

## **Wiltshire Council**

### **Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee**

**16 July 2019**

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#### **Task Group Update**

##### **1. Communications with Councillors Task Group**

###### Membership

Cllr Graham Wright  
Cllr Ruth Hopkinson  
Cllr Gavin Grant  
Cllr Allison Bucknell  
Cllr Trevor Carbin (Chairman)  
Cllr Jose Green

*Supporting officer: Adam Brown*

###### Terms of Reference

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.

###### Recent activity

The task group most recently met on 3<sup>rd</sup> July to consider a referral from Full Council regarding a potential review of the Wiltshire Council Media Protocol. Members met with Ceri Toccock, Head of Communications Marketing & Events. The process of the media protocol was discussed, along with its content in the context of it being last updated in 2015. The task group considered that reviewing the protocol would stray from its remit. As such they have agreed for it to be passed to the Public Consultations Task Group to consider a review.

The task group have agreed a draft survey to be developed and circulated to all Wiltshire Councillors regarding their experience with internal communications. This will

be circulated once a named officer has been established to create the survey using the relevant software, it is hoped that this will be shortly after the 8<sup>th</sup> July.

## **2. Digital Strategy and Implementation Task Group**

### Membership

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

*Supporting Officer: Natalie Heritage*

### Terms of Reference:

1. Explore the 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 met on 11 June 2019 to receive an update on the Digital Programme, as well as the ICT Get Well Programme and Citizen Engagement. The members discussed the progress of work within the Digital Programme and provided input on ensuring that Citizen Engagement adds value to the community groups that it is designed to serve.

Following liaison with the Executive over recent months, the Chairman was impressed with the paperwork provided and presentations given by Officers. The Task Group are next meeting in early September, to discuss their interim report as well as to receive an update on certain elements of the Digital Programme. Members have agreed that in 2020 they would like to meet quarterly.

## **3. 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

*Supporting officer: Henry Powell*

### 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
7. *To review the council's Performance and Risk monitoring reports and the Corporate Performance Framework. [Proposed for endorsement]*

### Recent activity

6<sup>th</sup> June 2019

#### **Presentation on the Avon Mutual Bank from Jules Peck, Founding Director**

#### **New approach to budget and performance reporting**

- The Task Group welcomed the direction of travel toward the integrated reporting of budget, performance and risk data

#### **Budget Monitoring Report - Quarter 4 and Outturn 2018-19**

- Noted that the addition to general fund reserves was possible due to the Minimal Revenue Provision which we did not need to use last year, and also the small underspend from the 2018-19 budget.
- Sought reassurance that, following reports to Audit Committee, and the financial pressures on schools, there is no wider issue regarding the council's liabilities. It was confirmed that there is no indication that Wiltshire has schools with significant deficits at present. An overall picture of schools' financial health will be available shortly.
- The savings delivered under the ASC transformation programme were welcomed.

#### **Budget process review and forward look**

- Welcomed plans to introduce a 3 year budget plan to be fleshed out during the summer and proposals brought back to the task group.

#### **Non-executive councillor budget suggestion facility**

- Approved the latest draft of the new Protocol.

#### **Acquisition of an Operational Asset**

- Assessed the planned acquisition, which was later determined by Cabinet.

#### **Terms of Reference**

- Agreed to propose the expansion of the Task Group's terms of reference to encompass scrutiny of performance and risk. This has been undertaken by the task group for some years but hitherto not formally reflected in its remit.

#### 24 June 2019 – Adult Social Care budgets 2018/19 and 2019/20b

The Task Group received detailed updates on the outturn position of the 2018/19 adult social care budgets and the current position of the 2019/20 budget. In summary,

- Formal KPIs have been put in place to maximise staff's use of Care First to avoid the unforeseen budget pressures that have been experienced in the past.
- There is no particular departmental reserve for the ASC budgets should anything over-spend. Any unforeseen overspends will need to be dealt, as usual, with by finding savings elsewhere in the budget or failing that through GF reserves.
- As well as the pressures on staff created by reduced resources, vacancies due to lack of suitable staff also create work pressures (and also further financial pressures).
- Due to improvements in the transitions processes between child and adult care there is improved forecasting of the future costs heading to ASC. However, there is a limit to the accuracy of this forecasting because of the fundamental differences between the Children's Act and the Care Act i.e. the differences in the assessment criteria at the two different life stages.
- Service users also face the trials of re-assessment once they reach 18, with all their previous assessments being disregarded.
- Without the requisite number of qualified social workers and Occupational Health professionals it is difficult to have the tough conversations with clients. We are looking at moving to a strength-based approach to assessment (rather

than deficit-based approach), which will focus on the clients' abilities from the starting point and move away from a cultural tendency to overprescribe care.

