

## **COMMERCIAL AND INVESTMENT COMMITTEE: MINUTES**

**Date:** 11 September 2020

**Time:** 10:00am – 10.35am

**Venue:** *Meeting held remotely in accordance with The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings) (England) Regulations 2020*

**Present:** Councillors M Goldsack (Chairman), C Boden (Vice-Chairman), I Bates, J Gowing, D Jenkins, L Jones, P McDonald, T Rogers, M Shellens and T Wotherspoon

**Apologies:** None

### **369. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no apologies or declarations of interest.

### **370. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 JULY 2020 AND ACTION LOG**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

With regard to item 358 (Shire Hall disposal), Members were advised that the Deputy Chief Executive had undertaken some sensitivity testing on the rental incomes, as requested, and would be running through the potential impact at the next meeting of the Member Working Group, the details of which we will be circulating shortly. It was agreed that the Shire Hall disposal Member Working Group membership would be circulated to the Committee. **Action required.**

The Action Log was noted.

### **371. PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no petitions or public questions.

### **372. INSOURCING THE DELIVERY OF OVERNIGHT SHORT BREAKS AND RESIDENTIAL CHILDREN'S HOMES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH**

The Committee considered a report on the insourcing of Residential and Overnight Short Breaks for Disabled Children back into Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC), in particular the implications on the future on-going costs to CCC Property.

A contract for these services was awarded in October 2015 to Action for Children (AfC), but the provision of this services was subsequently reviewed, and it was agreed to

bring the service back in-house with effect from 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2020. Specifically, the Children & Young People's Committee had made the following decisions at a meeting earlier in the year:

- a) Agreed the TUPE of 73 employees from Action for Children into Cambridgeshire County Council
- b) Agreed to insource our Residential and Overnight Short Breaks service
- c) Noted the outcome of the Overnight Short Breaks Consultation

At that stage, it was believed all approvals had been obtained, but officers had since become aware that the Commercial & Investment Committee should have made the approvals relating to the property aspects of these proposals. For this reason, the request to Committee was retrospective, as the decisions had already been implemented.

Presenting the report, officers outlined the phasing and transformation aspects of these changes, and the resource implications of the changes. The move would cost more in the short term, but it was hoped that the costs would be mitigated by the transformation of the service. Fewer short breaks would be provided, with a focus on providing alternative service provision or direct payments.

The following points were raised during discussion by individual Members:

- Whilst fully supporting the principles set out in the report, expressed concerns regarding the financial aspects. The business case was alluded to, but there was no business plan, which would provide the detail of how short term costs would be recovered or mitigated longer term e.g. the substantial additional costs such as TUPE'ing 87 personnel from another organisation, without explaining how savings would be made to staff costs. Some cost savings had been identified, but costs such as maintenance, TUPE, and management costs needed to be factored in, and also the costs of making the London Road site fit for purpose. There was also an issue on the ringfenced funding (£350K) from the CCG, and where that was factored in.
- Asked about the timescales for the mitigation i.e. how much would be within the current financial year, next financial year, or subsequent years.
- Asked if this was a one-off, or if there were further insourcing proposals planned, and stressed the importance of getting the sequencing right in future.
- In addition to the key financial issues, suggested that the vision was missing from the report, i.e. was the rationale to bring the service back in house primarily to save money, or was it about phasing out some of the current respite care provision and supporting people in their own homes; if it was the latter, would this result in higher or lower costs? Members needed a broader sense of the objectives of the proposal.

- Commented that some of the preceding questions on the finances were within the remit of the CYP Committee, but Commercial & Investment Committee needed the evidence and confidence that CYP Committee had made the appropriate decision, based on a business case, with the appropriate strategic view.
- Asked where the London Road site was.
- In light of recent discussions about the Cambridgeshire Outdoors service, asked if there had been any liaison between two services, and any scope to link the two together.
- Suggested that the report should be deferred, and that an enhanced report, responding to Members' questions, should be presented to the Committee at a future date.

Responding, the officer acknowledged the concerns raised, and apologised again for the report being presented to the Committee out of sequence. She reassured Members that there was a vision in terms of supporting more people in their home environment, and moving away from overreliance on short breaks and shared care. One of the main reasons for insourcing the service was to ensure the quality was there to ensure the outcomes and offer to young people and families was at the appropriate standard. In response to a question on the impact of deferral of this Committee decision, she advised that the homes were now back under the control of the County Council, so the delay would not have a significant impact on the work that needed to be done.

It was agreed that a comprehensive set of answers needed to be provided to Members' questions to enable the Committee to agree to use the assets in this way. It was further agreed that a summary of the questions raised would be circulated to the Committee to check if they were correct, and whether there were any additional points Members wished to raise.

It was agreed to defer the decision pending receipt of further information, to be considered at a future meeting.

### **373. ACQUISITION OF PLAYING FIELD LAND FROM THE LITTLEPORT LEISURE TRUST**

The Chairman advised that this item would be withdrawn, pending a request for a more detailed report.

### **375. COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN, TRAINING PLAN AND APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

The Committee considered the Agenda Plan and Training Plan, including changes made since publication.

Members noted that an appointment had been made to the Energy Investment Programme Member Working Group over the summer under delegated powers, with Councillor Gowing appointed to a vacancy on that group.

It was noted that there was a vacancy on the Cambs 2020 Member Group. The other Members of this Group were Councillors Goldsack, Schumann, Bates, Jenkins, Jones, Shellens and Rogers. It was agreed that Councillor Boden would be appointed to this Group.

The Committee was asked to appoint a County Farms Member Champion, and it was proposed that Councillor Goldsack be appointed to this position. Other Members indicated their support for this appointment.

It was resolved to:

1. review the agenda plan and training plan;
2. note the appointment of Councillor Gowing to Energy Investment Programme Member Working Group under delegated powers;
3. appoint Councillor Boden to the vacancy on the Cambs 2020 Member Group, along with Councillors Goldsack, Schumann, Bates, Jenkins, Jones, Shellens and Rogers;
4. appoint Councillor Goldsack as County Farms Member Champion.

Councillor Shellens raised a number of issues relating to his recent observations at a This Land Board meeting. He felt that the meeting had been dominated by the Chairman, and whilst there were contributions from officers, there were no material contributions by any of the Non-Executive Directors. He asked if it was appropriate for the Committee to ask Councillor Schumann, as the Committee's appointee to the Board, to update the Committee on his role.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Shellens for his observations, and advised that he would be meeting the This Land Chairman for the first time shortly, and he would be happy to raise these comments and observations. He added that a number of Committee Members had attended the This Land Annual General Meeting, and had been satisfied and encouraged by the participation of Non-Executive Board Members. He was also encouraged by progress against the latest This Land Business Plan, in particular key Planning Permissions that had been granted. He agreed that Councillor Schumann could be invited to a future meeting to share his understanding, and that there would be an item at future meetings for Members to raise these issues. **Action required.**

