

**GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE: MINUTES**

**Date:** Tuesday, 25th July 2017

**Time:** 10.00a.m. – 11.15a.m.

**Present:** Councillors Bailey, Bates, Bywater, Count (Chairman), Criswell, Dupre, Giles, Hickford, Hudson, Jenkins, Kavanagh, Nethsingha, Schumann, Shuter and Whitehead

**14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**15. MINUTES – 13TH JUNE 2017 AND ACTION LOG**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th June 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. The Action Log and following updates were noted:

- information from central government on the detail of what the £6m funding for East Cambridgeshire and Fenland schools could or could not be used for was still awaited. It was noted that a conference call was scheduled with the Department for Education (DfE). Concern was expressed regarding the length of time this was taking. The Chairman reported that the Council had drawn up plans regarding possible use of the funding and was just awaiting approval from the DfE. It was agreed that the Committee should receive a briefing note following discussions with the DfE. **Action Required.**
- a breakdown of the amount of debt totalling £353k written off in 2016/17 had been provided to the Chairman.
- the final guidance on the additional Government funding for Adult Social Care of £8.33m had been received. Negotiations were continuing with the Clinical Commissioning Group. The funding which was part of the Better Care Fund would need to be signed off by the Health and Wellbeing Board. Any virements would then be reported to the next meeting of General Purposes Committee.
- the Committee had received an e-mailed note providing an update on the work being carried out by Transformation and Business Intelligence on the benefits and savings associated with community interventions.
- a decision regarding whether the base budget for Public Health should go back to reserves would be considered as part of the business planning process.
- officers would take on board feedback in relation to the Transformation Fund – Baseline and Monitoring Report and reflect it in the new version for the first quarterly monitoring report in September.

- the Finance Team was currently looking at how to identify debt which was paid for by the Council or which went directly to the revenue account. **Action Required.**
- the appointments to outside bodies, internal advisory groups and panels, and partnership liaison and advisory groups had been completed.

Attention was drawn to the response to the action and work taking place in relation to whether there were any schools, which had significant surplus revenue balances that had not achieved a good or outstanding Ofsted report. The Chairman asked that the Committee be emailed the list of maintained schools being presented to Schools' Forum. One Member commented that she had raised several times at Schools' Forum the fact that no information was available from secondary academies. She suggested that a Freedom of Information (FOI) request be submitted. Another Member reported that academies were limited companies so had to publish their accounts. The Chairman confirmed the need to deal with maintained schools first. He then proposed that officers should write to academies, and if this proved unsuccessful, they should consider the best route for finding out this information, which could ultimately be an FOI request to the DfE. **Action Required.**

## **16. PETITIONS**

No petitions were received.

## **17. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT – MAY 2017**

The Committee was presented with the May 2017 Finance and Performance report for Corporate Services and LGSS Cambridge Office. A balanced budget was forecast and there were no exceptions to report this month. Attention was drawn to the figure for corporate demography on page 32 of the report. It was noted that recommendations to allocate this funding to Looked After Children (LAC) and Waste Services would be considered in the next report.

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

## **18. INTEGRATED RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 31ST MAY 2017**

The Committee received a report detailing the financial and performance information to assess progress in delivering the Council's Business Plan. Members were advised of a correction to recommendation b) which should read 7.6 and not 7.7. Attention was drawn to recommendation c) relating to demography virements. The Head of Finance reported that the budget for LAC was £2m less than the Council spend on LAC placements in recent years. Despite significant increases in overall LAC numbers, actual levels of spend had not increased at the same rate. It was therefore proposed to allocate £2.913m from the corporate demography budget to LAC placements.

The Executive Director: People & Communities highlighted the context nationally. There was an ongoing rise in children in care resulting in a national pressure of £938m. Cambridgeshire was therefore no different to other authorities. The Executive Director explained that she considered each child coming into the care system. The best option

was in-house foster care but the Council did not have sufficient places. It was noted that independent foster care was generally twice the cost of in-house care. The Council needed to recruit more foster carers particularly to deal with complex needs. However, even if the Council managed to recruit more foster carers, this would not reduce significantly the number of children coming into care. There was also a need to address knock-on costs associated with adoption places, legal, and independent reviewing officers.