- Wiltshire has a lot of clients with quite complex needs. Sometimes the residential care homes don't have the appropriate skills, leading to the spot purchasing of expensive specialised care.
- There is an emerging campaign to find more care/support workers for adults. For example, asking foster carers for young people to become Shared Lives carers once their foster children turn 18.
- Wiltshire's high self-funding numbers lead to too many clients entering residential placements when they don't necessarily need to. They can then end up in expensive care placements, which the council then contributes to, immediately or in the long-run when the client's assets run out.
- Cosmetic virements will no longer be processed by Finance. This is to ensure accountability of budget management, but also transparency of where the pressures really are. This allows next year's budgets to be set based on accurate data.
- Wiltshire may see benefits from the merging of the three CCGs (Wiltshire, Swindon and BANES) in terms of policy and procedures.

## **5. 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

*Supporting officer: Adam Brown*

### 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 most recently met on 13<sup>th</sup> June to consider a report on the potential future options regarding the scrutiny engagement with the SWLEP. After considering the options detailed in the report the members resolved to request further research into the processes, requirements and implications of establishing a joint committee and refreshing the current task group model and its terms of reference. The task group will next meet on 9<sup>th</sup> September to consider this information.

## **6. Public Consultations Task Group**

#### Membership:

Cllr Gavin Grant  
Cllr Ruth Hopkinson  
Cllr Jim Lynch  
Cllr Pip Ridout  
Cllr Fred Westmoreland  
Cllr Stuart Wheeler (Chairman)

*Supporting Officer: Natalie Heritage*

#### Terms of Reference

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.

### Recent Activity

The Task Group met on 17 June with a very full agenda, they discussed The Wiltshire Compact, Equality Impact Assessments, the proposed Business Intelligence Hub and also received a presentation from Cllr Lynch on Models of Communication, specifically William Bridges' model. Officers from Legal Services also attended the meeting, to provide further evidence on the Council's consultation process and legislative duties.

The Task Group supported the principles that underpin the Wiltshire Compact and suggested that, once updated, this document be extended to include all external public sector partners that work with the Council.

In regard to the Business Intelligence Hub, detail around how consultations would be managed has not yet been finalised and the Task Group expressed concern about interim arrangements; as they felt these risked opening up the Council to legal challenge with any consultations that are conducted during this time. The Task Group agreed that officers working within the Hub should be skilled in human psychology and consultation processes.

The Task Group are next meeting in early September to discuss their final report and recommendations with the Executive and Officers, which they intend to bring back to OS Management Committee at the end of September.

## **8. Commercialism Task Group**

### Membership

Cllr Richard Britton  
Cllr Tony Deane  
Cllr Gordon King  
Cllr Ian Thorn  
Cllr Stuart Wheeler (Chairman)  
Cllr Roy While

*Supporting officer: Marie Gondlach*

### Terms of Reference

- a) To support implementation of the council's commercialism agenda, by considering and making recommendations regarding,
  - Developing existing income streams

- Developing new commercial opportunities, either through existing assets or developing or acquiring new ones
- Councillor and officer expertise in this area
- The experiences of other local authorities
- Legal and commercial issues
- The ethos, values and reputation of the council when considering opportunities.

b) To liaise with the Financial Planning Task Group, Audit Committee and the Traded Services for Schools Task Group to ensure that a holistic approach is taken with regards to commercialism for the council.

### Recent activity

The Commercialism task group has not met since the last meeting of OSMC.

The task group will hold its next meeting in September 2019 when it will consider:

- An overview of traded services within the council;
- Models available to deliver services (such as wholly owned subsidiary, community interest company, etc.);
- A national overview of Local Authorities' approach to commercialism.

### Proposals

- 1. To note the update on Task Group activity provided.**
- 2. To expand the terms of reference of the Financial Planning Task Group to include the following: "To review the council's Performance and Risk monitoring reports and the Corporate Performance Framework."**

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