

## OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY ORGANISATION AND RESOURCES SELECT COMMITTEE

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### DRAFT MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY ORGANISATION AND RESOURCES SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5 APRIL 2012 AT COUNCIL CHAMBER, BRADLEY ROAD, TROWBRIDGE.

#### **Present:**

Cllr Trevor Carbin, Cllr Nigel Carter, Cllr Tony Deane (Vice Chairman), Cllr Peter Doyle, Cllr Charles Howard, Cllr Jon Hubbard (Substitute), Cllr Jacqui Lay, Cllr Christopher Newbury, Cllr Mark Packard, Cllr Pip Ridout (Substitute), Cllr Ricky Rogers and Cllr Jonathon Seed

#### **Also Present:**

Cllr Bill Moss

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#### 21. **Election of Chairman**

Cllr Trevor Carbin was elected Chairman for the remainder of the municipal year.

#### 22. **Apologies and Substitutions**

Apologies were received from Cllr Christopher Devine, Cllr Bill Roberts and Cllr Judy Rooke.

Cllr Pip Ridout substituted for Cllr Bill Roberts and Cllr Jon Hubbard substituted for Cllr Judy Rooke.

#### 23. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2012 were approved and signed as a correct record.

#### 24. **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Pip Ridout and Cllr Jonathon Seed declared personal interests in relation to Item 9 – Agency and Contract Staff Update.

25. **Chairman's Announcement**

There were no Chairman's Announcements.

26. **Public Participation and Councillors Questions**

There was no public participation.

27. **Budget Monitoring**

Relevant extracts of the bi-monthly budget monitoring report submitted to Cabinet on 15 February 2012 were considered.

Ensuing discussion included a request for further information regarding income shortfalls and virements in relation to the Transformation Programme, Communications and Branding and School Improvements. The Cabinet member for Finance, Performance and Risk confirmed that clarification would be sought following the meeting and duly circulated.

In relation to the expected overspend within Legal & Democratic Services confirmation was given that this had been managed down since publication of the paper which would be reported to the next Cabinet meeting.

Additional questions were raised in relation to budgeting areas outside of the remit of the Committee and the benefits of a Task Group to look at the budget as a whole was therefore discussed.

The Committee also requested that future spreadsheets should be included in hard copy form to members of the Committee in larger print for ease of future reference during the meeting.

**Resolved:**

**To note the report provided.**

28. **The Role of the Council as a provider and/or Commissioner of services**

Members were reminded that at its previous meeting on 18 January 2012 the Committee asked for a policy paper on the role of the Council as a provider and/or commissioner of services including the current traded services in Education at a future meeting.

Full Council subsequently met on 28 February 2012 where consideration was given to an amendment to the budget from the Leader of the Liberal Democratic Group to increase investment for services offered to neighbouring authorities.

Although not supported, the Leader of the Council proposed that a Scrutiny Task Group be established to consider traded services and its findings reported to Cabinet.

The Service Director Business Services was in attendance and clarified that the authority was undertaking strategic planning over the next 6 to 9 months in relation to the role of the Council as a provider and/or commissioner of services and a policy paper was expected later in the year.

The Committee learnt that the separate piece of work in relation to traded services within the education arena due to be considered by the Children's Services Select Committee had been postponed pending the outcome of discussions arising today to ensure there was no duplication of work.

The Committee was reminded that the authority had been trading services with schools and commissioned services for many years. The opportunity to develop this further outside of the county was seen as a positive development.

Ensuing discussion included concern for the potential of skill loss from the authority to external bodies undertaking administrative services for education.

It was also recognised that there was a need for transparency throughout the trading services process to ensure appropriate monitoring was undertaken.

A proposal was made for the establishment of a Task Group to consider traded services process within the Council as soon as possible to undertake an early scoping exercise rather than wait for the policy paper.

Several members expressed an interest in taking part in the exercise, which included representatives of the Children's Services Select Committee which would be informed accordingly of the Committee's decision.

