

## CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held at Committee Room 2, Council Offices, High Street North, Dunstable on Monday, 18 January 2010

### PRESENT

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

Cllrs I Dalgarno  
P A Duckett  
D J Hopkin

Cllrs Mrs J G Lawrence  
J Street

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs R W Johnstone

Substitutes: Cllrs D Bowater

Officers in Attendance: Mr M Bowmer Assistant Director Financial Services  
Mrs C Carruthers Assistant Director Property & ICT  
Mr C Heaphy Director of Corporate Resources  
Ms M Peaston Senior Democratic Services Officer  
Miss C Powell Overview and Scrutiny Officer

#### CR/09/01 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Johnstone. Councillor Bowater was present as his substitute.

#### CR/09/02 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2009 were approved as a correct record subject to the following amendments:-

- The word "opaque" in minute CR/09/11 to be changed to "transparent".
- Minute CR/09/11 to be amended by the addition of the words "RECOMMEND TO THE EXECUTIVE and" after the word "to" in resolution number 1.
- Add the following **Note**:

At the subsequent meeting of the Committee on 18 January 2010 Members were advised that the green-amber-red indicators for the corporate budget proposals were a means of showing whether the services could be delivered if those efficiencies were carried through. It was noted that even where matters were given a green rating, indicating deliverability, there could nonetheless be an impact on the service.

Members asked that this be set out in a note to be added to the minutes.

CR/09/03 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

CR/09/04 **Chairman's Announcements and Matters of Communication**

**1. Thanks to Director of Corporate Resources**

The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, formally expressed their thanks and recorded their appreciation of the work of the Director of Corporate Resources and wished him the very best for the future. It was noted that the Director would be present at the next meeting before finally leaving the authority.

**2. Attendance at Next Meeting**

The Chairman indicated that further to the circumstances of the Management Review it would be appropriate for the current Director of Business Transformation to attend the next meeting.

**RESOLVED** to require the current Director of Business Transformation to attend the next meeting.

**3. Note to Minutes of Last Meeting**

The Chairman considered that a matter of clarification needed to be brought forward further to the amendment of the minutes of the last meeting. Members were advised that the green-amber-red indicators for the corporate budget proposals were a means of showing whether the services could be delivered if those efficiencies were carried through. It was noted that even where matters were given a green rating there could nonetheless be an impact on the service. Members asked that this be set out in a note to be added to the minutes.

**4. Update on Asset Management Plan**

The Chairman advised that further information was available regarding the Asset Management Plan and asked the Assistant Director, Property and Asset Management to update the Committee.

It was noted that the first draft of the Asset Management Plan would be available within the next 2-3 weeks. Members were advised that timing was tight but must not slip as the Plan must be brought to the next meeting of the Executive. If it did not, there would be an adverse impact on the CAA score. In view of the timescales it would not be possible to submit it to the next meeting of the Committee so a proposal was made that the draft Plan be sent to all members of this Committee with an invitation to comment directly to the Assistant Director.

In response to comments made at the meeting the Assistant Director undertook to ensure that wording in certain areas was clarified. These included:-

- clarify principles
- define more clearly the responsibility for assets
- refer to the long term accommodation strategy
- clarify figures regarding the backlog of maintenance.

**RESOLVED:-**

1. to note the oral update regarding the Asset Management Plan;
2. that the draft Asset Management Plan be sent to all members of the Committee and that comments be referred directly to the Assistant Director.

CR/09/05 **Petitions**

There were no petitions.

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

There were no statements, questions or deputations from members of the public.

CR/09/07 **Disclosure of Exempt Information**

The Chairman advised that item EX1 Disaggregation of the Assets of the Former Bedfordshire County Council would be considered at the end of the meeting and a resolution to exclude the press and public from the meeting would be made immediately before it.

CR/09/08 **Call-In**

There were no matters of call-in.

CR/09/09 **Requested Items**

The Chairman indicated that he wished to bring forward an item under Procedure Rule 3.1 of Part D2 of the Constitution.

**Scoring system – Policy Led Budgeting for Capital Schemes**

The Committee was advised that the Capital Financial Handbook which gave guidance to officers contained a scoresheet for early consideration of whether an item should be submitted for determination through the political process for inclusion in the Capital programme.

