

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held at on Monday, 13 July 2009

PRESENT

Cllr J G Jamieson (Chairman)
Cllr J A E Clarke (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs Mrs A Barker
P A Duckett
D J Hopkin

Cllrs D Jones
Mrs J G Lawrence

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs R W Johnstone
Mrs C Turner

Substitutes: Cllrs L Birt

Members in Attendance: Cllrs John Street, Ann Sparrow, David Lawrence, Mike Gibson, Maurice Jones, Adam Fahn.

Officers in Attendance: –

CR/09/01 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Christina Turner. Councillor Lewis Birt was present as her substitute.

CR/09/02 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of Bedfordshire County Council's Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 19 February 2009 were received.

CR/09/03 **Declarations of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest nor of any political whip arrangements.

CR/09/04 **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

There were no announcements from the Chairman nor any matters of communication.

CR/09/05 **Petitions**

No petitions had been received.

CR/09/06 **Public Questions, Statements or Deputations**

There were no public questions, statements or deputations.

CR/09/07 Disclosure of Exempt Information

There were no matters for consideration which might contain exempt information.

CR/09/08 Call-in

There were no matters of call-in.

CR/09/09 Directorate Presentation - Overview, Key Issues and Challenges

The Committee received a presentation from the Director of Corporate Resources, Clive Heaphy. He provided a wide-ranging description of his directorate, including details of the nine functions and five Assistant Directors' areas of responsibility. These were:

- Financial services
- ICT and Property
- Human Resources and Organisational Development
- Legal and Democratic
- Audit and Risk.

Members recognised that ICT had been identified in the lead up to April 1 2009 as an area where problem resolution was longer term. Considerable progress had been made since then and it was likely that achieving one network for the whole of the authority would be achieved within a 3-year period.

It was noted from the minutes of the last meeting of Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee that Bedfordshire County Council had experienced difficulties regarding the management of the PCT's debts to the Council. The Director assured Members that the Committee would be kept informed regarding the status of PCT payments to the Council.

A comment was made that the Council was required to make many returns to Government and regulators, the benefits of which were not always apparent, and that that it might be worthwhile challenging whether all were really required.

Discussion ensued about risk management. It was noted that whilst the risk register framework was a responsibility of Audit Committee it was for the Executive to monitor risk. Members noted that the transition risk register had reached its conclusion and a new ongoing risk register was being put in place. A suggestion was made that consideration should be given by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Panel as to which Overview and Scrutiny Committee should most appropriately monitor it. The next meeting of this co-ordinating body was scheduled for 29 July 2009.

The Committee noted that reserves brought forward from the three predecessor authorities were likely to be approximately £15.8 million, slightly higher than anticipated.

RESOLVED that the detailed presentation be noted.

The Committee had a short comfort break from 11.15am to 11.30am.

CR/09/010 **Proposals for the Committee's Work Programme**

Members received a draft Work Plan for the Committee which was tabled at the meeting. It was noted that this was a work in progress in that timescales had not yet become clear for some matters. The Committee noted that it would be appropriate to consider a topic for delegation to a task group where it required in-depth work and could be carried out as a finite task.

The Chairman commented that there were some major matters which should be the subject of overview by the Committee this year, as follows:-

- Human Resources issues such as harmonisation of terms and conditions
- Procurement (including contracts)
- Contracts
- ITC and Accommodation
- Budget
- Treasury
- Property .

Mention was also made of the need to scrutinise Shared Services, which would be picked up by the Business Transformation Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and the need to examine an opening Balance Sheet for the Authority, once available.

A discussion ensued regarding the overview of the budget for next year and it was noted that the Executive would be agreeing a timetable for the preparation of next year's budget, involving the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and taking into account the Directorate Plans. Members also discussed the need to ensure that scrutiny of Human Resources matters dovetailed into the work of the General Purposes Committee.

RESOLVED:-

1. that topics for the next meeting would be as follows:-

- Accommodation and ICT – this would include the report to be considered by the Executive in July on accommodation
- Strategic overview of procurement – including the draft strategy currently being prepared and a list of the major contracts or groups of contracts, when they come up for renewal and who has responsibility for them
- Pre-budget processes – this would include options for this Committee to consider next year's budget and also a presentation on budget monitoring for the first quarter this year, drawing on the Budget Book.

2. to note the draft Work Programme and to give it further consideration at the next meeting when greater clarity had been achieved regarding some of the items; and to include the following item:
 - a. assessment of whether adequate training is in place for employees, particularly those below Assistant Director level.

CR/09/011 **Forward Plan**

RESOLVED to note the Executive's Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010.

CR/09/012 **Date of next meeting**

The Committee noted that the next meeting would be held on 10 August 2009 and that as with all the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, starting in August, it would commence at 10.00am.

Chairman.....

Date.....

(Note: The meeting commenced at 9.30 a.m. and concluded at 12.35 p.m..)