**Resolved:**

- 1) To establish a Task Group to consider the policy issues around traded services the membership of which would include:**

**Cllr Christopher Newbury**

**Cllr Peter Doyle**

**Cllr Jacqui Lay (Vice Chairman of the CCSC)**

**Cllr Jon Hubbard (member of the CSSC)**

**Cllr Nigel Carter**

**Cllr Pip Ridout**

- 2) To arrange the first meeting of the Task Group to take place as soon as possible to agree terms of reference and undertake a scoping exercise for future meetings; and**

3) **To inform the Children's Services Select Committee of the Committee's decision.**

29. **Scrutiny Representation on Project Boards (Revenue and Benefits Project Board)**

Due to the need of the scrutiny representative on the Revenue and Benefits Project Board to leave the meeting early due to prior commitments, this item was brought forward for consideration on the agenda.

In presenting the update report, the scrutiny representative confirmed the following additional information:

- All Council Tax bills had been dispatched (approximately 200,000), as had non-domestic rate bills (approximately 14,000) and notification letters to all those currently in receipt of housing and council tax benefit (approx 31,000).
- Although the system was unavailable for almost 4 weeks, benefit payments to landlords and tenants were still made.
- The payment run process had been merged and simplified to a single weekly payment run (previously four-weekly) which had greatly eased the administrative burden on the council's Business Support Team.

The Committed noted the update provided.

30. **Agency and Contract Staff Update - Comensura**

The Committee at its meeting held on 24 March 2011 received an update on the centralisation of the employment of consultancy and agency staff contract with Comensura and requested future annual reports.

Ensuing discussion included concern over the increase in agency staff numbers and the implications of long term employment by the authority.

The Corporate Director confirmed that the increase was necessary to ensure the authority was able to continue to deliver services whilst staff reviews were being undertaken. Further clarity was also provided that the cost savings of £331k was reflected in the budget and did not include soft savings, such as pensions, superannuation, sickness, etc.

The Committee noted that legislation had recently changed in relation to employment rights of temporary and agency staff but were reassured by the Corporate Director that Comensura were managing the situation as the contract in place was for short term placements. Details of the type of contract (to include clarity on whether a monthly fee was applicable) with Comensura would be circulated following the meeting.

**Resolved:**

- 1) **To note the update provided and to receive further annual updates; and**
- 2) **That details of the type of contract (including whether a monthly fee applied) with Comensura would be circulated following the meeting.**

31. **Corporate Management Restructure**

The Committee considered an update on the new corporate leadership management arrangements at its last meeting on 18 January 2012 and resolved to receive regular updates.

The Corporate Director confirmed that the Extended Leadership Team (ELT) was currently being restructured which was likely to result in a reduction of two Service Director positions.

Upon question it was confirmed that there was a low risk level to the authority although further changes were anticipated due to the implementation of new legislation.

Sickness and grievance levels continued to be monitored which were in line with the public sector figures within the area.

**Resolved:**

**To note the update provided.**

32. **Task Group Updates**

Task Group activity information was provided with the agenda with further clarification provided as follows:

**ICT Task Group**

The meeting scheduled to take place the following week would now be on 18 April 2012.

The Group's Chairman had been in dialogue with officers in relation to Sharepoint and its availability to members. Cloud computing would also be considered by the Group and telephone outages followed up.

**Campus and Operational Delivery Programme (CAODP) Task Group**

A request was made for clarity over the disposal of lease properties and whether any financial penalties were likely.

The Chairman of the Group would follow this up and respond accordingly.

#### Procurement and Commissioning Task Group

The Task Group continued to monitor the anticipated procurement savings from the 4 year business plan.

#### Member Support in the Locality Task Group

Due to a clash, the meeting arranged for 19 April would need to be re-arranged.

The Committee discussed member engagement in the proposed new Standards regime. Noting that discretion was left to local authorities to implement and that orders and regulations had yet to be made, the Committee agreed that the terms of reference for the Task Group be extended to cover this issue.

#### **Resolved:**

**To extend the terms of reference for the Member Support in the Locality Task Group to include review of the proposed new Standards regime for Wiltshire.**

#### 33. **Forward Work Programme**

The Forward Work Programme was noted and would be amended to reflect discussions.

#### 34. **Scrutiny Representation on Project Boards**

##### Staffing Management Project Board

No update was provided as a meeting had yet to take place.

##### Wiltshire On-Line Project Board

Further to the main agenda item at the last meeting, it was reported that a full time Project Manager was in place and a procurement programme under way to select an appropriate organisation to work with the authority to deliver the project.

#### **Resolved:**

**To note the updates provided.**

#### 35. **Date of next Meeting**

14 June 2012.

36. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items for consideration.

(Duration of meeting: 10:30am – 12:45pm)

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