

## **GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE: MINUTES**

**Date:** Tuesday, 20th October 2015

**Time:** 10.00a.m. – 12.50p.m.

**Present:** Councillors Bailey, Bates, D Brown, Count (Chairman), Criswell, Divine (substituting for Councillor Bullen), Hickford, Hipkin, Jenkins, Kavanagh (substituting for Councillor Whitehead), Leeke (substituting for Councillor Cearn), McGuire (Vice-Chairman), Reeve, Tew, Walsh and Williams (substituting for Councillor Nethsingha)

**Apologies:** Councillors Bullen, Cearn, Nethsingha, Orgee and Whitehead

### **156. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **157. MINUTES –15TH SEPTEMBER 2015 AND ACTION LOG**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15th September 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. The Action Log and following updates were noted:

- Item 144: the detailed proposals to be presented to the Committee regarding the associated costs of implementing the new Operating Model for Business Planning would be subject to evaluation by the Council's new Chief Executive. It was noted that there could therefore be changes before the report was presented to Committee in November.
- Item 146: the Service Director, Strategy and Development had reported that the Yaxley to Farcet cycleway had not been delayed by resources being redeployed to City Deal schemes. The scheme had been delayed by land issues. There had been no delays to schemes outside of the Greater Cambridge Area as a result of resources being deployed to City Deal schemes. City Deal schemes had been resourced by filling vacancies that would otherwise not have been filled and retaining staff who were on temporary contracts. There had been some reprogramming of Section 106 and grant funded cycling schemes in and around Cambridge in order to rapidly mobilise on City Deal cycling projects, and to ensure a co-ordinated implementation programme.
- Item 146: the Service Director, Strategy and Development had asked for a note to be prepared on CB1 and Section 106 by the team who had renegotiated.
- Item 154: a separate column had now been included in the 'Income and Expenditure – Overall Position' tables detailing the original budget position.

### **158. PETITIONS**

No petitions were received.

## 159. BUSINESS PLANNING – DRAFT STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The Committee received a report setting out the draft Strategic Framework as part of this year's Business Planning process. Attention was drawn to the background to the development of the Framework, which was set against a deeply challenging outlook for Cambridgeshire and its communities. The model had been developed with Members and officers and in consultation with the Council's partners. The draft Strategic Framework was intended to articulate the key principles that would guide the decisions and changes the Council would make over the next five years, and described what this was likely to mean to communities. The Committee was advised of five Council wide themes that were critical for the Council to deliver in order to achieve the outcomes which had been identified. It was noted that Service Committees would be asked to use this draft Framework to assist them in their consideration of Business Plan proposals over the next few months. The Committee would then receive a more detailed document in the New Year prior to consideration by full Council.

In welcoming the document and thanking officers, Members made the following comments:

- the need to reconsider the wording on page 8 of the draft Framework, which set out that the Council would work with and invest in communities. There was a need to clarify what the word invest meant in this context as it was not yet clear how this work would be resourced. There was also need to identify how each Service would respond in terms of resource. The Director: Customer Service and Transformation reported that this information would be brought forward in a future iteration.
- highlighted the use of the word "customers" on pages 3 and 7 of the draft Framework. One Member queried whether the Council's residents would see themselves as customers and suggested substituting the word with resident. Other Members highlighted the fact that there were different types of interactions with residents, which included those partaking of the Council's services and business. The Director agreed to follow up whether the use of the term in the context was appropriate.
- the need to identify an action in relation to "working with partners" on page 6 of the draft Framework. One Member queried who the Council's partners were. He was concerned that there was an expectation that Parish Councils would pick up the slack but these authorities had their own budget cycles. The Chief Executive proposed that the Framework should explain the intention to work with partners and how they could contribute rather than a long list. The Director reported that information had been sent out to Town and Parish Councils as part of the consultation process around the budget. It was proposed to provide them with further information, week beginning 26 October 2015, which would include a list of items they might like to get involved in.
- expressed concern that it was too late for Town and Parish Councils to take on new responsibilities as they were currently in the process of setting their precepts. The Chairman reported that the Council had informed Town and Parish Councils that detailed plans would not be available until next year. However, the Council had drawn their attention to the fact it was changing the way it worked and in a generic

e-mail had asked them to consider what resources they could offer. It was acknowledged that individual Town and Parish Councils would have different solutions. The Director drew attention to the Community Resilience Strategy which set out the expectation requirement of communities.

