

## **GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE: MINUTES**

**Date:** Tuesday, 28th July 2015

**Time:** 10.00a.m. – 2.30p.m.

**Present:** Councillors Bailey, Bates, D Brown, Bullen, Cearns, Count (Chairman), Criswell, Hickford, Hipkin, Jenkins, McGuire (Vice-Chairman), Nethsingha, Orgee, Reeve, Tew, Walsh and Whitehead

### **123. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Jenkins declared a non-statutory disclosable interest under the Code of Conduct in relation to Minute 135, as Chairman of Histon and Impington Parish Council, which had an interest in one farm.

### **124. MINUTES – 19TH MAY 2015 AND ACTION LOG**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th May 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. The Action Log and following updates were noted:

- the contract for the construction of a Solar Farm at Triangle Farm, Soham had been signed week beginning 20 July 2015. In response to a query, it was noted that the ending of the Green Deal Finance Company would not impact on this project.
- the Treasury Strategy Review Working Group had developed a protocol for improved engagement of members in property decisions, which would be submitted to the next meeting for approval. **Action Required.**
- the final draft of the Accountable Body Agreement was still awaiting sign off by the Local Enterprise Partnership's Legal Team. **Action Required.**

### **125. PETITIONS**

No petitions were received.

### **126. INTEGRATED RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2015**

The Committee received the operational report detailing the resources and performance position for the financial year 2014/15. It was noted that this management report preceded the production of the Council's formal Statement of Accounts on which the audit opinion would be formed. As a result of balance sheet activities being reviewed, a number of Year End Adjustments had been identified for approval. During discussion, Members noted responses from the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) as follows:

- the anticipated costs associated with the implementation of the new Operating Model for Business Planning had not yet been defined. Detailed plans would need to be in place to draw down the reserve to the value of £1m. It was therefore noted that these proposals would need to be presented to a future meeting. **Action Required.**

- a reserve to the value of £56k was proposed to back-scan payroll and pensions data currently held in the Octagon in order to create better utilisation of space.
- the Council had a number of significant contracts. A reserve to the value of £893k was therefore proposed to mitigate against potential contract disputes with providers in order to avoid a charge to revenue. Councillor Jenkins requested a briefing on any potential disputes. **Action Required.**

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the Council's year end resources and performance position for 2014/15.
- b) Approve the following year end adjustments:
  - o A reserve to the value of £893k to mitigate against potential contract disputes;
  - o A reserve to the value of £56k in respect of back-scanning work; and
  - o A reserve to the value of £1.0m in respect of anticipated costs associated with the implementation of the Operating Model for Business Planning (section 3.2.10)

## 127. INTEGRATED RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 31ST MAY 2015

The Committee received the first report of the year detailing financial and performance information to assess progress in delivering the Council's Business Plan. It was noted that the overall revenue budget position was showing a forecast year end overspend of nearly £4.0m. The CFO reminded Members that this was not unusual for this time of year but for the first time he was identifying the significant real threat of an overspend at year end. He urged Policy and Service Committee Chairs to challenge and review financial statements at their committee meetings. Attention was drawn to the fact that the Capital Programme was likely to incur slippage and as a result an upfront saving of just under £900k had been identified.

The Chairman asked for monthly Integrated Resources and Performance Reports to be circulated electronically to the Committee if its reserve date was not used. **Action Required.** During discussion, members made the following comments:

- expressed concern that the Committee was being asked to note remedial action currently being taken without receiving an explanation as to how the overspend would be addressed. It was suggested that the Chairs of Policy and Service Committees should be asked to feedback to the next meeting on how their committees intended to address the overspend. The Chairman proposed, with the unanimous agreement of the Committee, to amend the recommendations to reflect this.
- the need to review the presentation of the Strategy and Commissioning Directorate overspend on page 7. It was currently misleading as it did not reflect the full impact of the Home to School Transport – Special overspend. The CFO confirmed that the figure had been netted off to reflect how information was set out in the Business Plan. He agreed to show it as a separate item in future reports. The Chairwoman of

Children and Young People Policy and Service Committee reported that radical solutions such as the Council purchasing its own fleet of mini buses to address the overspend were being considered. It was noted that the Cambridgeshire Future Transport Member Steering Group was looking at this issue. She drew attention to the increasing demands placed on the Looked After Children (LAC) budget. Members asked for the individual times unit cost totals used for LAC to be applied to Adults.

