

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Tuesday, 28 June 2016.

PRESENT

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

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

Members in Attendance:	Cllrs	J G Jamieson	Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Executive
		Mrs T Stock	Deputy Executive Member for Corporate Resources
		R D Wenham	Executive Member for Corporate Resources
		Mr S Conaway	– Chief Information Officer
		Mrs R Preen	– Scrutiny Policy Adviser
		Mr C Warboys	– Chief Finance Officer

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CROSC/16/1. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 24 May 2016 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

CROSC/16/2. Members' Interests

None.

CROSC/16/3. Chairman's Announcements and Communications

The Chairman informed the Committee that item 11 would be moved to the end of the meeting in order to facilitate a visit to view the new office layout at Priory House. Members were provided with an update on progress with regards to measures to improve Council responsiveness to customer queries.

CROSC/16/4. Petitions

None.

CROSC/16/5. Questions, Statements or Deputations

None.

CROSC/16/6. Call-In

None.

CROSC/16/7. Requested Items

None.

CROSC/16/8. Executive Member Update

The Executive Member for Corporate Resources updated the Committee in relation to the following:-

- That web based scorecards would soon be available to the public, enabling them to see how the Council measured its success.
- The new Council website had received over 290,000 hits within the first 2 months of its launch and the results of the feedback functionality would be used to help monitor progress and improvements.
- That the Council's software was being upgraded to meet the necessary compliance requirements.
- That Unions had agreed a 2 year pay settlement for staff, backdated to April 2016 and that pay scales could be modified in light of the national living wage increase.
- That the apprenticeship levy would come into force over the course of the next year and HR were assessing the budget implications accordingly.

CROSC/16/9. Digital Transformation and IT Strategy Update

The Chief Information Officer delivered a presentation outlining progress and the direction of travel in relation to the Digital Transformation Strategy, highlighting the need to update the Council's technology as it was largely out of date. Members were informed that recent trials had been successful and well received by audiences and were provided with figures in relation to investment and projected financial savings. The Chief Information Officer confirmed that Members would be regularly updated with progress and agreed the importance of effective communication in order to minimise the impact of change.

Members queried the level of Cloud storage, the security procedures involved and whether the disaster recovery strategy was robust under the new measures. In response the Chief Information Officer highlighted the benefits of using the Cloud as it allowed for a more secure method of storage and recovery of data which had been of previous concern to the Authority, with the Directorate confident that current measures taken with regards to compliance and security were effective.

The Chief Information Officer acknowledged the challenge presented by the compatibility of hardware devices with the systems used by the Authority and

explained that conflicts should resolve themselves once the technology upgrade had been completed.

The Chief Information Officer went on to deliver a presentation detailing changes to the telephony systems which would support an improved customer experience, including the benefits of having one contact number for each officer, compatible with both landline and mobile devices.

Members were informed that the Council was trialling remote meeting attendance, that it had been successful and well received to date and the Committee proceeded to discuss the benefits of this new way of working. Members conceded that it would not be possible to remotely attend meetings in every instance due to constitutional restrictions when voting, but efficiencies could be realised in relation to informal meetings.

Members agreed that a comprehensive database of officer contacts would be beneficial and the Chief Information Officer agreed to investigate the possibility and update Members accordingly, also ascertaining whether the use of Skype was always free.

NOTED the presentations and RECOMMENDED that the Committee endorse the proposed system improvements, acknowledging the associated benefits.

CROSC/16/10. Working Smarter

The Chief Information Officer delivered a presentation which set out progress to date and the direction of travel with regards to the Working Smarter Programme, detailing changes to the working environment within Priory House.

Whilst Members agreed that the new environment was welcome, were satisfied with the level of investment made and acknowledged the achievements to date, they highlighted the importance of staff consultation and buy in to the process, a clear outline of the benefits, savings and any associated impacts on staff working in the area. Members agreed that mobile working was an evolutionary process and that due consideration be given to those roles which had been assessed as requiring a full time office presence and the impact on staff fielding queries on site for mobile colleagues.

NOTED the presentation and RECOMMENDED increased staff consultation for future projects.

CROSC/16/11. 2015-16 Outturn Budget Presentation

The Chief Finance Officer delivered a presentation detailing the financial position of the Council at the end of Quarter 4. The report highlighted that the underspend had been much lower than in previous years and acknowledged the challenge of generating ongoing reserves in the long term.

NOTED the presentation and RECOMMENDED that the strong financial performance of the Council in Q4 be acknowledged.

CROSC/16/12.Work Programme 2016/17 & Executive Forward Plan

AGREED the work programme for 2016/17 with the addition of the following:-

- 1. To include an overview exercise to assess the use of Council assets in order to meet housing need – Winter 2016**
- 2. The Farming Strategy – October 2016**
- 3. Assets Strategy Update - October 2016**
- 4. Legal Restructure Update – November 2016**
- 5. To remove the Shortfall in Later Life Housing from the work programme as this had been previously satisfied at the Committee meeting of 22 March 2016**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 12.30 p.m.)

Chairman.....

Date.....