- expressed concern that many Parish Councils had no understanding of the pressures facing the County Council. The Chairman explained that the Community Resilience Strategy would alert Town and Parish Councils and would provide County Councillors with information to take to meetings with these organisations. He was of the opinion that there had been a change over the last 12 to 18 months following meetings with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils and the national association.
- the need to identify a dedicated resource if Councillors were going to champion community-based provision as detailed on page 8 of the draft Framework. The Director drew attention to the Councillors as Connectors Scheme. It was noted that the Community Engagement Team was exploring the resources needed to support Councillors. The Chairman reminded the Committee of the need to consider the different ability and appetite of Councillors. He had asked officers to investigate the option of a supervised potential fund for individual Councillors which they could use if they could demonstrate they could deliver a better service.
- the need to avoid being too prescriptive with partners. It was important that the Council worked with and facilitated partnership rather than invested resources. One Member highlighted the need to identify where partners were and if they were doing the same type of work.
- the need to get the balance right between aspiration and reality. It was suggested that "...the choices we are making" should be pursuing rather than making on page 3 of the draft Framework, and that the challenges should be bolder and fuller. It was important that the document was honest and transparent in order to avoid it being patronising. The Council needed to take into confidence its residents and electors so that they were fully aware of what it was facing.
- the need to consider an alternate approach for Districts which did not have Town and Parish Councils.
- the need to make reference to deprivation on page 6 of the draft Framework. It was important to identify what would be different in relation to this issue by 2020. The Chairman reported that the issue of deprivation and the level of support to communities should be reflected in the redesigning of services. He drew attention to the outcomes on page 12 of the draft Framework and the need to take positive action to close the gap in terms of health as well as the economy, which would impact on Town and Parish Councils and the NHS.
- the need to bear in mind that the approaches and ways of working in the draft Framework were not a solution to the huge financial challenges facing the Council. The adoption of the Framework would inescapably lead to the development of proposals which might have a negative impact across Cambridgeshire's communities.

- queried whether the Council had “a strong political mandate to deliver this vision” as set out on page 2 of the draft Framework. One Member reported that he, unlike some Councillors, was accepting reality rather than providing a strong political mandate. The Chairman reported that the political mandate was for transformation and investing in communities.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Approve the Draft Strategic Framework as the basis for Service Committees consideration of Business Plan proposals in the period November 2015 – January 2016.

## **160. ELY HUB AND CAMBRIDGESHIRE ARCHIVES**

The Committee considered a report seeking the approval to a reduction in scope of, and a small increase in the budget for, the Ely Hub project. The Chief Finance Officer drew attention to the background to this scheme detailed in the Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee (H&CIC) report. It was noted that the H&CIC had unanimously agreed to Option A in the report, reiterating the original purpose and focus of the project, which was to address the very longstanding accommodation needs of Cambridgeshire Archives. The Chairman clarified the role of the General Purposes Committee, which was to approve the finance only. However, it was noted that the Committee could discuss how the process had been handled by H&CIC.

During discussion, members made the following comments:

- highlighted confusion around the General Purposes Committee (GPC) and H&CIC reports. The GPC report stated that there was sufficient capacity for at least 20 years whilst the H&CIC report stated that there was a risk that the archive service could soon outgrow the space. The GPC report also stated that the Cambridgeshire Collection would not be accommodated at Ely whilst the H&CIC report included a proposal to bring it to Ely. The Executive Director: Economy, Transport and Environment apologised for the lack of clarity. He confirmed that following further work, it had been established that Option A would provide at least 20 years of storage capacity. The Chairman of H&CIC commented that H&CIC had been provided with this information before taking the final decision. In relation to the Cambridgeshire Collection, it was noted that certain records would be accommodated at Ely but the Cambridge records would remain in Cambridge.
- requested clarity regarding the £183k saving for the Registration Service in Section 4.26 of the H&CIC report. It was not clear what staff savings would be made if the Registration Service was not integrated. The Executive Director acknowledged that Option A provided less potential for staff savings. As part of the Business Planning process, officers were looking at opportunities for additional savings such as reviewing opening hours and bringing archives staff together. It was expected that savings of approximately £170k per annum would be achieved over two years.
- highlighted the fact that staff working at Noble House would not be accommodated within Option A. One Member commented that she had put forward a proposal to house the Children and Young People team based at Noble House at Centre E

