

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee held on
Wednesday, 20 February 2019 at 5.20 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Grenville Chamberlain – Chairman
Councillor Brian Milnes – Vice-Chairman

Councillors:	Henry Batchelor	Ruth Betson
	Anna Bradnam	Dr. Martin Cahn
	Sarah Cheung Johnson	Gavin Clayton
	Graham Cone	Dr. Claire Daunton
	Bill Handley	Steve Hunt
	Peter McDonald	

Councillors Sue Ellington, Neil Gough, Philippa Hart, Dr. Tumi Hawkins, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Peter Topping, Aidan Van de Weyer, Bunty Waters and John Williams were in attendance, by invitation.

Officers:	Johanna Davies	Economic Development Officer
	Mike Hill	Director of Housing and Environmental Services
	Kathrin John	Democratic Services Team Leader
	Sean Missin	Procurement Officer
	Bob Palmer	Interim Executive Director
	Ian Senior	Democratic Services Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Councillors Dr. Douglas de Lacey and Judith Rippeth sent Apologies for Absence. Councillor Henry Batchelor was substituting for Councillor Rippeth.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee authorised the Chairman to sign, as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2019.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

5. ITEM REQUESTED BY COUNCILLOR PETER TOPPING - CONSERVATIVE GROUP BUDGET PROPOSAL FOR 2019/20

The Committee considered and commented on a budget proposal from the Conservative Group, so that it could be accepted for debate in accordance with the requirements of Council Standing Orders.

Councillor Peter Topping presented this item relating to measures intended to address the issues of fly tipping and street cleaning. The stated aim was to help residents to

show pride in the communities in which they live.

The Committee discussed the legal and practical considerations involved in the proposal that the Council should buy a second drone to identify the precise location of fly tipping. Members questioned Councillor Topping about this, and about the likely costs involved. They also spent time identifying the record to date in successfully prosecuting those accused of fly tipping. Members concluded that there already existed agencies with expertise in the field of rural crime, including fly tipping, and that the Council should strengthen its partnership working rather than introduce new measures of its own.

Councillor Neil Gough, the Lead Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Licensing, highlighted the action already proposed for tackling fly tipping and noted that officers were seeking to improve processes and procedures so that the Council could “work smarter”. He additionally noted that Recycle for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (Recap) was funding a new post to work on fly tipping in Cambridgeshire.

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee **NOTED** that the amendment would be considered by Full Council on 21 February 2019, but did not record its support for the proposal.

6. QUARTER 3 POSITION STATEMENT: PERFORMANCE AND FINANCE

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee considered a report which set out the Council’s Quarter Three position with regard to its General Fund, Housing Revenue Account (HRA), Capital budgets and performance indicators (by exception). The report also provided an update in respect of the Council’s in-flight projects.

- The Committee was informed that outturn was actually expected to be £2.25m, rather than £1.59m as shown in the original papers, owing to an incorrect assumption on the relative shares of the projected outturns. Members noted the corrected projection of outturn for the Planning and Shared Waste services. Whilst welcoming the underspend, Members noted that some of this was due to underspend on staffing, including planning and questioned the action being taken to address difficulties in recruiting staff.
- Members questioned why the bid for AV equipment in the Council Chamber had been rejected, but were pleased to hear that proposals were under consideration for live streaming of meetings, which they felt would support public engagement in meetings.
- The Committee welcomed the inclusion of the new ‘In Flight Project Tracker’ which Members found very useful. It hoped that this would be updated on and submitted to the Committee on an ongoing basis.

The Committee received and **NOTED** the report.

7. BARRIERS TO PROCUREMENT FROM SMES TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Committee considered the report of the Barriers to Council Procurement for SMEs Task and Finish Group. The Task and Finish Group had reviewed the Council’s existing procurement processes with a view to ensuring that Council contracts were accessible to local small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). It had developed a series of recommendations which, if implemented, could significantly improve the skills and knowledge of local companies and reduce the resource requirements when applying for Council contracts.

