

Wiltshire Council

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

20 November 2018

Task Group Update

1. Digital Strategy and Implementation Task Group

Membership

Cllr Howard Greenman
Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chairman)
Cllr Bob Jones OBE
Cllr Stuart Wheeler
Cllr Gordon King

Terms of Reference:

1. Explore their options of the Microsoft Exercise and look at learning from other councils on how to potentially use those solutions
2. Look at the list of projects and how things become projects - explore how these can be better vetted in future to ensure project meet best needs
3. Look at audit of existing software and how much we are/are not duplicating systems and costs
4. How we interface between service users/residents and the council and its digital systems

Recent Activity

The task group did not meet as originally planned on 11 September, as the draft paper on the corporate list for ICT's prioritisation projects was not yet available.

The task group are now due to meet on 13 November and will be discussing the above paper, as well as the progress of the Microsoft Navigator Programme. A verbal update will be provided.

Further information on the task group's work to date can be found in their [interim report](#), which was received by Committee on 18 September 2018.

2. Financial Planning Task Group

Membership

Cllr George Jeans
Cllr Pip Ridout
Cllr Ian Thorn (Chairman)
Cllr Stuart Wheeler
Cllr Roy While
Cllr Richard Britton
Cllr Gavin Grant

Terms of Reference:

1. To understand and review the Medium Term Financial Strategy (4 year financial model)
2. To understand and review the approach and robustness of the financial planning regime within the Council
3. To understand and help develop the approach to the annual budget setting cycle
4. To review the specific contribution of overview and scrutiny in the annual budget setting cycle with a focus on outcomes
5. To undertake periodic budget monitoring including reviews of key midyear trends and developments and to ensure that these are taken into account when updating the Financial Plan
6. To work under the direction and guidance of the Management Committee and report regularly to the Cabinet Member, Management Committee and select committees (as appropriate) on its work and findings and to make any necessary referrals

Recent activity

The task group last met on 19 September 2018 and considered the following:

Revenue and capital quarterly budget monitoring reports

- Some of the projected savings currently RAG-rated as red will still be implemented and deliver savings. However, they will not be achieved in full during this year financial year.
- Some inaccuracies in the adult social care base budget have been identified and these are now putting pressure on the agreed savings for 2018/19.
- The Salisbury and Amesbury incidents have had an indirect impact on delivering some of the expected savings for the financial year.
- The task group may focus on what is an appropriate level of reserves in the future. Although the council's general fund reserves are approximately £12M there are a large total of further 'ear-marked' reserves that are being reviewed.
- The council is reviewing the capital programme across the board in order to reduce pressure on the revenue budget. The objective is to fund future capital investments from capital receipts and grants etc, rather than from borrowing.

Budget Scrutiny Development

- The Cabinet Member would like to move toward a process of continuous rather than annual budgeting. This would not require a significant cultural shift as officers are operating in this way already.
- An annual process also focuses pressure on budget holders at only one point in the year, causing delays in delivering savings.
- Consultations on next year's budget will begin earlier this year so identified savings can be implemented more promptly. Contingencies against each saving will also be agreed at the time of budget agreement.
- It was subsequently agreed that the Financial Planning Task Group will hold a series of thematic meetings in the Autumn/Winter looking at budget priority areas. Relevant select committee chairmen and vice-chairmen will be invited. These are currently being arranged.

Salisbury Museum – Request for Support

- The Cabinet Member clarified that the council's proposed £500k commitment was a backstop position in order to secure the necessary grant funding from Heritage Lottery Fund. The museum's fundraising history suggests they can deliver the necessary income without the need for support from the council.
- Cabinet subsequently approved the proposal at its September meeting.

Commercial actions update

- The Cabinet Member advised that details of specific commercial opportunities will be brought to the task group by the end of the year.

4. Military and Civilian Integration Partnership Task Group

Membership

Cllr Richard Britton (chairman)
Cllr Gordon King
Cllr Mollie Groom
Cllr Alan Hill
Cllr Tony Jackson
Cllr Graham Wright

Terms of Reference

1. To identify any risks and opportunities presented by the MCIP that are relevant to Wiltshire Council services and priorities, focusing on the following themes:
 - Housing
 - Health
 - Infrastructure
 - Budget
 - Schools
 - Employment (leavers and dependents)

2. To make workable recommendations on how any identified risks could be mitigated and opportunities exploited to support delivery of the MCIP and of relevant priorities within the Council's Business Plan.

Recent activity

The MCIP task Group met in late September.

The task group finalised the purpose, tone and detail of the questionnaire designed to understand the extent and success of military/civilian integration at a community level. The questionnaire is now with area boards and town and parish councils. Replies are expected by the end of November.

The group also identified a series of outstanding concerns, from its previous work. The Chairman has shared these with the responsible corporate director.

A new Programme Manager for MCI has been appointed and the task group will aim to interview the post holder at their next meeting.

4. Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Task Group

Membership

Wiltshire Councillors:

Cllr Trevor Carbin
Cllr Christine Crisp
Cllr Alan Hill (Chairman)
Cllr Nick Murry

Swindon Borough Councillors:

Cllr Maureen Penny
Cllr Des Moffatt
Cllr Chris Watts
Cllr Rahul Tarar

Terms of Reference

1. Develop an overview and scrutiny framework and operational protocols which meet the requirements of democratic accountability for the use of public funds by a partnership body which is led by the business community under a mandate from the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills.
2. Whilst developing the framework, the Task Group will carry out trial activities to scrutinise the outcomes and work of the SWLEP. In fulfilling this role the task group will:

- a) Perform all overview and scrutiny functions on behalf of both Councils in respect of the SWLEP and JSEC
- b) Appoint such sub-groups as it consider appropriate to fulfil those functions.
- c) Review and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge or any of the SWLEP and JSEC functions.
- d) Make reports and recommendations to the Councils relevant partner in connection with the discharge of any functions.
- e) Approve a forward work programme, including the programme of any sub-groups it appoints so as to ensure that the Task Group and sub-groups' time is effectively and efficiently utilised.
- f) Foster and encourage an inclusive, structured, non-partisan and non-adversarial approach to overview and scrutiny which is reliant on evidence rather than anecdote.

