

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Room 15, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Tuesday, 8 April 2014.

PRESENT

Cllr P A Duckett (Chairman)
Cllr Miss A Sparrow (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs	Mrs A Barker	Cllrs	J Murray
	L Birt		B Saunders
	Mrs C F Chapman MBE		

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs Dr R Egan
T Woodward

Members in Attendance:	Cllrs	P N Aldis	
		R D Berry	
		D Bowater	Vice-Chairman of the Council
		D Jones	
		M R Jones	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources
		J N Young	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development

Officers in Attendance:	Ms D Clarke	– Director of Improvement and Corporate Services
	Dr D Cox	– Chief Assets Officer
	Mrs P Everitt	– Scrutiny Policy Adviser
	Ms R Hobbs	– Head of HR Services
	Mr P Meigh	– Chief Procurement Officer
	Mr C Warboys	– Chief Finance Officer

CR/13/102 **Minutes**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 28 January 2014 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

CR/13/103 **Members' Interests**

None.

CR/13/104 **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

None

CR/13/105 **Petitions**

None

CR/13/106 **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

None

CR/13/107 **Call-In**

None.

CR/13/108 **Requested Items**

None.

CR/13/109 **Executive Member Update**

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources provided the Committee with an update regarding the following:-

- The impact of the Welfare Reforms on the Revenues and Benefits Team had caused a drop in performance levels. However, performance in February and March had improved..
- That collections rates for Council Tax and Business Rates were slightly down on previous years.
- That the Contact Centre had improved its performance following the implementation of new procedures

In light of the update, Members commented as follows:-

- Members of the Committee wishes to extend their thanks and congratulations to the Revenues and Benefits Team and the Contact Centre for all their hard work to improved performance.
- Whether their had been a demand for the Welfare Reform hardship fund. No figures were available at the meeting, however, the Chief Finance Officer confirmed there had been less of a demand than expected
- A Member requested details on the figures showing the shift from calls to the Council to web and email responses.
- Members wished to thank the Communications Team for the Council Tax video which had received good feedback from residents to Members of the Committee.

CR/13/110 **Exclusion of public and press**

The Committee considered whether to pass a resolution under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1971 to exclude the public and press from the meeting for Item 11 on the grounds that consideration of the item was likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information relating to any consultation or negotiation, or contemplated consultation or negotiation, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the Council or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under the Council.

RESOLVED that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of item 11 and item 12 under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds outlined above.

CR/13/111 Provision of Recruitment Services for Temporary Agency Staff

In accordance with the need to consider this item in private the Committee received a presentation and discussed in detail the issues and risks in relation to the Children's Services Directorate arising from some of the proposals.

RECOMMENDED to the Executive that the following views of the Corporate Resources OSC be taken into account prior to the approval of proposals:-

- 1. That the Committee fully supports the implementation and initial daily monitoring of the proposed contract**
- 2. That the Committee felt the Council needed to more proactively recruit permanent workers**
- 3. That the Committee supports the implementation of an Academy for permanent workers**

RECOMMENDED that an update be provided to Members of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee following the first three months operation of the contract.

CR/13/112 Procurement of Specialist Professional Services

In accordance with the need to consider this item in private the Committee received a report on the proposal to implement a contract for the supply of specialist professional services available through the North East Procurement Organisation framework.

RECOMMENDED that the Corporate Resources OSC fully support the proposed contract for the supply of specialist professional services as outlined in the Executive report.

(Meeting adjourned at 1130 and reconvened at 1145)

CR/13/113 Draft Asset Plan

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources introduced an updated version of the Corporate Asset Management Strategy and Plan (CAMSAP). The Deputy Leader was confident that this revised plan and strategy would ensure the Council would deliver its objectives. The Chief

Assets Officer described the new elements incorporated in the Asset Plan that included:

- Regional asset plans
- Stakeholder engagement
- Rural farms and land asset plans
- Proposed joint working with the Regeneration Service and Landlord Services.

In light of the presentation, Members raised the following issues:-

- Officers provide a clearer performance cascade. The Chief Assets Officer would provide Members with a working example to better explain the cascade.
- A time frame be included in the action plan.
- Members of Sustainable Communities and Social Care Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committees be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee to consider the Draft Asset Strategy and Plan.
- An invitation be sent to all non-executive Members to attend a briefing, delivered by the Chief Assets Officer, on the Draft Asset Plan.

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That the Committee fully support the Corporate Asset Management Strategy and Plan proposals.**

CR/13/114 Customer Service Strategy

The Director of Improvement and Corporate Services delivered a presentation outlining the approach that had been taken to develop the Customer Services Strategy. Five work streams had been developed to deliver the Strategy and detailed work to inform the Strategy was still underway.

Members welcomed the revised Customer Services Strategy and were encouraged by the approach.

NOTED the presentation.

CR/13/115 Fees and Charges Policy

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources introduced a report that outlined revisions to the Fees and Charges Policy. The Policy had last been updated in 2010/11 by a working group of Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members. It was proposed that a similar approach be adopted now so that new charges could be implemented from January 2015.

RECOMMENDED an invitation be sent to all non-executive Members to join a Task Force to review the Fees and Charges Policy so a new charging policy could be implemented from January 2015.

CR/13/116 Q3 Budget Monitoring

The Chief Finance Officer provided a presentation that highlighted the key points in relation to the financial results for Q3 2013/14 for the Council. The Chief Finance Officer highlighted the forecast outturn of £0.4m overspend in addition to the main pressures, which were in Children's Services. The Chief Finance Officer also confirmed that 2014/15 budget had addressed the financial pressure in Children's Services. An underspend of £0.6m in Public Health was forecast, which would contribute to relevant Council overheads. Treasury Management and the Housing Revenue Account continued to perform well.

The Corporate Resources Directorate forecast outturn at Q3 was £212k underspend.

NOTED the presentation

CR/13/117 Work Programme 2013 - 2014 & Executive Forward Plan

The Committee considered its current Work Programme and the latest Executive Forward Plan. Members agreed to remove the Discretionary Housing Payment and Welfare Reform items, which would be added to the Social Care Health and Housing OSC work programme. Items relating to a review of the Fees and Charges Policy and the Corporate Asset Management Strategy and Plan would also be considered as outlined above.

RECOMMENDED that the Corporate Resources OSC work programme be amended as outlined above.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 12.55 p.m.)

Chairman.....

Date.....