- expressed concern that the Key Performance Indicator relating to proportion of pupils attending Cambridgeshire schools judged good or outstanding by Ofsted had been removed rather than split into school sectors. The Committee asked for it to be reinstated in the next report. **Action Required.**
- suggested that the table on page 3 needed to show the current status as Red and not Amber if the overspend was not expected to dissipate by year-end.
- queried whether the bus lane enforcement income was being used to subsidise the shortfall in Park and Ride income. The Chairman of Economy and Environment Policy and Service Committee confirmed that he would investigate whether it was even possible to cross-subsidise. **Action Required.** The CFO reminded the Committee that the net figure was used in the report as reflected in the Business Plan.
- queried how the shortfall in Park and Ride income was predicated. The Chairman of Economy and Environment Policy and Service Committee agreed to investigate. **Action Required.**
- queried the removal of £20.0m from the ETE Capital Programme. The CFO reminded the Committee of the change in funding arrangements and the consequential impact on the revenue budget.
- expressed concern that the Council had not yet moved to outcome focussed budgets. The CFO explained that it was a significant step to move from an incremental silo to a corporate outcome approach. As it was an evolving process, it was likely that it would not be available for the 2016/17 budget. As a result, it was proposed to use a hybrid (traditional/outcome) approach for this budget.
- expressed concern about the impact of the recommendations on borrowing interest payments. The CFO reminded the Committee that the Capital Programme had been approved by Council. He drew attention to the fact that the Capital Strategy was on the Committee's agenda. However, it was important to note that the Capital Programme did have revenue consequences. The Chairman added that there was actually a net reduction proposed in the Capital Programme budget and the CFO confirmed that the proposals were altering the incidence of the borrowing requirement rather than increasing it.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- ai) Analyse resources and performance information and note the remedial action currently being taken.

- aii) Invite Committee Chairs to report at the next meeting of General Purposes Committee on actions in place to address emerging overspends.
- b) Approve the transfer of £200k from the General Reserve to LGSS Managed to address the budget error that arose when creating the 2015/16 base budget in relation to the City Deal (section 3.2.5).
- c) Approve the use of the full £31.9m capital carry forward funding in 2015/16 (section 6.5).
- d) Approve that the remaining £20.0m budget in relation to the Science Park Station scheme be removed from the Economy, Transport and Environment (ETE) capital programme in 2015/16 (section 6.5).
- e) Approve that the additional Growth Deal funding of £1m in 2015/16 be allocated in full to ETE (section 6.5).
- f) Approve that the 2015/16 element of the second tranche of the Cycle City Ambition grant of £1.48m be allocated in full to ETE (section 6.5).
- g) Approve an increase of £1.24m to the Prudential Borrowing requirement in 2015/16 to offset the reduction in funding received from the Department for Education (DfE) RE: Condition, Suitability and Maintenance funding (section 6.5).
- h) Approve the -£5.8m rephasing of Children, Families and Adults (CFA's) S106 funding in 2015/16 (section 6.5).
- i) Approve the -£7.1m rephasing of CFA's Prudential Borrowing requirement in 2015/16 (section 6.5).
- j) Approve the inclusion of the additional CFA capital schemes into the 2015/16 and 2016/17 capital programme, along with the associated Prudential Borrowing requirement of £3.2m in 2015/16 and £2.6m in 2016/17 (section 6.5).
- k) Approve CFA's additional Prudential Borrowing requirement of £1.5m in 2015/16 (section 6.5).

## **128. EAST BARNWELL COMMUNITY CENTRE**

The Committee received an update report on the work undertaken to explore the risks and benefits of revisiting mixed use options for the development of the East Barnwell Community Centre site. Attention was drawn to the background to the project, which was based in the most deprived Ward in the City. Since the start of the project, Group Leaders had in March 2015 asked for one change, which was to revisit the mixed use option to ensure that the full commercial value of the Council's assets was being realised. An on-site workshop had recently been convened to allow Group Leaders to meet local stakeholders and key Members to explore further the risks and benefits of revisiting options for development of the site. The Committee was therefore asked to consider whether to proceed with the original proposal or consider mixed use, which would result in further delay. It was noted that additional borrowing would be required to deliver Options 2 and 3.

The Chairman exercised his discretion and invited City Councillor Richard Johnson who had submitted his request to speak after the deadline for public speaking to address the Committee. Councillor Johnson speaking as the Local Member for Abbey Ward expressed his gratitude to the Chairman and Group Leaders for their commitment to redevelop the site in strained financial circumstances. However, he was concerned that the project could be threatened if the Committee decided to deviate from the original proposal. The facility was badly needed and much good will had already been fostered in the local community. He was fearful that this could be lost and that City Council partnership funding via Section 106 developer contribution could be put at risk. He felt that any change to the original proposal would add unnecessary risk. He urged the Committee to be bold and move forward with the project as soon as possible.

