

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held at Room 15, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Monday, 1 March 2010

PRESENT

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

Cllrs P A Duckett
D J Hopkin
R W Johnstone

Cllrs D Jones
Mrs J G Lawrence
J Street

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs I Dalgarno

Substitutes: Cllrs D Bowater (In place of I Dalgarno)

Members in Attendance: Cllrs M R Jones,

Officers in Attendance: Mr M Bowmer Assistant Director Financial Services
Mrs M Clampitt Democratic Services Officer
Mr R Ellis Director of Customer and Shared Services
Mr G McFarlane Acting Assistant Director Human Resources and Organisational Development
Miss C Powell Overview and Scrutiny Officer

CR/09/01 **Minutes**

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 1 February 2010 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

CR/09/02 **Declarations of Interests**

(a) **Personal Interests:-**

None.

(b) **Personal and Prejudicial Interests:-**

None.

(c) **Any political whip in relation to any agenda item:-**

None.

CR/09/03 Chairman's Announcements and Communications

1. The Chairman informed the Committee that the following items had been withdrawn from the Agenda as they had been covered during the budget process:

Item 10 – Corporate Overview of the Budget
Item 11 – Treasury Management Budget.

2. The Director of Customer and Shared Services provided Members with an overview of the system problems which had led to the unprecedented event of the early morning of 16 February 2010. It was noted that Emergency Planning had been put into place and the system restoration had been prioritised to restore contact between colleagues and the public back online as quickly as possible. Priority cases included reinstating contact between adult service care service users, carers and other vulnerable groups within the region. A review is in the process of being carried out to ascertain the system outage's root cause. The Director stressed the review would need to address and identify why the outage had occurred, why total resilience was not in place as well as understanding the parallel process of whereby all CBC departments need to regularly review the Business Continuity Plans to mitigate any potential outage problems of this magnitude in the future.

This review along with the Audits carried out by Deloitte and the Audit Commission would be brought back to the Committee as soon as possible for consideration and review.

3. The Chairman confirmed that discussions with the Portfolio Holder, Director and Scrutiny officer had taken place to discuss themes for the Committees 2010/2011 work programme. Five areas for consideration were identified as follows:- IT, Pensions, Project Management, Asset Management and the Budget Process.

CR/09/04 Petitions

No petitions were received from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Annex 2 of Part A4 of the Constitution.

CR/09/05 **Questions, Statements and Deputations**

No questions, statements or deputations from members of the public were received in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Annex 1 of Part A4 of the Constitution.

CR/09/06 **Call-In**

No matters were referred to the Committee for a decision in relation to the call-in of a decision.

CR/09/07 **Requested Items**

No items were referred to the Committee for consideration at the request of a Member under Procedure Rule 3.1 of Part D2 of the Constitution.

CR/09/08 **People Strategy**

The Committee received the report of the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources which provided the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the opportunity to review the Strategy prior to its receipt at Executive for consideration on 9 March.

The Acting Assistant Director (HR/OD) informed the Committee that the Strategy had been written within the context of a new authority in transition. As such Members were presented with a high level plan with several detailed operational plans sitting beneath. The current People Strategy also incorporated elements of the Council's Organisational Plan and the Committee were informed that the Strategy would have a two year lifespan. In this instance the Strategy would be reviewed and refreshed accordingly during its two year span and would run in parallel with the overall cultural development of the organisation. The Strategy covered five key themes:-

- Resourcing
- Leadership
- Skills and Capacity
- Organisational effectiveness
- Equality and Diversity.

A full and frank discussion took place in particular around the different levels of "plain English" and jargon used on the documents. Members were concerned it would be too confusing for some staff.

The Director of Customer and Shared Services confirmed that the Strategy had been through a number of iterations, reflecting the fact that the wider Corporate Strategy and critical priorities for the organisation were still in development.

It was noted that the Strategy would also run in parallel with the overall cultural development of the organisation.

The Executive were to be asked to allow the Strategy and the under pinning action plans to be brought back to the Overview and Scrutiny no later than 10 September and should it be deemed necessary returned to the Executive in October.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the People Strategy report be noted and any comments submitted to the Executive and full Council if considered necessary.**
- 2. that the under pinning action plans to be brought back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its 6 September meeting.**

CR/09/09 **Quarter 3 Budget Management Report**

The Chief Finance Officer confirmed that the layout, presentation and level of information would be reviewed. It was to ensure Members had the relevant information.

Members noted that not all of the accounts appeared to reflect true money spend or commitment. A prime example was the Capital Fund. Due to the current financial position of the Council, it was important that this account be as accurate as possible. The pressure would not be removed if the Capital Fund had not been fully spent as some projects had been started and therefore some funds would be committed even if not spent.

A question was asked about the Interim Accommodation Fund spend. The fund was for £2m. It was noted that the spend had been split between 2009/10 and 2010/11.

The Assistant Director, Financial Services informed the Committee that there is a need to discuss how the information is presented corporately and gave the Committee an example of the way in which the Corporate Property Block is currently reported. This was shown as £4million in the Committee's papers, but Members were informed that the majority of this sum had been apportioned to the Medium Term Accommodation Strategy and was therefore inaccurate.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the Quarter 3 Budget Management report be noted**
- 2. that any issues from this report be considered within the work programme by the Committee.**

CR/09/010 **Quarter 3 Performance Report**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Corporate Resources which highlighted the Quarter 3 Performance for the Directorate.

The Committee were pleased to see that the absences had been separated between school and non-school. It was noted that the figures didn't include statutory days.

Members requested that the figures from the schools be checked for accuracy. It was agreed that the Children, Families and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee be given the suggestion to check the questions of how the absences are recorded and that the levels were correct.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the Quarter 3 Performance report be noted; and**
- 2. that any issues arising from this report are considered by the Committee as part of their work programme.**

CR/09/011 **Work Programme 2009 - 2010**

RESOLVED

that the Work Programme for 2009/2010 be approved.

CR/09/012 **Date of Next Meeting**

With effect from 1 March 2010, Business Transformation Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been combined to form the Customer and Shared Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

It was agreed that the scheduled date of the Committee March meeting would not be convened unless urgent business was brought forward.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 11.40 a.m.)