

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Room 15, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Tuesday, 11 June 2013.

PRESENT

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

Cllrs Mrs A Barker
L Birt
Mrs C F Chapman MBE

Cllrs Dr R Egan
J Murray

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs B Saunders
T Woodward

Substitutes: Cllrs R W Johnstone

Members in Attendance: Cllrs P N Aldis
M R Jones

Deputy Leader and
Executive Member for
Corporate Resources

Officers in Attendance: Mr P Burt – Head of Property Assets
Ms D Clarke – Director of Improvement and
Corporate Services
Mrs P Everitt – Research and Business Support
Officer
Ms C Harding – Corporate Policy Advisor (Equality
& Diversity)
Mr J Partridge – Scrutiny Policy Adviser
Mr C Warboys – Chief Finance Officer

CR/13/17 **Minutes**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 30 April 2013 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

CR/13/18 **Members' Interests**

There were no declarations of interest or political whip in relation to any agenda items.

CR/13/19 **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman drew the Committee's attention to a referral from the Audit Committee regarding two strategic risks they had been asked to consider. The risks related to "the significant loss or ICT failure of core business systems including but not limited to: SAP, ECM, CCMS, SWIFT, Tribal, Accolaid, Open Revenues, QL Housing and a core infrastructure failure of Datacentre Environment, SAN and/or CBC Network. In response the Director of Improvement and Corporate Services commented that steps had been taken to mitigate the risk and the Council was delivering its statutory obligations by:

- process and governance controls.
- Sourcing market leading solutions for the core systems such as SAP, SWIFT, and CCMS with a large local government user base and solid track record. Recommended version upgrade path for these systems was also being followed.
- Use of managed services and externalised support for specialist support.
- Moving to external third party data centres to increase the resilience and environmental controls for the physical data centre environment.

RECOMMENDED

That the Audit Committee be made aware that the Corporate Resources OSC had received adequate assurances regarding the strategic risk.

CR/13/20

Petitions

No petitions were received from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Part D2 of the Constitution.

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Questions, Statements or Deputations

No questions, statements or deputations were received from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Annex 1 of Part 4 of the Constitution.

CR/13/22

Call-In

The Committee were advised that no decisions of the Executive had been referred to the Panel under the Call-in Procedures set out in Appendix "A" to Rule No. S18 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

CR/13/23

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/13/24

Executive Member Update

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources provided the Committee with an update on current activities pertaining to his portfolio,

which were not already included on today's agenda and which covered the following issues:-

- Congratulations were extended to the Director of Improvement and Corporate Services on her recent appointment.
- The Council's final accounts would be submitted to the Audit Committee meeting scheduled on Wednesday 24 June, 2013 and an invitation had been extended to all Members to attend.
- The successful roll out of the Employee Self Service and Manager Self Services system.
- The improved performance of the contact centre. The Committee wished to record their thanks to staff responding to queries on Welfare Reforms. The Committee were reminded of a standing invitation to visit the contact centre with prior arrangement through the Director of Improvement and Corporate Resources.
- The increased revenue of £70,000 through advertising on roundabouts.
- The procurement of a new performance monitoring programme. The Director of Improvement and Corporate Services agreed to provide a presentation of the system at a future meeting.
- The Council was in the process of installing a CoCo compliant secure enclave network for Revenue and Benefits.

NOTED the update

CR/13/25

Corporate Asset Management Strategy

The Head of Asset Strategy delivered a presentation, which provided the Committee with an update of changes affecting the Corporate Asset Management Strategy. The presentation included:-

- Revisions made to the asset portfolio to reflect sales and acquisitions
- The transfer of 60 leases to academies
- The introduction of an officer led Assets Investment Group
- Self financing of Housing Revenue Account
- Increased income from commercial investment property; and
- Changes to Key Performance Indicators

Members of the Committee raised a number of queries during the presentation regarding the following issues, which were addressed by the Deputy Leader and Executive Member and officers in attendance, these included:

- The need to ensure joint use arrangements remain in place once leasehold had been transferred to academies.
- Reassurance that checks were maintained to ensure conditions of leases to academies was being met. The Head of Asset Strategy confirmed that leases were monitored and letters sent to schools to remind them of the conditions. Should any changes be required to buildings or land, new consent must be obtained from the Council.
- Concerns relating to the additional cost to the Authority of undertaking conditions surveys and conveyancing. A member queried the extent of the

cost is to date. The Executive Member agreed to provide members of the Committee with a collective cost figure.

- The ability to check ownership of assets. The Executive Member confirmed the Council has a data base of its assets, however, it was not released because of the commercially sensitive information it contained.
- The difficulty of identifying land ownership. The Committee discussed whether it would be helpful for the council to identify land owners in circumstances where the council did not own the land. In response the Executive Member commented that this was a national issue that all Councils needed to be mindful of.
- The importance of negotiations to fill empty shop premises.

NOTED the update

CR/13/26 Equality and Diversity Strategy

The Director of Improvement and Corporate Services delivered a diversity quiz and drew the attention of the Committee to the following four corporate, overarching objectives and activities essential to ensuring that consideration of equality and diversity was embedded across all council activities:-

1. Strong leadership (championing diversity in our area, identifying objectives and monitoring outcomes).
2. Improved outcomes for vulnerable groups.
3. Good recruitment and management of a high performing workforce.
4. Improved engagement, civic participation and cohesion.

In response to the quiz and the further clarification provided by the Director of Improvement and Corporate Services and officers present, Members of the Committee discussed the following:-

- The importance of Equality and Diversity on the concept of Big Society and the need to make reference to this in the Strategy.
- That the strategy be sent to all Town and Parish councils and for Equality and Diversity training to be offered to raise awareness of this important Strategy.

RECOMMENDED

That the Strategy be supported and the comments of the Committee be considered by the Director of Improvement and Corporate Services. In addition to incorporating a reference to the Big Society.

CR/13/27 Work Programme 2013 - 2014 & Executive Forward Plan

The Committee considered its current Work Programme and the latest Executive Forward Plan and agreed to the following amendments/additions:-

1. Draft Farm Strategy update – 30 July 2013
2. Amendments/additions outlined in the minutes dated 30 April 2013

RESOLVED that the work programme be approved subject to the amendments as detailed in the Minute above.

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

Chairman.....

Date.....