During discussion:

- Members welcomed the recommendations from the Task and Finish Group, which they felt would improve accessibility of SMEs to Council contracts and help support local business growth. The Committee congratulated the Members and Officers involved in producing the report.
- Members commented that the assumption should not be made that SMEs would not want to tender for larger contracts and should not be disadvantaged by the tendering process. However they recognised the need to strike an appropriate balance between simplification of procedures and at the same time having robust provisions and safeguards in place.
- Members noted the impact on cash flow of businesses caused by late payments and in that respect noted that the RAG rating for payment of invoices by the Council (FS 109 - % invoices paid in 30 days) in the Quarter 3 Position Statement, was red. Members wished to highlight the need for performance to improve in the interests of our local businesses.

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee **RECOMMENDED**:

- (1) That Cabinet approve the recommendations of the Barriers to Procurement for SMEs Task and Finish Group.
- (2) That progress against the recommendations be reviewed in 12 months.

8. UPDATE FROM SCRUTINY ICT WORKING GROUP

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee received an update from the Scrutiny ICT Working Group, which advised the Committee of its serious concerns regarding the governance and management of the ICT Shared Service.

The Committee was updated verbally as follows:-

- The Working Group believed that governance was weak and lacked Member involvement.
- A number of key documents which the Working Group had asked to see, appeared to be either missing or unavailable. Records of reports, minutes and decision making were not available. It appeared that meetings had taken place without all three partners present.
- No entity existed to deliver the shared service.
- No cost allocation system appeared to be in place.
- There was no 3C ICT Business Continuity Plan, Disaster Recovery Plan and Security Policy.
- The first time a shutdown and recovery test had been undertaken was on 9th February 2019. There was no evidence of any process in place to ensure proper testing took place.
- There was a concern to ensure that the people producing the disaster recovery plan, should not be the same as those testing it.
- The Working Group was deeply concerned at the risks to the Council and believed that all documents requested by it should be made available urgently and, if not in existence, the Working Group should be informed accordingly.
- The Working Group was still in discovery phase but its scope was widening. It was likely to recommend bringing in external support for the service.

The Committee was informed that the Chairman had written to his counterparts at

Cambridge City and Huntingdonshire District Council. He had received a response and agreement to a meeting from the City Council Chairman, but no response to date from the Chairman at Huntingdonshire District Council. A proposal had been made for a joint scrutiny review of the service.

The Committee noted that the Lead Cabinet Member for Customer Services and Business Improvement had attended a meeting in place of the Leader last week, and had raised a number of concerns including in relation to Member involvement; compliance with the Service Level Agreement; service performance; the need for requests for evidence to be acceded to in full and the need to set up a joint scrutiny. Some assurances in relation to these issues had been received.

The Committee noted that the Leader had another meeting scheduled with partners that week and would raise these concerns again.

The Committee was informed that the consultants undertaking the organisational review had also identified the Shared ICT Service as the Council's greatest risk.

Following a suggestion by the Leader, the Committee supported a proposal to share the update at agenda item 8, setting out the Working Group's concerns about the lack of policies and testing, with the Chief Executives and Leaders of the partner councils.

The Committee was concerned at the delay in the Council Anywhere project, which was hampering the effective working of staff, most notably the newly established joint Planning service.

The Committee concluded that the Working Group should be provided with the 3C ICT Business Plan immediately, even if this was in a draft form.

The Committee **NOTED** the verbal update from the Scrutiny ICT Working Group

9. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received and noted the work programme and the Notice of Key and Non-Key Decisions.

The Chairman noted that the 3C Shared Services Business Plans had been identified as a non-key decision but, in the light of the earlier discussion on ICT, was of the view that the ICT Business Plan should be considered as a "significant" item and therefore referred for review by the Scrutiny and Overview Committee.

Following questions by Members, officers undertook to review progress on taking forward the work of the task and finish groups on Rural Crime and Gypsy and Traveller needs and Issues.

10. MONITORING THE EXECUTIVE

Councillor Dr. Claire Daunton reported on discussions with the Lead Cabinet Member for Housing on the issues of staffing in the housing department and on the consultation in respect of the Housing Strategy.

11. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee noted that its next scheduled meeting would be on Thursday 21 March 2019, starting at 5.20pm.

The Meeting ended at 7.10 p.m.

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