

Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 3 October 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the **Overview & Scrutiny Committee** held on **3 October 2023** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr Mrs J E McPherson
Vice-Chairman: Cllr N J Booth

Cllr Mrs D L Belton
Cllr A G Cross
Cllr Mrs E P Gadsdon
Cllr R Lambourne

Cllr R Milne
Cllr Mrs S J Page
Cllr D J Sperring

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs J N Gooding, Mrs C M Mason, G W Myers, I H Ward and S E Wootton.

SUBSTITUTES

Cllr D S Efde - for Cllr S E Wootton
Cllr I A Foster - for Cllr I H Ward

OFFICERS PRESENT

G Campbell - Director, Policy & Delivery
T Willis - Interim Director, Resources
S Worthington - Acting Service Manager, Democratic Services, BBC & RDC
W Szyszka - Democratic Services Officer

193 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 September were approved as a correct record subject to an amendment on page 7 of the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 September that the penultimate paragraph be amended to: "Officers responded that any savings were being distributed towards the service area."

194 ONETEAM TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME – STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP WITH BRENTWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL – QUARTER 2 UPDATE

Members considered the report of the Director of Policy & Delivery providing Members with a quarterly update on the progress of the One Team Transformation Programme.

Members noted that the Communications and HR Departments across Rochford District Council (RDC) and Brentwood Borough Council (BBC) had completed their service reviews and implementation

In response to a Member question as to whether RDC and BBC carried out consultation with officers in light of the OneTeam Transformation Programme, officers advised that both authorities implemented 'OneYou' conversations that

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were being held between line managers and reporting officers which acted as a new appraisals programme for officers to discuss individual targets, share their concerns and for line managers to receive feedback on staff morale. Officers also added that regular quarterly all-staff briefings were held as a way of keeping the Council, as a whole, informed.

A query was raised in relation to paragraph 8.1 on page 6.8 of the report as to how the engagement consultations would be carried out.

In response, officers advised that the consultation was currently being worked up and would be reported further in the quarter 3 update report.

Attention was drawn to paragraph 8.1 and a question was raised whether the results of the consultation would be brought back to Full Council at the end of 2023. Officers clarified that this paragraph should be amended to reflect that the results be brought back to Full Council early next year.

A Member queried the risk register contained within Appendix 1 of the Report and asked whether staff accommodation could be perceived as a significant risk affecting staff morale.

In response, officers advised that this was indeed a substantive risk that could affect staff retention and would be added to the risk register.

In response to a Member question relating to the business cases as per paragraph 3.3 on page 6.2 through to page 6.5 of the report, officers advised that some business cases were still outstanding; however, these would be completed in November 2023. Members also noted that the Q2 report had been completed in September and therefore progress had been made between completion of Q2 report and the Overview & Scrutiny Meeting which was not included within the report.

Officers advised that at future meetings a verbal update would be given to update Members on any progress or issues that arose between the report being complete at the end of the quarter and the report being reported to Committee.

A query was raised relating to the Chief Officer Appointments Committee noting that some Chief Officers were due to leave employment. Officers advised that the Council was proactive in terms of recruitment and HR, in consultation with the Chief Executive, and were reviewing salaries to ensure that compensations were properly aligned.

A Member questioned the membership of the Transformation Board.

Officers responded that the Transformation Board consisted of the Leader and Deputy Leader from both RDC and BBC and the Chief Executive Officer. Members also noted that the Transformation Board met on a monthly basis.

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A question was raised in relation to which Council would undertake employment of the new Strategic Director in light of the fact that one of the current Strategic Directors was due to retire.

Officers advised that a response would be provided outside the meeting.

A query was raised in relation to paragraph 3.17 on page 6.6 of the report as to whether there were any officers who were on long term sickness and whether any of them included senior staff.

Officers advised that a response would be provided outside the meeting.

A further query was raised relating to paragraph 3.18 on page 6.6 of the report as to whether any themes had emerged through the Employee Assistance Programme.

In response, officers advised that this was something that fell within HR.

A concern was raised relating to Risk 5 within the Appendix and whether the change in governance from an Executive/Leader model to a Committee system would cause additional pressure on Council officers.

Officers advised that this had been considered and concluded that it was not perceived to be a potential risk; however, this would be monitored.

A Member queried whether RDC and BBC implemented a time allocations system to monitor how much work was being carried out for BBC and RDC to ensure that workloads were evenly distributed between the two councils.

Officers responded that the Councils did not operate such a system; however, officers worked in line with their job descriptions. Officers also added that a structure chart could be provided to Members setting out areas of responsibility for the different directorates.

Members noted that workloads amongst senior officers were evenly distributed between RDC and BBC duties; however, the distribution of workloads was part of the wider consideration when it came to service reviews and that different factors had to be considered when transitioning to OneTeams e.g., BBC was obliged to maintain its housing stock which Rochford DC does not have; this would have to be factored into the review and the proposed business case.

Members noted that training would be provided to Members relating to the transition from an Executive system of governance to a Committee System.

Cllr Mrs D L Belton moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr R Milne, to add a further risk to the risk register relating to staff accommodation and welfare that could impact staff morale that in turn could affect the delivery of OneTeam.

Members noted that this risk would be managed by officers.

The Motion was unanimously agreed.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (2) That a further risk be added to the risk register relating to staff accommodation and welfare that could impact on staff morale.

(This was unanimously agreed.)

195 TREASURY MANAGEMENT QUARTERLY REVIEW 2023/24

Members considered the report of the Interim Director, Resources providing Members with an update on the Council's Treasury Management activity for the period April 2023 to 30 June 2023 in accordance with the Council's Treasury Management Policy.

Officers advised that figures relating to investments and balances fluctuated on a day-to-day basis.

Members noted that paragraph 3.1 on page 7.5 of the report took into account inflationary pressures.

Members queried the nature of the £777k Financing Requirement. In response, officers advised that this was a historic accounting entry and agreed to provide a response outside the meeting.

A query was raised relating to S106 income and how this was quantified.

In response, officers advised that S106 monies related to development within the District and were paid by developers to the Council when planning permission was granted. S106 funds related to specific projects and remained ringfenced until they were able to be spent.

Resolved

That the contents of the report be noted. (DR)

196 APPOINTMENT OF WORKING GROUP TO REVIEW THE COUNCIL'S OUTSIDE BODIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

The Working Group reviewing the Council's Outside Bodies and Partnership arrangements was constituted comprising of the following Members:-

Cllrs R Lambourne, Mrs J E McPherson, Mrs S J Page, I H Ward and S E Wootton.

197 KEY DECISIONS DOCUMENT

The Committee noted the contents of the Key Decisions Document.

198 WORK PLAN

The Committee noted the contents of the Work Plan.

Members agreed that the following items to be scheduled for this Municipal Year be considered by the Committee as follows:-

- Review of Engagement with Stakeholders and Residents – March 2024
- Pre-Scrutiny of Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plan – February/March 2024
- Outcome of the Council's Planning Service Review – January 2024

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm.

Chairman

Date

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