

NON-CONFIDENTIAL - LGSS JOINT COMMITTEE: MINUTES

Date: Friday, 26th July 2019

Time: 2.00pm – 3.10 pm

Place: Room 1.02, Civic Offices, Milton Keynes Council, Milton Keynes.

Present: Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC):
Councillors Chris Boden (Chairman), Sebastian Kindersley and Terry Rogers

Milton Keynes Council (MKC):
Councillors Robin Bradburn, Peter Geary and Robert Middleton (Vice Chairman)

Northamptonshire County Council (NCC):
Councillors Graham Lawman, Malcolm Longley and Bob Scott

Others in attendance:

Mark Ashton (Interim Managing Director, LGSS), Ian Duncan (S151 Officer Northamptonshire County Council), Fred Lynch (Fred Lynch Associates), Chris Malyon (S151 Officer Cambridgeshire County Council) Stewart Martin (LGSS Director IT), Steve Richardson (S151 Officer Milton Keynes Council), Daniel Snowdon (Democratic Services Officer).

Apologies: Councillor Lizzie Bowen

The Chairman began the meeting by paying tribute Kay Maybin, LGSS Head of Learning and Development who had sadly passed away following a cycling accident. The Committee joined the Chairman in observing a minutes silence in memory of Kay.

The Chairman with the agreement of the Committee amended the running order of the agenda, proposing that the LGSS Operating Model review item be taken as the first substantial item following the exclusion of press and public from the meeting. For the purposes of the minutes the items appear in the same order as the published agenda.

84/19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

85/19 MINUTES – 28TH FEBRUARY 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on 28th February 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

86/18

LGSS BUDGET MONITORING REPORT – MARCH 2019

Members received the March 2019 iteration of the LGSS Budget Monitoring Report. In presenting the report, officers highlighted the positive year-end financial position that saw an overall underspend of £189k. The underspend had been achieved through rigorous spending controls and close management of vacancies that had in part been required due to the continued LGSS operating model review. Members noted that LGSS had met its financial commitments every year apart from 1.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the financial monitoring position as at 31st March 2019
- b) Note the capital monitoring position regarding LGSS capital projects.

87/19

LGSS BUDGET MONITORING REPORT – MAY 2019

The Joint Committee received the May 2019 iteration of the LGSS Budget Monitoring Report. In presenting the report officers drew attention to the forecast overspend of £561k, of which £582k which related to Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) and an agreed shortfall against the £919k savings target asked of LGSS by CCC for 2019/20. Some savings had been identified and agreed however, the remainder had been put on hold pending the outcome of the LGSS operating model review. The figure of £582k was offset by £21k that related to shared service underspends.

Members noted that in relation to the LGSS Helpdesk a support contract had ceased and taken as a saving. The LGSS Helpdesk had been unsupported for 2 years and it was now prudent to resume the support in order to successfully manage any changes or migration pending the outcome of the LGSS operating model review.

During discussion Members:

- Sought clarity in relation to paragraph 3 of the report where underspends were impacting on service delivery. Officers explained that LGSS continued to struggle to retain staff. There were also specific issues relating to teams such as Integrated Finance where closedown accountants were particularly difficult to recruit. Recruitment was particularly challenging due to potential candidates not wishing to join a Council (NCC) which was due to be abolished and were also discouraged by LGSS as a brand.

- Noted that the gross figure of £919k of savings identified by CCC were predicated on a 4th partner joining LGSS.
- Highlighted the complex accounting procedures within LGSS that were difficult to understand.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the financial monitoring position as at 31st May 2019
- b) Note the capital monitoring position regarding LGSS capital projects; and
- c) Approve the use of LGSS reserves to fund support for the current LGSS helpdesk solution

88/19 LGSS BUDGET UPDATE 2019-20

The Joint Committee received an update on the development of the LGSS Budget for 2019-20. In presenting the report officers explained that the report focussed on 2019/20 and very little beyond that owing to the ongoing work related to the operating model. .

Members noted the detailed figures in table 3 of the report that provided a break down in the residual gap of £576k set out in table 2 of the report.

It was resolved to:

- 1) Review and approve the draft Operational Update for LGSS for 2019-20 as set out in Appendix A to the officer report
- 2) Note that the update focuses on business as usual service delivery for 2019-20 and no assumptions have been made about the future of LGSS operating model, or the ability to deliver savings beyond 2019-20; and
- 3) Note that the savings asks for MKC and NCC have plans in place to meet in full but there remains a residual gap for CCC which the Council have made provision to cover.

89/19

REPATRIATION OF PROFESSIONAL FINANCE AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES TO CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL AND MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL

Members received a report that sought the repatriation of Democratic Services and Professional Finance to Cambridgeshire County Council and the repatriation of Professional Finance to Milton Keynes Council.

The S151 Officers for Cambridgeshire County Council and Milton Keynes Council in presenting the report drew attention to the previous repatriation of Democratic Services and Professional Finance by Northamptonshire County Council. Members noted that the Democratic Services Team was the only remaining such team in LGSS and therefore should be repatriated.

It was resolved:

To agree that the Professional Finance and Democratic Services teams return to Cambridgeshire County Council and Milton Keynes Council from 1st October 2019.

90/19

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was resolved that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that the items contained exempt information under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and that it would not be in the public interest for the information to be disclosed: information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

91/19

LGSS OPERATING MODEL REVIEW

An update was presented on the LGSS operating model work that had been undertaken by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).

It was resolved unanimously to.

Approve the amended recommendations as set out in the confidential minutes.

Chairman