

## CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Room 15, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Tuesday, 25 October 2016.

### PRESENT

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

Cllrs N B Costin  
D McVicar

Cllrs T Swain  
T Woodward

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs Mrs C F Chapman MBE  
R W Johnstone  
J Kane

Substitutes: Cllrs C C Gomm

Members in Attendance: Cllrs K M Collins Deputy Executive  
Member for Corporate  
Resources  
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

Officers in Attendance: Mr Q Baker Director of LGSS Law and Monitoring  
Officer  
Mrs P Everitt Scrutiny Policy Adviser  
Mr G Muskett Head of Revenues & Benefits  
Mr C Rushworth Legal Services Business Relationship  
Manager  
Mrs G Stanton Chief Communications Officer  
Mrs C Taylor Recovery Team Leader  
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 23 August 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 had invited the Chief Information Officer SRO to advise Members on the reason for the outage experienced on Friday 21 October 2016. A presentation was delivered to the Committee that explained the problem was due to the council's service provider cutting through a communications cable in Luton late the previous evening. A large number of users were left without office systems and telephones by the outage. A redundant provision should have been in place and had been on order from the suppliers for some months but unfortunately was not available in time to avoid this outage.

The redundant provision on order would mitigate the chances of a further large scale outage for CBC like the incident that occurred. A major power outage or a major Internet fault would fall outside of CBC's control and would have a direct impact on CBC services as with all other services within the area.

**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:-

- A management restructure in Corporate Resources had been announced and details had been circulated to Members.
  - The bi-annual residents' survey field work had been undertaken and a report would be presented at the next Corporate Resources meeting.
- A number of software upgrades had been implemented and would provide efficiencies for HR and other services.

**CROSC/16/9. Debt Recovery Performance**

The Executive Member Corporate Resources introduced a report detailing the Council's Debt Recovery performance. Proposals to reduce the current long

term debt were planned and progress had been made across the Council to reduce the debt figure.

The Head of Revenues and Benefits advised that despite an increase of the amount of Council Tax due to be collected during this financial year, the current percentage was ahead of target. Members were informed of the various debt collection remedies used by officers which included the issue by the Courts of a Liability Order that was subsequently attached by an employer to deduct arrears from the debtors wages. The last resort remained the engagement of bailiffs and the Revenues team continued to make contact with the debtor and agree payment.

A new team of officers had been successful in the investigation of old debt, and following digitalisation next year, it was hoped to add further resources to the Team.

The collection of NNDR was expected to achieve year end targets although due to the nature of collecting NNDR and the levels of appeals collection rates can be unpredictable.

**NOTED the report and welcomed the improvements made by the Service.**

#### **CROSC/16/10 Shared Legal Service - Operations Update**

The Executive Member for Corporate Resources introduced an update on the first six months of operation of the Shared Legal Service. It was reported there had been a smooth transition, although it was too soon to circulate a survey.

The Director of LGSS Law and Monitoring Officer explained the ethos of LGSS Law and the advantages of the model that included cost efficiency, opportunities, experience and continuity.

The Legal Services Relationship Manager reported the service had gone live in April 2016 and the operating model was on target to deliver a saving of £240k in year 1. As well as retaining service quality, anecdotal staff feedback was positive. With governance arrangements in place, there were some working practices that required improvement or imbedding and these would be addressed.

**NOTED the update and the successful implementation of the new operating model.**

#### **CROSC/16/11 Q1 Budget Monitoring Update**

The Chief Finance Officer delivered the financial results for Q1 (June 2016). The current Revenue forecast had improved from the £2m overspend position down to £1m forecast overspend figure. The new homes bonus would contribute to the reserve figure and it was expected that further changes to the budget in future years would be needed subject to the Government's decision on funding local authorities. The Capital and HRA positions were noted. Concern was raised on the proposed Government initiative 'Pay to Stay', however, it was not possible to comment on the impact at this stage.

**NOTED** the updated.

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

**AGREED** the work programme subject to the addition of the following:-

- 1. Residents Survey**
- 2. Responsiveness/working smarter enquiry**

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

Chairman.....

Date.....