

CR/14/26. **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

Members were reminded that a co-convened meeting of all OSC's would be held after 1pm on Tuesday 23 September to discuss Fees and Charges. It was also noted that a briefing on the Review of Healthcare Services in Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes was scheduled for Monday 20 October at 2pm in the Council Chamber at Priory House.

CR/14/27. **Petitions**

None

CR/14/28. **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

None

CR/14/29. **Call-In**

None.

CR/14/30. **Requested Items**

None

CR/14/31. **Executive Member Update**

The Executive Member for Corporate Resources advised the Committee that due to the abolition of the Standards Committee it would be necessary to implement a new process for reviewing Member standards. Recently the level of complaints, particularly from Parish Councils, had risen sharply and were very costly. In light of this challenge the Committee commented it may be necessary to establish a Task Force in order to review the matter in more detail.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee consider the use of a Task Force to scrutinise the Council's approach to responding to complaints from Town and Parish Councils.

CR/14/32. **Asset Management Strategy**

The Chief Assets Officer delivered a presentation to the Committee which set out the Corporate Asset Management Plan and explained the Council's approach to managing and developing its land and property assets. The presentation provided a framework and interim plan and would be supplemented in due course with a full strategy.

In light of the presentation the Committee discussed the following issues in detail:-

- The importance of keeping Members informed of decisions on parcels of land, as often Parish Councils and Ward members received queries to which they could not readily respond. The Director for Improvement and

Corporate Services agreed that ongoing and improved communication would be beneficial. Clarification that assets would not be looked at in isolation when there were several assets in close proximity to one another. The Chief Assets Officer agreed that a holistic approach to asset management would be beneficial and agreed to ensure this took place at CBC. Pressures and ongoing costs to the Town Council for maintaining Downs Rd, Dunstable. The Chief Assets Officer confirmed that Downs Road was under review and plans were in place to address the issues raised.

- Reassurance that the process for valuation of all assets was robust. The Chief Assets Officer verified that more than one independent valuer was used, which was a very reliable guide to accuracy.

NOTED the presentation

CR/14/33. **Budget Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan**

The Chief Finance Officer introduced the report, which provided the Committee with an opportunity to comment upon the Medium Term Financial Planning Framework for 2015-16 through to 2018-19.

In light of the report the Committee queried the impact of a rise in interest rates and whether this would lead to a possible decline in property values. In response the Chief Finance Officer explained that although the risk of a rise in interest rates was unlikely to materialise for some time it was prudent for the Council to prepare for an eventual increase and with that in mind the department were looking carefully at Treasury Management. Declining property prices were more likely to affect the public than the Council but any impact upon the residents of Central Bedfordshire could place additional pressure on the Council's resources.

Members also expressed concerns regarding the ability to make further substantial savings and queried whether it was possible to plan further ahead. The Chief Finance Officer explained that the Council had a strong track record of achieving savings and senior officers were confident this would continue. It was difficult to plan too far in advance as Central Government only announced funding from one year to the next. The Medium Term Financial plan did however allow for a four year projection with any alterations as necessary.

RECOMMENDED that the report be endorsed

CR/14/34. **Q1 Budget Monitoring**

The Chief Finance Officer delivered a presentation, which highlighted the Councils forecast outturn position as at June 2014 was over budget by £0.7m of which the main forecast overspend was in Children's Services. It was also noted that the capital position was much closer than in previous years.

NOTED the presentation.

CR/14/35. **Work Programme 2014/15 & Executive Forward Plan**

The Committee considered its current Work Programme and the latest Executive Forward Plan.

RECOMMENDED that the Corporate Resources OSC work programme be agreed.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.05 a.m. and concluded at 11.30 a.m.)

Chairman.....

Date.....