Recent activity

The task group last met on Tuesday 2nd October in Monkton Park. Members were updated on the outcomes from the latest SWLEP Board meetings, this included the future incorporation process for the SWLEP which is due to complete by April 2019.

A report was received by members which detailed the initial work of the Better Business for All partnership scheme. The broad aim of the scheme is to provide support for current and new businesses to help them comply with regulations. Initial uptake of the scheme from businesses has been low and a revised method for advertising the scheme was due to be undertaken.

The main part of the meeting was dedicated to continuing the work on the Chippenham Station Hub project. The overall vision for the project was discussed along with what the status of the project was anticipated to be at the 2021 deadline for local government funding spend. The task group is working towards an evaluation of the project process and will receive information on the project spend at their next meeting in December.

5. Third Party Advertising Policy Task Group

Membership

Cllr Stuart Wheeler (Chairman)
Cllr Alan Hill
Cllr George Jeans
Cllr Nick Murry
Cllr Graham Wright

Terms of Reference

1. To support the development of the council's Third Party Advertising Policy, by considering,
 - Legal and commercial issues

- The ethos, values and reputation of the council
- Supporting local businesses and economic development
- Opportunities for income generation

2. To submit findings and recommendations to the Cabinet Member prior to the Policy's consideration by Cabinet in 2018.

Recent activity

Committee endorsed the Task Group's final report in March 2018, including a recommendation that the Task Group reconvene after six months to receive an update on implementation of the council's Advertising and Sponsorship Policy.

On 7 November the Committee's chairman and vice-chairman received a verbal update on progress from the Cabinet Member for Communications, Communities, Leisure and Libraries and the Director for Communities and Communications.

It was reported that following adoption of the Policy important implementation steps have been actioned;

- Clarity of the planning process and where permissions are required
- Submission of planning permissions for advertising opportunities; such as space external to City Hall in Salisbury
- Leasing space to third party in campuses and council hubs for occupancy and advertising
- Aligning expertise and resource to secure sponsorship funding to cover the cost for the following events and ensure no underwrite required by the council; total amount circa; £650,000
 - Wiltshire Business and Sports Dinner (14 March) – funding secured
 - OVO cycle tour series – Salisbury (23 May) – in negotiation
 - National Armed Forces Day 2019 - Salisbury (28-30 June) – initial launch 7 November – funding pledged as of 8 Nov circa £200K.

It is proposed that the Task Group reconvene for a full progress review in January 2019.

6. Public Consultations Task Group (proposed)

Membership

To be confirmed.

Terms of Reference (proposed)

1. To investigate,
 - a. The quantity and scope of council consultations and the level of response
 - b. How the council determines when, and when not, to consult the public on proposals or potential service changes

- c. How the council determines the best design and format for each consultation
 - d. The public's perception and experience of council consultations
2. To make constructive recommendations for improvement if appropriate.

Background

At its meeting on 9 October 2018 the Cabinet agreed a proposal to close Everleigh Household Recycling Centre (HRC). The proposal had been subject to public consultation, with the results showing a large proportion of respondents being in favour of retaining the facility. At the meeting Cllr Graham Wright, Committee Chairman, questioned whether consultations should be undertaken in such cases when the final decision appears to be unaltered by the results.

Following this the Chairman and Vice-chairman of the Committee met with the Cabinet Member for Communications, Communities, Leisure and Libraries and the Director for Communities and Communications to discuss. It was agreed that a task group reviewing the council's approach to consulting the public could add value and that it would be proposed to Committee with the terms of reference set out above.

7. Communications with Councillors Task Group (proposed)

Membership

To be confirmed.

Terms of Reference (proposed)

1. To review Wiltshire councillors' experience and expectation of internal communications from the council across its service areas.
2. To contribute to the work already underway to develop a new online information portal for Wiltshire councillors.
3. To make recommendations to ensure that the communications received by Wiltshire councillors take into account their expectations to assist them in undertaking their role as effectively as possible.

Background

A scrutiny review of the council's internal communications with its elected members was originally discussed with the Cabinet Member and Director in 2017. A further discussion was held on 7 November 2018 and it was agreed that a task group with the terms of reference set out above would add value.

In particular, a new online information portal for councillors is already being created, with the existing intranet site having been in place since the council was formed in

2009. The task group can make a contribution to the design of the new portal and also to ensuring that councillors always receive the information they need to undertake their role as community representatives. This would include consideration of the quantity, clarity and format of the information provided and how effectively the organisation engages with councillors on county-wide and division-based issues.

Proposal

- 1. To note the update on OS task group activity provided.**
- 2. To note that following discussion with the Cabinet Member for Finance the Annual Budget scrutiny process will commence earlier this year, with the Financial Planning Task Group holding a series of thematic meetings in Autumn/Winter. These will focus on budget priority areas, with the relevant select committee chairmen and vice-chairmen invited to attend and contribute.**
- 3. To note the update on the council's advertising and sponsorship activity provided and that the Third Party Advertising Policy Task Group will reconvene in January 2019 for a more detailed review of progress.**
- 4. To endorse the establishment of a Public Consultations Task Group with the terms of reference outlined within the report.**
- 5. To endorse the establishment of a Communications with Councillors Task Group with the terms of reference outlined within the report.**

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