted that the Leader and Deputy Leader at Luton Council would also receive regular updates on how the project was progressing.

Following receipt of the February report, Members would consider further how best the Committee would involve itself in the Total Place programme.

RESOLVED

- (1) that the key activities in the development of the Total Place programme as detailed in the report of the Director of Business Transformation, be noted.**
- (2) that a further report be submitted to the February meeting, which would provide Members with details of the findings flowing from the pilot and outline proposals going forward.**

BT/09/20 Work Programme 2009-2010

The Committee received a report regarding its work programme for 2009/2010 and also discussed proposals for considering specific items detailed in an appendix to the submitted report.

It was noted that the Business Transformation Overview and Scrutiny Committee's 28 September meeting would cover:-

- Customer Services Strategy Task Force Report
- Community Engagement Strategy
- Performance Report Q1

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted.

BT/09/21 Forward Plan

The Committee received and considered the items contained within the Forward Plan in conjunction with the suggested work programme at item 12. Please refer to the above minute for further information.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 12.15 p.m.)