During discussion, Members received the following answers to their questions:

- there had been different and regular campaigns to attract foster carers. The 'No Wrong Door Scheme' provided them with support to manage children with needs. The Council was attracting more foster carers but not at the rate of the number of children coming into care.
- the 'No Wrong Door Scheme' which was part of the Children's Change Programme included an early help service focused specifically on helping adolescents to stay at home. One Member reported that the Interim Service Director and Lead for Children's Transformation had provided a statement detailing the reasons why children came into care, which could be re-circulated. The work with troubled families had shown a significant reduction in the number of children coming into care and the Council had met all its targets.
- Children's Services were much better at identifying the needs of children nationally. A significant amount of training had been provided in relation to targeting neglect. The Children's Change Programme provided a clear strategic approach which was measured so that the Service could learn from experience. One Member commented that he was keen to see an analysis of the work to ensure funding was being spent in the right place.
- the population in Cambridgeshire was growing by 1.4% compared to a growth of around 11/12% for LAC; the growth in LAC was similar to the national position.
- the Council would not be able to reverse the increase in LAC even if it had an infinite funding pot. Although, there were a number of initiatives which would bring the numbers down slightly. The Executive Director reported that all avenues were being explored to identify those initiatives with a good evidence base which could make a difference.
- the Council was only recently receiving the full cost recovery of caring for unaccompanied asylum seeking children. This was not retrospective so the Council was still carrying the impact. It also only received funding for the direct placement so the impact of these children using the limited number of in-house foster placements had to be borne by the Council. It was also confirmed that the figures in the report were the net amount after Government funding for asylum seekers had been taken into account.

One Member welcomed the fact that this funding for LAC was going into the base budget. She commented that she had made clear previously how unrealistic the savings in this budget were. Although, she was pleased to see funding going into the

Children's Change Programme, she was concerned about the reduction in early help services, such as the review of Children's Centres, as these centres could stop children coming into care. The Executive Director reported that the Council was making sure limited resources were targeted where there was the greatest need in order to have the biggest impact. Another Member queried whether Children's Services should still be asked to save £1m given the difficulties outlined in the report.

The Chairman of Children and Young People Committee highlighted the importance of looking forward by redesigning services. He was particularly concerned about statutory costs and had asked for a report to be presented at the next meeting of the committee. Another Member raised the need to provide a fit for purpose service which was up to date and more accessible. He added that any income saving could be used to invest in the service.

The Head of Finance drew attention to other parts of the report including the new "Savings Tracker" report. The overall position shown by the forecast within the tracker was a £2.5m shortfall against the plan. The Committee was asked to consider the new proposals for monitoring performance and risk. It was noted that the Corporate Risk Register would now be included within this report.

During discussion, Members raised the following:

- welcomed the outcome focussed nature of the performance information but highlighted the need to also provide the direction of travel. There was a need to utilise the information better in the "Balance Sheet Health". The information shown in the charts presenting activity in the previous month needed to be presented better. Finally, the information presented in the snapshots of the organisation needed to be clarified in order to provide a greater feel as to what was meant.  
**Action Required.**
- acknowledged that there were a considerable number of appendices. It was noted that detailed information would be available via electronic links in future.
- queried what happened to garden waste as reported in "Waste Demography" on page 63. The Chairman of Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee reported that it was subject to in vessel composting. It was noted that it was residual waste driving the demography funding.
- welcomed the proposal to monitor risk on a regular basis. One Member queried why the risk relating to "Inequalities in the county" was the responsibility of Public Health, as every committee had a responsibility in relation to this area. It was noted that this register had been mapped against the previous register to ensure continuity. Discussions would take place with service committees to ensure all areas were reflected in the action plans. The Chairman of Communities and Partnership reported that his committee would receive a report on inequalities at its September meeting. The Chairman added that it remained a core focus for the council.
- the need to flag up changes to risks and new risks to the Committee. It was noted that the Committee would receive a summary of the overall position including changes with the detail provided in an electronic link.

- queried the use of earmarked reserves on page 72 for a Dementia Co-ordinator and 'traded' services. The Chairwoman of Adults Committee reported that it reflected delayed implementation which meant the funding spanned two years.
- queried where the funding would be found for the increase in Members' Allowances. The Chairman reported that a note which had been provided to Look East would be circulated to the Committee. **Action Required.**

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Analyse resources and performance information and note any remedial action currently being taken and consider if any further remedial action was required.
- b) Approve the changes to capital funding requirements as set out in Section 7.6.
- c) Approve the demography virements set out in Section 8.1.
- d) Approve the use of £54,200 from the General Fund to support a new Minerals and Waste Local Plan, as set out in Section 8.2.
- e) Note the transfer in budget responsibility and reporting for Drug and Alcohol Treatment from Children, Families and Adults to Public Health set out in Section 8.3.
- f) Consider and approve the proposals for the use of service reserves, as set out in Appendix 3.
- g) Consider and approve the proposals for monitoring performance and risk in this report.
- h) Request Service Committees review performance indicators and risks to align with the outcome focused approach set out in this report.