Youth Hub, which would have removed the cost of Noble House. Unfortunately, it was now too late as all the office space at Centre E had been let. The Chairman asked officers to explain how this issue would now be dealt with as the Council could not afford to renew the lease on Noble House. **Action Required.**

- acknowledged that there had been problems with the way the process had been carried out which had highlighted the tension between the Library Service and the Service responsible for buildings. The Chief Finance Officer reported that there was now a Property Asset Board which would help prevent this from happening again.
- highlighted the danger of cost increases resulting from areas where further investigation was required as detailed on page 60 of the Feasibility Report. Attention was drawn in particular to the assessment of the load bearing capacity of the ground floor slab. Members were informed that the building was a former warehouse and the ground floor slab had been overdesigned and was more than adequate for the Archives Service.
- queried reference to point 11 on page 74 of the Feasibility Report relating to new external lighting columns. It was noted that a full design team had looked at the lighting columns and identified that they were reusable.
- queried the loss of capacity if a mezzanine floor was not provided. It was noted that there would be a 25% loss of capacity. Members were informed that H&CIC had been informed of the lifespan of the building rather than the loss of capacity. The Chairman was concerned that this information had not been included in the original report. He queried the make up of the final figure of £4.2m. It was noted that the figure primarily included design and construction but it did contain risk elements, which could result in a reduction in the final figure if reduced.
- queried the cost of the consultancy fees of £123k and the fact that one sentence on page 74 in point 11 appeared incomplete. The Chief Finance Officer reported that the Feasibility Report had cost £6k and was a high level superficial survey. The original more detailed ARCUS report had focused on land acquisition with a small contingency and had given a project cost of £2.5m. Since that point in time a detailed costing had taken place. The figure of £6.9m encompassed all issues not adequately identified in the original report.
- queried a number of points in the original H&CIC report. These included the value and probability of the need for a partial mezzanine floor for the archives, and which option a full mezzanine floor was comparable with. One Member queried the amount and probability of additional income generated by the Registration Service. He also suggested that could release savings in 4.13 meant would, that a net present value should have been calculated as set out in 4.19., that officers should look at value first in 4.21 and then financing, that the uncertainties in 4.24 should be addressed, and that the graph in 4.23 was not useful. Finally he had queried how the figures in Appendix 2 related to the figures in the report.
- suggested that the documents in the appendices were historical and were there to provide background information rather than the focus of debate. One Member hoped that officers would in future provide analysis of why the other options had been discounted rather than attach old reports. He reminded the Committee that

H&CIC had debated this issue in detail and had agreed unanimously to progress the archives only option. The Chairman commented that it would have been helpful to have attached the minutes of the H&CIC meeting.

- queried whether the Council needed to physically store every piece of information currently stored. It was suggested that H&CIC might wish to review the policy.  
**Action required.**

It was resolved to agree to:

- a) the scope of the project to be restricted to resolving the longstanding accommodation requirements of Cambridgeshire Archives and county registration records;
- b) the capital budget for the scheme to be increased to £4.2M; and
- c) the project to be progressed through planning and acquisition to completion.

## **161. BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE**

The Committee was asked to review the proposed strategy to build resilient communities, which had been developed with the help of Members, officers and external experts. Members were reminded that the strategy was an important part of the new Operating Model and proposed a fundamental shift in the way that service provision and local communities interacted. It included six areas of activity representing a specific part of the work to be taken forward. Attention was drawn to the financial benefits and business planning, which focused on costs avoided, helping to guide where savings could be made in front line services, and mitigating the impact of cuts which would have to be made to front line services. Officers would be working with the Council's partners to share this agenda, and meetings had already taken place with the voluntary sector and the Constabulary.

