

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Thursday, 26 July 2018.

PRESENT

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

Cllrs	Mrs A Barker	Cllrs	J Kane
	Mrs C F Chapman MBE		D McVicar
	C C Gomm		T Swain

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs T Woodward

Members in Attendance:	Cllrs	P Downing	Vice Chairman Social Care, Health & Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee
		E Ghent (Executive Member)	Executive Member for Assets and Housing Delivery
		Mrs S A Goodchild	
		Ms A M W Graham	
		Ms C Hegley (Executive Member)	Executive Member for Adults, Social Care and Housing Operations (HRA)
		P Hollick	Chairman of Social Care, Health & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee
		Ms C Maudlin (Executive Member)	Deputy Executive Member for Adults, Social Care, Housing Operations (HRA) and Volunteering
		B J Spurr (Executive Member)	Executive Member for Health and Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board
		Mrs T Stock (Executive Member)	Deputy Executive Member for Health
		R D Wenham (Executive Member)	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources

Officers in Attendance:	Mr M Coiffait	–	Director of Community Services
	Mrs P Everitt	–	Scrutiny Policy Adviser
	Ms S Hughes	–	Community Engagement Manager

	Mr T Stephenson	– Programme Manager
	Mr C Warboys	– Director of Resources
Others in Attendance	Mrs J Atkinson	Citizens Advice Dunstable
	Mrs J Hedges	Citizens Advice Mid Bedfordshire
	Mrs T Park	Citizens Advice Leighton-Linslade
	Public: 2	

CROSC/18/15 Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 31 May 2018 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the addition of Cllr Eugene Ghent to the attendance list.

CROSC/18/16 Members' Interests

The following Committee Members declared an interest at Item 9 in light of an association with Citizen's Advice Organisations both past and present.

Cllr A Barker

Cllr C F Chapman

Cllr J Kane

Cllr D McVicar

Although not Members of the Committee, the following Members also declared an interest in Item 9 in light of an association with Citizens Advice Organisations:-

Cllr A Graham (Chair of Trustee Board Mid Beds CAB)

Cllr C Hegley (Representative Dunstable CAB)

Cllr P Downing (Member of Trustee Board Mid Beds CAB)

Cllr S Goodchild (Representative Dunstable CAB)

Cllr B Spurr (Representative at Leighton Buzzard CAB)

CROSC/18/17 Chairman's Announcements and Communications

The Chairman announced the Housing Development Company Report had been withdrawn from the Agenda. The Director of Community Services advised the report would be rewritten and submitted to the special Executive on 11 September 2018. Members of the Committee were invited to attend the Executive meeting to raise any concerns on the report.

The request made by a Member of the Committee for an investigation into the Community Transport tender would be raised at a future meeting of Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

CROSC/18/18 Petitions

None.

CROSC/18/19 Questions, Statements or Deputations

None.

CROSC/18/20.**Call-In**

None.

CROSC/18/21**Requested Items**

None.

CROSC/18/22**Executive Members' Update**

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources updated the Committee on the latest news and developments for the Corporate Resources Directorate that included:-

- The Web team had received an award in recognition of improvement to the Central Bedfordshire website.
- Project Simplify had made progress and 'job families' work had been completed.
- Management changes had been made at LGSS Law. The Director of Resources would deliver a presentation at Audit Committee on Monday 30 July to update the Committee. All Members were invited to attend.

In response to a concern regarding Project Simplify, the Director of Resources would bring a presentation to a future meeting of the Committee.

The Executive Member for Assets and Housing Delivery updated the Committee on the latest news and developments for his Portfolio that included:-

- Minor works had been undertaken by the Assets Service at the Horticultural Centre in Silsoe. The improvements for service users had been well received.
- Works at Sandy Northern Depot were in progress and expected to be completed ahead of schedule in September.
- Houghton Hall Park had received the Best Commercial Project Award from Local Authority Building Control (LABC).

In response to a question regarding the old Flitwick Leisure Centre site, the Director of Community Services advised a proposed scheme was at pre-planning stage and Ward Members would be kept informed of progress.