In response to a question, Councillor Johnson reported that the Section 106 funding could be put at risk if the project was delayed as the developer could ask for this funding back.

Speaking as a Local Member, Councillor Whitehead reported that the project, which was ready to proceed, had already incurred costs and these would be wasted if the Committee decided not to go ahead. Alternative arrangements were in place for community groups who the Centre needed to come back in order to generate income. She outlined other ways the Council could make income locally including developing the Barnwell Library and Malta Road sites. The previous proposal for flats on the site had been considered inappropriate because it was on a busy congested road opposite McDonalds and there would be insufficient parking to cover both residential and community use. There was also a potential conflict between the two in relation to the amount of noise likely to be generated from the youth club and wedding receptions. The outdoor multi use games area was likely to cause both a light and noise disturbance for the residents of the flats, which could affect the successful operation of the Centre.

During discussion, members made the following comments:

- the need for a timetable for Options 2 and 3. Members were informed that it was difficult to estimate timescales but it had taken six to nine months to procure a contractor after a feasibility study for Option 1. However, it was acknowledged that timings could be different for the other options.
- queried the risk of the Council losing Section 106 funding. The Chairman explained the history of this development and the fact he had signed it off in January 2014 as Cabinet Portfolio Holder because of this same risk. Another Member informed the Committee that there had been a culture change at the City Council in relation to back loading capital projects and there was now a greater risk the money could disappear.
- queried whether the advice from the City Council's Planning Department had changed. It was noted that the circumstances around conversations had changed. City Council officers had been more positive about possible mixed use compared to last year. The Chief Planning Officer had attended the on-site workshop.

- requested that officers identify the amount of affordable housing needed in relation to Options 2 and 3.
- acknowledged the issues around delivering the project late but expressed concern that Option 1 would result in a building not fit for purpose. The Council was also looking to maximise its assets and build revenue streams.
- queried whether further discussions had taken place with neighbours. It was noted that there had only been superficial talks so far as officers had not wanted to undermine the democratic process.
- queried whether the Council was aware of the full picture in relation to what services could be brought in to the Community Hub to cross benefit the Council. It was noted that the site where the Centre was located was very tight and given the services planned it would be a struggle to include partner organisations. Members were informed that there could be a further opportunity to locate the Police and Health on site.
- highlighted the tension between considerations which applied to the whole of the Council and those which were intensely local. However, it was important to bear in mind the Council's financial situation. A mixed use development would not only help the Council's challenging finances but could also provide housing for key workers. The Local Member expressed concern that the needs of the community centre would be secondary to the housing. She urged the Committee to bear in mind the conflicts of interest.

Two Group Leaders who attended the workshop informed the Committee of the reasons why the options for mixed use should be considered. It was acknowledged that borrowing would be necessary but it was essentially for an invest to save project. It was noted that the site was set back from the main road and there were a lot of three storey buildings nearby. There was also an opportunity for the Council to make a considerable return as the ground and access to utilities had already been paid for.

The Committee highlighted the importance of a time limit for Option 3. The Chairman proposed, with the unanimous agreement of the Committee, to amend recommendation (c) to reflect the need to develop Heads of Terms within six months.

The Chairman proposed an amendment, seconded by Councillor Jenkins, to remove option (a) and request a report in two months detailing further information including discussions with neighbours on options (b) and (c). On being put to the vote the amendment was carried.

It was resolved to agree:

- to remove option (a) and receive a report in two months detailing further information including discussions with neighbours on the following options:
  - (b) Develop a Council only site mixed development including the redesigned community facilities; and

- (c) Develop proposals for a wider development including the redesigned community facilities, providing that the Heads of Terms could be developed within six months of the meeting of General Purposes Committee held on 28 July 2015.

## 129. OVERVIEW OF THE BUSINESS PLANNING PROCESS

The Committee considered a report setting out the Business Planning process and proposed timetable for the forthcoming year. It also identified the role the Committee would have in the Business Plan setting process for 2016/17 and its responsibilities in delivering the current Plan as set out in the Council's Constitution. Attention was drawn to the fact that the report reflected the principles and timetable for the new 'operating model' approach to Business Planning.