In welcoming the document and thanking officers, Members made the following comments:

- acknowledged that the strategy was not the answer to all the Council's problems but it did reflect the changing world and provided Councillors with a document to share with partners.
- requested that thanks be put on record to Councillor Criswell, the Council's Localism Champion, for the work he had carried out in this area.
- the need for caution in relation to the section on Council Members on page 11 of the strategy. One Member queried whether all members of Council were conscious of the commitment they would have to make. He also highlighted the burden on other Councils particularly in relation to core planning policies. Another Member suggested that Group Leaders should encourage their members to get involved in the "Councillors as Community Connectors" group.
- queried where the Council was going to find all the volunteers needed particularly given the difficulty of finding Governors and Parish Councillors. It was suggested

that there was not vast armies of people to take on these tasks. One Member proposed that the Council should stand up to the Government instead. The Chairman informed the Committee that he had lobbied the Government. However, it was important not to harangue the Government on every policy but instead to highlight the fact Cambridgeshire was different. The Service Director – Enhanced and Preventative Services acknowledged the challenge of delivering the strategy and the need to engage the public where there was an appetite. Another Member drew attention to a case study on page 14 of the strategy showing how someone's life could be changed by just doing things in a different way. It was noted that Adults Committee was currently conducting a desk top exercise to see whether 30 people supported in Little Downham at a cost £300k could have their needs met differently saving a possible 20%. There was a need to capture all ongoing work in case studies to promote a cultural change. One Member expressed disappointment that a negative attitude to volunteers was demoralising for those who volunteered, and another Member pointed out that the Council did not have a choice.

- highlighted the need for a shift in attitudes to a direction of self help. The Chief Finance Officer reported that Hertfordshire Councillors had been at the forefront of this work with volunteers with budgets for their own local projects. He suggested that local communities should decide what footpaths should be renewed for example. This would then involve local Councillors working with an assigned budget for the good of the community. One Member highlighted the impact of £150k given to St Augustine's Church in Cambridge by the City Council, which had transformed the church into a community centre during the week run by volunteers who were providing a better service than the statutory authority.
- welcomed the case studies but queried again where the capacity would come from. The role of churches for example was limited. One Member drew attention to the fact that on page 19 of the strategy savings were predicated on this approach. The Service Director reported that the services the Council contracted with supported the strategy and there were levers using existing resources. With reference to the issue of capacity, the Chairman reported that Addenbrooke's had a large number of volunteers. There was also a pool of active retired people who wished to volunteer.

It was resolved to formally agree the Community Resilience Strategy as attached to the report.

## **162. INTEGRATED RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 31ST AUGUST 2015**

The Committee received a report detailing the financial and performance information to assess progress in delivering the Council's Business Plan. It was noted that the overall revenue budget position had improved since the last meeting following the activity undertaken by chairs of policy and service committees. It was now showing a forecast year end underspend of £43k. The Chief Finance Officer reported that he was confident the Council could deliver a balanced budget at year end particularly as the September figures were showing an underspend. He thanked Members for their commitment. However, he did draw attention to the pressure of the continued growth in the Looked After Children population. Attention was drawn to the Capital Programme which was showing a forecast year end underspend of £36.9m. He reminded Members

that £1m borrowing resulted in an additional savings requirement of £80k. He highlighted the need to re-profile the Capital Programme to make it more robust. Finally he drew attention to key performance indicators where four indicators were currently red.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:

