

**LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE –  
ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16**

*To:* Council

*Date:* 10th May 2016

*From:* Councillor Steve Count, Leader of the Council and  
Chairman of the General Purposes Committee

*Purpose:* To consider the Annual Report 2015/16 for General  
Purposes Committee.

*Recommendation:* Council is recommended to note the General Purposes  
Committee Annual Report 2015/16.

<b><i>Officer contact:</i></b>		<b><i>Member contact</i></b>	
Name:	Sue Grace	Name:	Councillor Steve Count
Post:	Corporate Director: Customer Service & Transformation	Portfolio:	Chairman, General Purposes Committee
Email:	<a href="mailto:sue.grace@cambridgeshire.gov.uk">sue.grace@cambridgeshire.gov.uk</a>	Email:	<a href="mailto:steve.count@cambridgeshire.gov.uk">steve.count@cambridgeshire.gov.uk</a>
Tel:	01223 699188	Tel:	01223 699173

## **1 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Councillor Steve Count is the Leader of Cambridgeshire County Council, and the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee (GPC). The GPC was established following the May 2014 annual meeting when the Council resolved to convert from a Cabinet form of governance to a Committee System.

## **2 COUNCIL LEADERSHIP IN 2015/16**

- 2.1 Over the last year the Council has continued to meet regularly to provide leadership against the backdrop of financial austerity and increasing demand for public services. For the 2015/16 financial year this included achieving £30m of savings.
- 2.2 Contributing to these savings has been Council's decision in October 2015 to implement the sharing of a Chief Executive with Peterborough City Council, for the period of a year. Not only has this generated savings in excess of £100,000, but has signaled Council's determination to fundamentally transform the organisation through new ways of working and service redesign both within the council and with our partners. A challenge which the new Chief Executive has been asked to lead.
- 2.3 In line with the above, Council also took the decision this year, in March 2016, to approve Milton Keynes joining the LGSS shared services partnership as a full partner. This is a significant expansion of the LGSS partnership established by this and Northamptonshire County Council, and will deliver further savings beyond the significant level that has already been achieved to date.
- 2.4 Together with the support of local MPs, the Local Government Association and the County Councils Network – this year the Council lobbied Government successfully for transitional funding which we received as part of the emergent changes to Revenue Support Grant. Alongside this, Government has also committed to reviewing the Schools Funding Formula, which is welcomed by Cambridgeshire as part of our continuing concerted calls for a fairer system of schools funding. A major element of the Council's work with Government over the future of local public services has been the negotiation of a devolution offer, which will be debated fully by this Council at a subsequent meeting.

## **3 GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE WORKLOAD**

- 3.1 The committee comprises the following Members:

Councillors; Steve Count (Chairman) Mac McGuire (Vice Chairman), Anna Bailey, Ian Bates, David Brown, Paul Bullen, Edward Cearn, Steve Criswell, Roger Hickford, John Hipkin, David Jenkins, Lucy Nethsinga, Tony Orgee, Peter Reeve, Michael Tew, Ashley Walsh and Joan Whitehead. The chairman Steve Count wishes to express his sincere thanks to them, their substitutes and officers contributions which enabled the workload to be fulfilled.

## **4 Business Planning**

- 4.1 The General Purposes Committee has an oversight and coordinating role in the annual setting of the Council's Business Plan. The 2016/17 Business Plan was adopted by the Council in February 2016 following many months of engagement,

consultation, and discussion across the Council, and with our partners, stakeholders and our residents.

- 4.2 This marked the continuation of the development of the Business Plan through the Committee system of governance. To achieve this, the General Purposes Committee worked together and with the Service Committees to encourage and facilitate the development of the Business Plan.
- 4.3 The Committee System was implemented to encourage more open democracy and to allow more councillors to participate in debate. The way of working has transformed our decision making, enabling the diverse viewpoints and needs of our communities to be more involved in the detail and way our decisions are made through greater involvement of elected representatives.

## **5 Transforming the way the Council operates**

- 5.1 GPC has discussed and agreed a number of initiatives over the last year as part of its commitment to the transformation of the Council. An example of this has been the decision to pilot a “Total Transport” approach within Cambridgeshire, whereby the transport needs of a local community and the transport services provided are considered in a holistic way as opposed to the previously fragmented approach. The aim is to bring service provision together so it is meeting the needs of the community better, at the same time as delivering savings. The expectation is that the pilot commissioned by GPC will develop a model that can be implemented across the whole of the county. GPC also agreed new ways of working across social care recruitment and retention, the county farms estate, new communities, and community resilience.

## **6 Asset Management**

- 6.1 Over the last year GPC has considered a number of issues around the best use of Council property and land assets. This has included, for example, the decision to transfer assets to support the development a community hub at Sawston in line with the needs of the local community and in particular the Village College. The Committee has also considered items on use of Council assets at; Milton Road (Cambridge), East Barnwell, Ely, Cottenham and the Cromwell Museum.

## **7 Customer Service and Transformation and LGSS Managed Services**

- 7.1 As well as its oversight role, the General Purposes Committee is also the Service Committee for Customer and Transformation, and LGSS Managed Services. This year the Committee has overseen major changes to these directorates in order to meet the organisation’s savings targets, alongside supporting the Council to deliver across all service areas.
- 7.2 This has involved GPC overseeing a fundamental shift in the way that the directorate is funded. Clarifying the services needed to support the successful running of the organisation, alongside but separate to the resource needed to transform the Council. This year it has also included consulting on changes to the charging levels for Blue Badges, and based upon overwhelming public support implementing new charges.

- 7.3 Within LGSS Managed Services GPC has this year overseen the successful completion of the negotiations for Castle Court. Concluding the ongoing work of the Committee, this has brought to fruition a significant example of asset utilization for the Council.

## **8 Treasury Management**

- 8.1 The Committee oversees the management of the Council's investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.
- 8.2 During the year the Committee ensured the Council operated within the Treasury limits and Prudential Indicators set out within the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) and in compliance with the Council's Treasury Management Practices. Additionally recommending the TMSS strategy for 2016/17 to the Council.

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
Agenda and Minutes General Purposes Committee	<a href="http://www2.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/CommitteeMinutes/Committees/Committee.aspx?committeeID=75">http://www2.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/CommitteeMinutes/Committees/Committee.aspx?committeeID=75</a>