Members requested clarification of the timetable in relation to the Target Operating Model (TOM) "to develop savings proposals", and the Directorates "to develop savings proposals", which appeared to be taking place at the same time. The CFO reported that the timing of the two activities was coterminous. He reminded the Committee that both Business Planning models would be taking place at the same time.

The Committee stressed the need to move faster to the new TOM, which was not about developing savings proposals but more about outcome based finance operations. Members stated that it would require changes to the Council's current approach rather than may. It was felt that the timetable on page 7 was too silo based as there was a need for Services to work together. Another Member highlighted the importance of service transformation and queried whether senior management might have a conflict of interest. The Chief Executive reminded the Committee that Strategic Management Team (SMT) needed to deliver and change services at the same time.

It was suggested that there needed to be a test run at outcome based finance allocation. Another Member felt that the Council should just introduce it straight away. The CFO explained that the approach was well developed in CFA compared to ETE, which was a more infrastructure based service. He explained that the Commissioning Strategy would set outcomes. In response, it was stressed that the Council needed to be more radical than that to avoid the danger of increasing services.

Other Members felt that culture change was happening as demonstrated by the Library Service. It was considered too much of a risk to just jump to the TOM. However, there was a need to reflect this new cross cutting approach in the timetable in order to see the big picture, which was based on service redesign and not savings. One Member raised the need for the Council to consider as part of the new TOM whether it was more economical for it to provide services rather than commission them.

The Chief Executive reported that there had been a considerable amount of energy and vigour spent on this issue but inevitably there would be a transition. The Chairman asked that Group Leaders be invited to the next SMT workshop in order to improve their understanding of this issue. **Action Required.** The Chairman further proposed, with the unanimous agreement of the Committee, to amend recommendation (b) to reflect the Committee's enthusiasm for a rapid transition to an outcome-based approach to

business planning. The Committee also requested a briefing note detailing how the TOM would work. **Action Required.**

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) note the Business Planning timetable
- b) note the responsibilities that it had in both the Business Plan Setting Process and the on-going delivery of the Plan and General Purposes Committee's enthusiasm for a rapid transition to an outcome-based approach to business planning.

### **130. BUSINESS PLANNING – MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY**

The Committee received a report setting out the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy for the next five years. This strategy was updated annually at the commencement of the business planning process. Its core purpose was to provide a financial framework within which individual service proposals could be developed before Council approved the budget and the Business Plan in February. The CFO explained that the Council would need to revisit assumptions made in the report following the announcement of the Government Spending Review.

The Chairman proposed, with the unanimous agreement of the Committee, to delete recommendation (b) and instead consider a more imaginative approach to allocating savings arising from service pressure and investments at a GPC/SMT workshop.

**Action Required.**

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Acknowledge the indicative departmental cash limits; and
- b) Recommend the Medium Term Financial Strategy to Council for approval.

### **131. BUSINESS PLANNING – CAPITAL STRATEGY**

The Committee considered the Council's Capital Strategy detailing all aspects of the Council's capital expenditure programme: planning; prioritisation; management; and funding. The Strategy had been revised as part of the 2016-17 business planning process, with respect to the new outcome-based Operating Model approach to Business Planning.

Members requested the inclusion of income generating capital projects in future reports in order to reflect the overall borrowing picture. The CFO confirmed that this information could be provided but had been excluded because there was no net impact on the fund.

One Member expressed his concerns about the Council's level of debt if it kept borrowing particularly given the Governor of the Bank of England's warning that interest rates were likely to rise. The Chairman acknowledged that if interest rates increased then debt charges would go up and the Council could hit its advisory ceiling. He



explained that the Council needed to take a decision on each issue by analysing the risk involved. He was of the view that the advisory limit on the level of debt charges, which had only been in operation for a year, should be kept at existing levels. The Chairman proposed the first bullet of recommendation b) as the preferred option, seconded by Councillor Criswell.

It was resolved to recommend to Council:

- a) Revisions to the Capital Strategy to align it with the Operating Model approach, including that prioritisation of capital proposals would be undertaken using an amended version of the Investment Appraisal process that reflected the new outcome-based focus of Business Planning.
- b) that the advisory limit on the level of debt charges (and therefore prudential borrowing) should be kept at existing levels, which were higher than the level of debt charges approved in the 2015-20 Business Plan;
- c) That borrowing related to Invest to Save/Earn schemes should continue to be excluded from the advisory debt charges limit.