A copy of the scoresheet was tabled at the meeting and is attached at **Appendix A** to these minutes.

The Chairman wished to bring the scoresheet to the attention of the Committee, first to ensure Members were aware of it and also to provide an opportunity for Members to develop their understanding of the process.

Members took the opportunity to clarify a number of matters, including the role of the business case and cost-benefit analysis in determining the future of any project. It was noted that this was a scoring system which assisted the decision-making process but that it could not cover all eventualities.

**RESOLVED:-**

1. to note the scoring system used at an early stage of considering bids for Capital matters;
2. to request that when the Committee considered Capital Programme priorities the business case for each item should be provided;
3. that during the process of reviewing the budget-setting process at its April meeting the Committee would also consider amending the scoring system.

**CR/09/010 Medium Term Accommodation Programme Update**

The Committee received a report which had been considered by the Executive on 8 December 2009 proposing a revised programme and re-naming it the Interim Accommodation Plan.

The Assistant Director Property and Asset Management gave a presentation in relation to this matter. The slides are attached to these minutes at **Appendix B**.

Views were expressed about the practicality of open-plan working arrangements when a service regularly handled confidential information. The need to ensure sufficient provision for confidentiality was stressed.

It was noted that Directors were satisfied with the proposals for locating their teams.

Members were advised that the process was currently on-target with regard to the budget. In response to a question it was noted that there were no further opportunities for savings to be made in the process as it had already been extended at no additional cost. Reference was made to new furniture and the Committee was assured that this would be suitable to transfer to new office accommodation in the future.

**RESOLVED** to note the report.

**CR/09/011 Treasury Management Strategy**

The Committee welcomed Rosa Phiroza Katrak from Arlingclose Consultants to the meeting.

The Committee considered a report proposing a revised Treasury Management Strategy in response to changes in two key codes and increased risk in the investment markets. The report had been submitted to the Executive at its

meeting on 12 January 2010 and the Treasury Management Strategy would then be considered by Council in February 2010 for adoption.

The Committee noted that a key revision required organisations to nominate a specific committee to be responsible for ensuring effective scrutiny of the Treasury Management Strategy and policies. The Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been identified as the appropriate one for this Council.

(**Note:** This Committee could be re-named in the near future due to the impending merge of the Corporate Resources directorate with another directorate.)

Members noted that there was greater emphasis on risk and its management was highlighted. A report detailing treasury management activities would therefore be brought to the Committee on a quarterly basis. The report would include details on:-

- borrowing
- cash
- anticipated cashflow profile.

The Committee was reassured that a good portfolio of borrowing had been inherited from the legacy authority which had borrowed at optimal rates.

It was noted that within the context of local government finance there was a need to borrow for major capital projects. However, over-borrowing resulted in higher costs and risks.

The Chairman highlighted the need for accurate cashflow forecasting and it was agreed to draw the importance of this to the Executive's attention and ask that it takes steps to ensure accurate cashflow forecasting.

**RECOMMENDED:**

**that the Executive be asked to ensure that accurate cashflow forecasting was carried out.**

**RESOLVED:**

to consider and note the report.

**CR/09/012 Executive Forward Plan**

**RESOLVED** to note the Executive Forward Plan for the period starting 1 February 2010.

**CR/09/013 Revised Work Programme**

The Committee considered its Work Programme and a number of items were added to the timetabling of the Programme.

**CR/09/014 Date of Next Meeting**

**RESOLVED** to note that the next meeting would be held on 1 February 2010 in Room 15 at Priory House Chicksands starting at 10.00am.

CR/09/015 **Disaggregation of the Assets of the Former Bedfordshire County Council**

**RESOLVED** under section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that consideration of the item was likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

The Committee considered a report proposing the basis of an agreement with Bedford Borough Council on the division of the assets of the former Bedfordshire County Council. Members noted the context that if no agreement was reached on the division of the assets there would be an adverse impact on both Councils' CAA score.

**RESOLVED** to note the report.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 12.20 p.m.)

Chairman.....

Date.....