- queried how the figures in table 4.2 reflecting In-house fostering, Kinship etc. had been calculated. The Chief Finance Officer reported that the first set of figures above the first “Total” did reflect the external provision unit cost times average cost to achieve the package total. The figures below the line included added fixed costs and officers were currently working to disaggregate these. In response to a query, the 55 weeks for foster carers reflected how they were remunerated.
- queried how it was proposed to fund the overspend of £270k from “Passenger transport other” as it was not possible to stop this provision. One Member expressed concern that this overspend primarily derived from Park and Ride, predominantly a Cambridge City function, could be funded by cutting other budgets which affected other areas of the county. The Chief Finance Officer agreed to investigate. **Action Required.** However, he reminded Members that it was the responsibility of H&CIC to deliver a balanced budget.
- queried the impact of a lack of available assessors in relation to the Mental Capacity Act/Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards. The Chief Finance Officer agreed to investigate. **Action Required.**
- expressed concern that performance of the indicator relating to “The proportion pupils attending Cambridgeshire Secondary schools judged good or outstanding by Ofsted” was significantly poorer than Primary schools where the Local Authority had some responsibility. The Chairman reported that the Chairwoman of Children and Young People Committee had spoken to the Commissioner who had confirmed that the Authority had no powers in relation to Secondary Schools. He reported that he had written to the Chairwoman and the Executive Director to see whether he could get involved and what options were now available.
- requested a breakdown on the Ofsted key performance indicator figures for Secondary and Primary schools on a District basis. **Action Required.**
- requested further information on delayed transfers which were the Council’s responsibility. The Chief Finance Officer reported that there were only two at Addenbrooke’s which was a quite an achievement.
- queried why Nursing in table 4.3 appeared to cost less than Residential. The Chief Finance Officer agreed to investigate. **Action Required.**

In conclusion, the Chairman thanked all the Committee Chairs for helping to address the budget overspend. However, there was still a £1.8m overspend in Children, Families and Adults which was less than 1% of its budget and a £128k overspend in LGSS Managed which was 1.2% of its budget.

It was resolved to:

Analyse resources and performance information and note the remedial action currently being taken and consider if any further remedial action was required.

#### **163. DRAFT 2016-17 CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND CAPITAL PRIORITISATION**

The Committee received a report detailing an overview of the full draft Business Plan Capital Programme and results from the capital prioritisation process. It was noted that once the prioritisation of schemes had been reviewed across the whole programme by GPC, firm spending plans would be considered by Service Committees in November. The Chief Finance Officer reported that he had drafted an amendment for the Committee to exclude Invest to Save Schemes from the prioritisation process. The Chairman explained that he had raised this issue to ensure that the Committee did not dismiss schemes which would save the Council money. The Chairman proposed, with the unanimous agreement of the Committee, to add an additional recommendation d) to exclude invest to save schemes from the corporate prioritisation process and that these be subject to individual business cases that would be considered by the Committee.

It was resolved to:

- a) Note the overview and context provided for the 2016-17 Capital Programme;
- b) Note and comment on the results of the capital prioritisation process, taking into consideration the most up to date estimations for financing costs and the overall revenue position;
- c) Comment on the draft proposals for the full 2016-17 Capital Programme and endorse their development; and
- d) Agree to exclude invest to save schemes from the corporate prioritisation process and that these be subject to individual business cases that would be considered by the Committee.

#### **164. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT – AUGUST 2015**

The Committee was presented with the August 2015 Finance and Performance report for Corporate Services and LGSS Cambridge Office.

It was resolved unanimously to review, note and comment on the report.

#### **165. GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN, TRAINING PLAN AND APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES, PARTNERSHIP LIAISON AND ADVISORY GROUPS, AND INTERNAL ADVISORY GROUPS AND PANELS**

The Committee considered its agenda plan, training plan and appointments to outside bodies, partnership liaison and advisory groups, and internal advisory groups and panels. In relation to its meeting on 24th November 2015, items 6, 8 and 10 had been deleted, and item 9 had been moved to December. The following items had been

added: Maple Grove Community Group; Sawtry Youth Centre; Soham Solar Park; and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy. It was noted that the item on the Exploration of Options in relation to the Supply of Agency Workers had been added to the December meeting. Members asked the Democratic Services Manger to review the wording in relation to “Decisions to be made in private”. **Action Required.** They also asked for the Regional Governance training to be extended to all Members.

It was resolved to note the agenda plan including changes announced at the meeting, and the training plan.

Chairman