#### **132. SOHAM, NORTHERN GATEWAY, MARKETING UPDATE**

The Committee received an update on the marketing of the Council-owned land in Soham Northern Gateway following a report presented on 6th January 2015.

It was resolved unanimously to:

note the current situation in respect of marketing of Council owned land in the Soham Northern Gateway.

#### **133. BUSINESS CASE FOR THE FORMATION OF THE GREATER CAMBRIDGE CITY DEAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

The Committee considered the Business Case for the formation of the Housing Development Agency (HDA). The Chairman clarified that the “Electoral division(s)” should include South Cambridgeshire. The CFO when introducing the report proposed an alteration to recommendation (c), which was agreed by the Committee, to delete “City Deal Board” and replace it with three shared service partners (*Note – the words “city deal” have since been added after the word “three” for clarity*).

Attention was drawn to the purpose of the HDA, which would make best use of land and funding made available by the City Deal partners to deliver new housing, and acquire new housing land and deliver additional housing through innovate partnership and funding mechanisms. There were three ways of setting up the HDA illustrated in the Business Case, which included the District Councils’ preference of a Shared Service Model, and the County Council’s preferred vehicle of a company construct. It was noted that no option precluded development outside of the City Deal area. One Member raised the need for a textual amendment to 2.1 to change “minimising” to expediting.

The Committee welcomed the proposal for a joint authority to deliver housing particularly as an additional 4,000 new dwellings were required by 2031 and an additional 33,000 had been identified in local plans. In response to a query as to why the HDA was restricted to three partners, it was noted that whilst this had been the set up it could work on a wider basis. One Member highlighted the importance of not neglecting the rest of the County. He also queried whether local government was equipped to move to a more entrepreneurial role. It was therefore important that staff had the capacity and expertise to undertake this work.

There was disappointment at the limited reference to affordable housing on page 11. It was suggested that it should be a main objective of the three partners and be delivered as part of the HDA activity. The CFO explained that the HDA was a delivery vehicle and not a housing association. The concept was to build a mix of tenure for the host authorities. The Chairman added that the Council would not own anything instead it would be a customer of a commercial vehicle like Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils and the University of Cambridge. The Chief Executive explained that each landowner would put land in and set the brief.

One Member expressed support for recommendation (c) the establishment of a Company construct and requested the detail of the company and its governance to be brought back to Committee for ratification as soon as possible.

It was resolved to:

- (a) Make comment on the business case for the establishment of the HDA;
- (b) Agree to the establishment of the HDA and the associated governance arrangements contained within the business case;
- (c) Request that the three city deal shared service partners agree to the establishment of a Company construct for the HDA to become operational by the end of 2016; and
- (d) Ask that the detail of the company and its governance be brought back to this Committee for ratification in due course

#### **134. RECRUITMENT STRATEGY REPORT**

The Committee was informed of the steps being taken by Children, Families and Adults Services to recruit and retain social care staff. Although the report had been considered by Adults and Children and Young People Policy and Service Committees, the approval of General Purposes Committee was needed to transfer funding. Attention was drawn to the case for change, it was noted that the role of social care had changed and it was important that the Council had a high quality workforce of permanent staff. It currently had to use agency staff to address a 15% vacancy gap in the workforce. The proposed increase in salary following a re-evaluation of roles would bring the Council in line with other authorities. It was noted that a virement was needed in 2015/16 but the increase in cost would be addressed through the Business Planning process for 2016/17.

The Chairwoman of Children and Young People Policy and Service Committee reported that paying agency staff had resulted in an overspend in the CFA budget. She hoped that by investing more it would be possible to recruit senior staff thereby reducing the overall spend in future. In response to a query regarding the reasons for staff leaving, it was noted that there were lots of reasons including moving out the county and other domestic ones. It was acknowledged that it would be stretch to manage the budget pressure associated with this proposal but it was difficult to see how the Council could deliver changes without a qualified permanent workforce. It was suggested that one of the mitigating benefits of higher pay was an increase in motivation and commitment.

One Member expressed serious concerns about the possibility of starting a price war as neighbouring authorities would be experiencing the same problems. He suggested that the Council should set up its own agency and work in partnership with neighbouring authorities to identify innovative ideas. The Committee was informed that this increase would not place the Council near the top of the pay scale. The process had been conducted as part of a role re-evaluation and pay had been benchmarked appropriately. The Council was committed to investigating the possibility of setting up its own agency. It was noted that a Board had been established to consider recruitment and retention and there was a regional Human Resources/Organisational Workforce Development Group who had agreed a memorandum of co-operation to cap agency rates.