## 19. CORPORATE SOFTWARE INFRASTRUCTURE RE-PROCUREMENT

The Committee received a report setting out the changes to the charging model for Microsoft Enterprise Support Agreements (ESA), of the change in funding required to continue to take advantage of these and of the alternative options available. The authority was currently covered under its existing ESA until September 2017. Attention was drawn to a summary of options which included the advantages and disadvantages. It was noted that the cost of changing to Google Client Access Licences or open source would be so great that any return on investment would not be realised for some considerable time. It was therefore recommended to procure the subscription-based Microsoft ESA for a term of three years until 2020 but fully investigate alternative office software solutions in preparation for renewal. It was noted that the funding would need to change from capital to revenue whether the Council chose to go with Microsoft or Google.

During discussion, Members raised the following:

- the security around cloud based infrastructure. It was acknowledged that the Council needed to be careful when considering this issue. However, both Microsoft and Google had good records in this area. The Chairman reminded the Committee that no decision had been made in relation to cloud based infrastructure. It was noted that it provided an opportunity to build on the subscription.
- the need to establish a Member Steering Group to assist with the investigation of alternative office software solutions in preparation for renewal in 2020. It was important that work started as soon as possible in order to make an informed decision. It was also requested that the timeline be established. The Chairman asked officers to report back on how Members could be incorporated within this work. **Action Required.**
- queried whether the agreement could be procured by LGSS. It was noted that Microsoft did not provide discounts for volumes.
- highlighted the need to avoid pre-determining the future direction. It was important that there was a thorough assessment of what the Council needed.
- highlighted the need for the cost of change to be nuanced as it did not reflect in detail the impact on individual employees, e.g. some employees would be able to deal with change quicker than others. It was noted that it was difficult to nuance technological changes. However, any change would need to be supported by training.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Procure the subscription-based Microsoft Enterprise Support Agreement for the term of three years until 2020.
- b) Fully investigate alternative office software solutions in preparation for renewal in 2020.
- c) Adjust funding from capital to revenue accordingly.

## **20. ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION & ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING POLICY REPORT**

The Committee considered a report detailing the revised Anti-Fraud and Corruption and Anti-Money Laundering Policies. It was noted that both policies had been endorsed by the Audit and Accounts Committee at its meeting on 30 May 2017.

It was resolved unanimously to:

approve the revised Anti-Fraud and Corruption and Anti-Money Laundering policies.

## **21. AGRESSO (UNIT4 BUSINESS WORLD) IMPLEMENTATION**

The Committee received an update on the progress of the programme to implement Agresso (Unit4 Business World) system to replace the existing Oracle System. Implementation of Agresso involving Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire had originally been scheduled for early 2017. The project was then expanded to include Milton Keynes Council with a 'Go-Live' date maintained at April 2017. Attention was drawn to the factors which had come together to make this date unrealistic. The 'Go-Live' date had been reviewed and rescheduled for 1 October 2017. There were additional costs associated with this date, which would require an additional £187k capital resource from the County Council.

The Chairman reported that he had asked for an additional recommendation to reflect the fact that the savings in Section 2.11 would be built into the 18/19 LGSS Strategic Plan. With the agreement of the Committee, this was included as recommendation c).

One Member commented that the Council had no choice but to agree the capital spend but he stressed that LGSS should not come back to the Committee more funding. He urged officers to learn from the process, as the Council was not getting the benefits of the system as a result of this slippage.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) note the progress on the implementation of Agresso (Unit4 Business World) and the revised Go Live date of 30 September 2017;
- b) approve a further £187k of capital spend to complete the implementation; and
- c) build the savings in Section 2.11 into the 18/19 LGSS Strategic Plan.

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

The Committee considered its agenda plan and training plan.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) review its Agenda Plan attached at Appendix 1; and
- b) review and agree its Training Plan attached at Appendix 2.

Chairman