CROSC/18/23.**Citizens Advice Bureau - Local Impact Presentation**

The Chairman of Trustees at Mid Beds CA, Cllr Graham, introduced the three representatives from Citizens Advice; in Dunstable, Judy Atkinson; in Leighton Buzzard, Tabitha Park and in Mid Beds, Jenny Hedges. Members were advised of each Citizens Advice setup including the numbers of paid staff, volunteers, and the range of speciality advice given to residents. The three Citizens Advice centres work together to reduce costs, however, it was evident that each area faced different challenges locally and should remain separate. The presentation demonstrated the combined economic value of

Citizens Advice in Central Bedfordshire in terms of savings to the public purse and the contribution of volunteers.

The Committee was aware of the lengths the Citizens Advice had to go to ensure funding was maintained with bids made to various Trusts and Town and Parish Councils. Some donations were received from local organisations and fund-raising events were held in each locality.

Members thanked those present for the insight into the challenges faced by the Citizens Advice Teams and proposed a partnership status with the Council. The work to build better communities in Central Bedfordshire was invaluable and the Committee was reassured that each budget had been challenged and the Council was receiving value for money for the funding it provided.

In conclusion the Executive Members present were asked to support Citizens Advice finance arrangements favourably post 2020. The Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Infrastructure organisations be invited to attend the next Corporate Resources OSC meeting to deliver a presentation on their work and impact in Central Bedfordshire.

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That the Committee welcomed the comprehensive update on the work of Citizens Advice in Central Bedfordshire.**
- 2. That the Executive review the Citizens Advice financial arrangements post 2020 based on an invest to save basis.**
- 3. That partnership arrangements with Citizens Advice be broadened and formalised.**
- 4. That Citizens Advice centres continued to receive the support of Members and Officers.**
- 5. That the VCS Infrastructure organisations be invited to attend the September Corporate Services OSC meeting to deliver an update on their work in Central Bedfordshire .**

CROSC/18/24 Performance Monitoring Outturn 2017/18

The Head of Knowledge and Insight introduced the 2017/18 Outturn Report that detailed performance for the Council's Medium Term Plan (MTP) indicator set. Members raised the following comments in summary:-

- Concern regarding silo working within the call centre. In response, the Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Housing Operations (HRA) noted the concerns and advised a 'channel shift' project was underway to encourage Members and residents to use the website rather than the call centre. Apologies were extended for the delay in responding to calls which was due to the continued high volume of staff who had left the service and moved on to other areas of the Council.
- The Director of Social Care, Health and Housing was requested to provide an update on the numbers of volunteers presently recruited to support residents that had asked for help.

RECOMMENDED that a request for an update be submitted to the Director of Social Care Health and Housing on the escalating support required to support residents and their dependency on the voluntary services.

CROSC/18/25 Budget Monitoring Outturn 2017/18

The Director of Resources introduced the outturn Revenue Budget Monitoring reports that had resulted in an underspend that would be added to the reserves. The draft Accounts had been completed in May in order that the Audit was completed by the end of July. There were overspends on Educational Transport, Legal and Housing Benefit subsidy and these would be addressed through the Budget Framework report and closely monitored going forward. In conclusion, the Revenue Budget was in a good position, however, there was no room for complacency.

In answer to a question about the procurement of fleet services and buses, the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Resources advised the vehicles purchased included diggers for use at Thorn Turn, vehicles for the enforcement team, library services, mini buses for children and adults with special needs. Each vehicle purchase had a firm written business case for its use.

The Committee commended the Executive Member and officers on the excellent position of the Capital Budget that considered the phasing of capital projects.

The Housing Revenue Account had achieved a surplus of £8.23m and would boost investment in Council houses. It was noted there had been a slightly higher number of Right to Buy sales than anticipated.

NOTED the 2017/18 Outturn Budget monitoring reports.

CROSC/18/26 Housing Development Company

This item was removed from the Agenda in order that the report could be rewritten.

CROSC/18/27 Work Programme 2018/19 & Executive Forward Plan

The Committee considered the current work programme and Executive Forward Plan. The work programme was agreed subject to the addition of the following items:-

- a presentation on the work of the three substantive VCS organisations at the meeting scheduled on 20 September 2018.
- An update on Project Simplify (TBC)
- An update on MSTAR3/CONMENSRA (TBC)
- A presentation on the Housing Development Company.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 12.35 p.m.)

Chairman.....

Date.....