Other Members commented that the quality of service was dependent on many complex factors. The transition of Children's Social Care from special measures to one of the best in the country must also be a factor in helping to attract staff. The Vice-Chairman of Children and Young People Policy and Service Committee commented that pay rates were only part of the package. He suggested that the Committee should receive a report on the Council's Recruitment and Retention Strategy in October. The Chairman proposed, with the unanimous agreement of the Committee, to include an additional recommendation (c) to reflect this request. **Action Required.**

It was resolved to:

- a) review and comment on the proposed measures to improve recruitment and retention of social care staff.
- b) approve the in-year revenue virement of £0.74m set out in paragraph 5.1.1 and confirm that the future full year costs (£1.59m) would be addressed by Children, Families and Adults through the Business Planning process; and
- c) ask officers to come back with an action plan in October with a strategy for retention and recruitment of social care staff including the potential of creating a council owned agency, measures to reduce reliance on agency staff and measures to increase the overall pool of resource.

## **135. COUNTY FARMS ESTATE STRATEGIC REVIEW**

The Committee considered a report detailing a strategic review of the Council's 34,000 acre estate. Attention was drawn to the background and a number of issues associated with the proposed review. There was an outline programme which would involve consultations with stakeholders. In response to queries, it was noted that the

programme should also reflect the role of the Treasury Strategy Review Working Group. Members were informed that it was proposed to engage external consultants who had the expertise to carry out the review.

The Committee acknowledged the importance of the review but raised the need to not lose sight of the principles which made the estate management so special. It was therefore important that this review had a clear risk assessment. It was further suggested that the review should also consider environmental costs.

One Member acknowledged the need for a review but expressed concern about the proposal to engage external consultants. He felt that the Council had sufficient in-house expertise to conduct the review, which would avoid the need to spend £125k to £135k on consultants. Another Member queried the purpose of the review in particular the need to avoid pricing out people who had lived on the estate for sometime. He therefore felt that the pricing of the estate should be more precise. The CFO reminded the Committee that the review was being conducted at the request of Members who wanted to assess the options in relation to a significant part of the Council's real estate.

One Member who had been involved in a previous review queried whether officers had the time or the capacity to conduct the review in-house. The Head of Strategic Assets highlighted the need to present Members with a comprehensive evidence base to enable them to assess the options. He explained that there would be a significant service impact on his team if the review was conducted in-house, and it also did not have access to market data. Another Member acknowledged the concerns raised but felt that the Council could obtain a robust evidence base without incurring additional cost. It was suggested that the review could be undertaken and only the pieces of land where development was a possible option could be valued without the need to value the whole estate.

Councillor Bullen proposed an amendment, seconded by Councillor Hickford, to remove the following wording "on the basis set out in this report". The Chairman proposed, with the agreement of the Committee, to then add a proposal to delegate the decision to allocate appropriate resources to progress the review to the CFO in consultation with the Chairman of General Purposes Committee. On being put to the vote the amendment was carried.

It was resolved:

to endorse the proposal to carry out a review of the County Farms Estate, in consultation with Treasury Strategy Review Working Group, and to delegate to the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of General Purposes Committee, the decision to allocate appropriate resources to progress the review.

*As set out in Part 4.4, Section 18 of the Council's Constitution, Councillor Reeve asked for his vote against this recommendation to be recorded.*

## **136. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT – OUTTURN 2014/15**

The Committee was presented with the Outturn Finance and Performance report for Corporate Services and LGSS Cambridge Office for 2014-15. It also included the

intended uses of Corporate Services carry forward account in 2015-16 and future financial years.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) review, note and comment on the report;
- b) approve the use of the Corporate Services carry forward reserve on projects in 2015-16 and future years as detailed in Section 3.2 of this report.

#### **137. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT – MAY 2015**

The Committee was presented with the May 2015 Finance and Performance report for Corporate Services and LGSS Cambridge Office. The Chief Executive reminded the Committee that it was responsible for approving mitigating measures to address any overspends in this area.

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

#### **138. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES, PARTNERSHIP LIAISON AND ADVISORY GROUPS, AND INTERNAL ADVISORY GROUPS AND PANELS**

The Committee considered appointments to outside bodies, internal advisory groups and panels, and partnership liaison and advisory groups. During discussion of outside bodies, it was agreed to no longer appoint representatives to the following: two vacancies on Ditchburn Place/Stanton House Management Committee; the Evelyn Boake Charitable Trust (Cherry Trees Club); Relate Cambridge; and St Columba Centre Management Committee. At the request of the UKIP Group Leader, it was also agreed to remove Councillor Rylance as the Council's representative on Camsight.

Following discussion of Internal Advisory Groups and Panels, it was noted that there were two vacancies on the Council's Diversity Group. In response to a request from the CFO, it was agreed to change the name of the Treasury Strategy Review Working Group to the Investment Review Group. A new description would be developed and Councillor Hipkin would no longer be a member of this group. In relation to Partnership Liaison and Advisory Groups, it was also noted that the Eastern Agri-Tech Programme Delivery Board had been transferred as an appointment for the Economy and Environment Policy and Service Committee to make.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- (i) agree the appointments to outside bodies as detailed in Appendix 1 including the appointment of Councillor McGuire to the Conservators of the River Cam.
- (ii) agree appointments to the Member Development Panel and the Council's Diversity Group, and review and continue to refer appointments to the other internal advisory groups and panels, as detailed in Appendix 2, to the relevant policy and service committee. It was also agreed to delegate to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the relevant Group Leaders, the appointment of a

UKIP and Independent Group representative to the Diversity Group. **Action Required.**

- (iii) agree appointments including the appointment of Councillor Hoy to the Fenland Crime Reduction Partnership, and continue to refer appointments to the other partnership liaison and advisory groups, as detailed in Appendix 3, to the relevant policy and service committee.

#### **139. GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN**

The Committee was asked to review its agenda plan. It was noted that the following items had been added to the agenda plan for 15 September 2015 meeting: LGSS Revenue and Benefits Joint Committee, and the Transfer of the Freehold of the Cromwell Museum Building to Huntingdon Town Council. The Chairman informed the Committee that the number of items for this meeting would be monitored in case the reserve date in August was needed.

It was resolved unanimously to note the agenda plan including two additional items for the September meeting.

#### **140. GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE TRAINING PLAN**

The Committee discussed its training plan proposed for 2015/16. The Chairman suggested that the training plan was likely to be very comprehensive in the first year after an election but lighter in following years with a focus more on updates, which should encompass everything.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- agree the training plan that had been developed as set out as Appendix 1 to the report.

#### **141. BURWELL, DEVELOPMENT OF LAND IN NEWMARKET ROAD**

The Committee received an update on proposals for the development of the Council's land at Newmarket Road in Burwell. Attention was drawn to the background, it was noted that in order to progress the project through to implementation, the Council would need to enter into a number of different types of agreement and contract.

Speaking as the Local Member, Councillor Brown expressed his support for the recommendation. He drew attention to the map attached at Appendix 1 and explained that five years ago a village consultation had identified the need for 100 houses on this land at Slade Farm in Newmarket Road in Burwell. Since then there had been 9 public meetings, two door to door surveys, numerous meetings and public exhibitions, which had identified the need for 350 homes. He informed the Committee that East Cambridgeshire District Council had a policy that 10% of houses must be self built. The proposal in the report showed a 100% rented scheme across the site. He therefore queried what had happened to the self build element. He also asked if the Local Member could be invited to attend Treasury Strategy Review Working Group meetings for this item.

The Head of Strategic Assets reported that the self build element would be considered as part of the planning application discussions. It was important to note that retaining ownership of the completed housing units was therefore not a foregone conclusion. The CFO reported that, in the worst case, the viability of the site would work with 100% rental. Some Members reported that they had expressed concerns about the site being 100% rental.

It was resolved to authorise the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of General Purposes Committee (GPC) and the Treasury Strategy Review Working Group to enter into appropriate agreements outlined in this report required to implement the development by the Council of the land at Newmarket Road in Burwell.

#### **142. CAMBRIDGE, MILTON ROAD, COMMUNITY HUB**

The Committee was asked to decide on the preferred procurement option for progressing the proposed replacement of Milton Road Library in Cambridge, and the construction of a new Community Hub building. Attention was drawn to the background to the proposal, which had resulted in the Effective Property Asset Management Board accepting a recommendation to redevelop the site in 2013. Significant progress had been made since then, which had included working with the developer, Hill, who had developed the Great Shelford scheme. There were four potential options for the Committee to consider. Planning permission and public and community consultation would be required depending on the option selected

The Chairman informed the Committee that it had received written representation from the following: The Friends of Milton Road Library; Joan Simms; G Singer; Marcus Smith and Anne Hamill; Bethan Hayward; and Martin Aitken. He had also received further representations which had been received too late to pass on to the Committee.

The Chairman invited local resident and representative of the Ascham Road Residents Association, Dr Mike Kemp, to address the Committee. He thanked Dr Kemp for providing the Committee with a list of key points.

Dr Kemp expressed concern that the Council had been very economical with the information made available. All the background, financial and risk information, pros and cons were contained in confidential appendices which made it impossible for the public to form a view on the options or to be satisfied that elected Members had sufficient information. He had submitted a complaint on this issue but had not yet received a response. The draft plans for the redevelopment showed 8/9 flats in a three storey building with a significant expanded footprint. He felt that the site was being over developed as it would take light from surrounding buildings and cause parking problems. He therefore proposed that the Council should adapt the existing building which would be cheaper, faster and lower risk. He presented the Committee with a 266 signature petition protesting at the proposal collected by people who had attended St Laurence Parish Mass on 26 July 2015.

The Chairman invited Mr Michael Bond, Treasurer of the Chesterton Community Association, to address the Committee. He thanked Mr Bond for providing the Committee with a list of key points.

Mr Bond reported that Milton Road Library had not been built on good ground and had started to fail after a few years of opening. The Association was of the view it would be too expensive to refurbish the existing library. He acknowledged the parking concerns raised by the previous speaker. He explained that parking was currently a significant problem, which had been exacerbated by commuters parking to avoid restrictions in other areas. There was also no resident parking provision around the site. He informed the Committee that developers did ask for their money back if Section 106 funding was not spent within five years. It was possible that funding could also be switched to other projects. He reported that the Association would like to see the site redeveloped as West Chesterton had few community facilities.

The Chairman invited Local Member, Councillor Scutt, to address the Committee. Councillor Scutt explained that there were varying views locally about this project. She informed Members that she had been a member of the steering group longer than she had been a councillor and some people were enthusiastic and others were not. She acknowledged the genuine concerns of Ascham Road Residents and the need for West Chesterton to have a community space. She highlighted a number of concerns she had about the project as follows: the need to go to tender; there should be no change of use of the library and community room elements in the future; and the project should be cost neutral with the developer paying for the refit and providing other compensation. If the Committee was minded to approve redevelopment, she felt that the Council should be a lot tougher with any developer as the return would be significantly above the figure detailed in the confidential appendix. She had investigated the time limit on the Section 106 funding and as far as she was aware it was not contingent on the new building.

The Chairman invited Mr Bond to clarify the situation regarding the Section 106 funding. It was noted that the next meeting of the North Area Committee would consider and review competing bids. It was therefore possible that there might be some reallocation of funding. One Member asked about local concerns if the site was converted to residential use. Councillor Scutt reported that the community would be up in arms if their Library was removed.

The Committee queried the Council's plans for its other buildings further up Ascham Road. The Head of Community and Cultural Services reported that she could not comment on the school but it was noted that back office library functions had been consolidated on the site. There were therefore no plans for that site at the moment. The level of consultation which had taken place was also queried. It was noted that extensive consultation had taken place in 2013 which had resulted in the establishment of a Steering Group. Information had been published at various times on the website and discussions had taken place at the North Area Committee. Members were informed that public consultation would form part of the planning application process.

One Member expressed his support for Option c) whilst others favoured Option d). In relation to Option c), the Member was of the view that the private developer, Hill, was a highly reputable company; this view was supported by the Local Member for Great Shelford. It was therefore important the Committee did not let the experience of the third floor of the Central Library affect its decision. This proposal had support from the Friends of Milton Road Library and the Chesterton Community Association. The Council had therefore drawn up a scheme with partners who were good to work with which was ready to go to access time limited Section 106 funding. In response,



Members queried how this proposal would operate in relation to the Council's contract procedures.

Other Members were of the view that the Council should self develop using the Housing Development Agency as the vehicle to take this work forward in order to achieve the best revenue stream. They felt that the Committee should heed Councillor Scutt's advice and be robust with developers. It was suggested that if the Council approved Option d), it should take the opportunity in consultation with the local community to develop further up Ascham Road to achieve a better scheme. The Chairman acknowledged that this scheme provided the perfect opportunity to remove the element of private profit from work for the community.

Councillor Bullen proposed recommendation d), seconded by Councillor McGuire. On being put the vote, it was resolved to:

- d) Self-develop – Cambridgeshire County Council reviews the parameters for delivering a viable and sustainable scheme for the provision of a new library and community building, procuring planning, design and construction resources from the market, managing and funding the development by retaining revenue producing elements of the site.

Chairman