

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday, 11 January 2017 in City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 5.35 pm
Concluded 7.05 pm

Present – Councillors

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR
BM Smith Rickard Cooke	Arshad Hussain Warburton Duffy Green Watson

Observer: Councillor Hinchcliffe (Leader of Council)

Apologies: Councillor Jeanette Sunderland and Councillor Adrian Naylor

Councillor Arshad Hussain in the Chair

78. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No disclosures of interest in matters under consideration were received.

79. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

There were no appeals submitted by the public to review decisions to restrict documents.



80. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The following recommendation had been referred to this Committee by the Regeneration and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting held on 22 December 2016:

THEATRES STRATEGY

Resolved –

- (1) That Document “O” be noted and officers be thanked for the tour of the Alhambra that took place prior to the meeting.
- (2) That the Consultancy Option Appraisal report be presented to Members the Regeneration and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the earliest possible opportunity and that the Terms of Reference for the report be circulated to the Committee Members immediately.
- (3) That the Regeneration and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertake a tour of St George’s Hall whilst contractors are still on site.
- (4) That the General Manager, Theatres Bradford and his team be congratulated for an extremely successful year and the team be thanked for the hard work.
- (5) **That the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee be requested to look at the internal finance options for the Council’s Commercial Services.**

ACTION: Assistant Direct, Sport and Culture

Resolved –

That a report on the Council’s Trading Services be submitted to this Committee which explores the internal finance options for the Council’s Commercial Services.

ACTION: Strategic Director Place

81. DISCUSSION ON THE WELL RUN COUNCIL / CORPORATE SERVICES

There was a discussion at the meeting which focused on the prepared budget proposals in relation to a Well Run Council/Corporate Services.



Appendix C of the Proposed Financial Plan 2017/18-2020/21 Budget (Executive Document “AJ”) considered by Executive at its meeting held on 6 December 2016 had been circulated to aid the discussion.

The Chair commented that in the absence of a detailed report, it was difficult for Members to understand the information that had been presented by way of appendix c. In response the Strategic Director Corporate Services explained that the appendix set out the budget context for the Corporate Services area, and formed part of the larger Executive budget document that had been presented in early December.

He went onto explain the proposed budget savings proposals for each of the service areas that fell under the Corporate Services umbrella, with a £0.6m overall savings proposal for 2017/18 and £2.7m for 2018/19.

Financial Services – That the proposed savings of £162,000 would be achieved through reduced staffing, primarily via voluntary redundancies and retirement. He stressed that that the Service was already a low cost functioning service compared to other local authorities of a similar size.

In response to a question regarding the level of staffing in the last 5 years, it was pointed out that the number of staff currently stood at 58, compared to 95 in 2010.

Insurance Services – The proposed saving of £500,000 would be achieved by reducing the level of the premiums and departments reducing the number of claims. In addition explore the possibility of selling on insurance to generate income.

In response to a question on how deliverable this ambition was in the context of reduced local government funding, its impact on service delivery and the possibility of more potential claims, the Strategic Director acknowledged that the savings target was ambitious and that sometimes significant claims can be made, which were difficult to predict, particularly in relation to claims pertaining to defects in the highway.

In relation to a question regarding shopping around in order to get a lower premium, the Strategic Director explained that although this was possible and Local Authorities were exploring the possibility of mutual cover on a joint basis, there were risks associated with this arrangement, and in any case the level of cover offered by the current provider was second to none and an excellent relationship had been forged over the years.

Revenues and Benefits – That the proposed saving of £160,000 would be achieved by reducing the amount of cash circulating within the organisation and the transportation of it, by moving to a cashless system.



A Member suggested that replacing the current cash only parking meters to a cashless system would significantly reduce the amount of cash that needed collecting.

Contribution of West Yorkshire Joint Committee - That the proposed £110,000 saving would be achieved by capping Bradford's contribution, becoming more financially viable in the process through the selling of services.

Information Technology Services - That the proposed saving of £500,000 would be achieved by re-sizing of the service and using more cost effective software solutions.

Human Resources – The proposal to save £204,000 and £400,000 relating to Terms and Conditions would be achieved by reducing transactional HR support and other HR functions. In addition removing anomalies in relation to the payment of car allowances.

Legal and Democratic Services – The proposal to save £75,000 through reconfiguration of services, however details had not been agreed at this stage.

A Member stated that it was important to look at the Council's decision making structure and have a debate on how Committee meetings can be rationalised.

A Member suggested the idea of moving towards paperless agendas as a way of saving money, as well as being more politically savvy on how matters are dealt with across the Committee structure.

Officer of the Chief Executive - The proposal to save £479,000 through a restructure of the Chief Executive's Office.

Regeneration – Asset management – The proposal to save £510,000 by changes in the management of the Council's operational and investment estate and other changes including investment ambitions.

In relation to the investment options, a Member expressed a word of caution, particularly in terms of the tax liability arising from investments. In response the Strategic Director stressed in order to exploit any income streams, the income potential would have to be guaranteed.

In relation to the Community Asset Transfer process, a Member highlighted the need to simplify the CAT process and make it more viable, otherwise there was a danger of the process becoming unworkable. In response the Strategic Director stated that efforts were on going to work with organisations to ensure deliverability. The Leader of Council was also present at the meeting and stated that there were some financial barriers and hence the Council had to be patient with community organisations in order to make Community Asset Transfer a viable process.



The Chair thanked the Strategic Director Corporate Services for attending the meeting and responding to Member's questions.

No resolution was passed on this item.

82. RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE 2016

The Director of Finance submitted a report (**Document "AI"**) which provided an update on progress made with risk management across the authority during 2016.

The Head of Internal Audit, Insurance, Information Governance and Risk explained that there had been minimal changes to the Corporate Risk Register in 2016, although there had been changes within the individual risk, but these were not considered fundamental.

During the discussion, a Member stated that this was a difficult report to compile and that it lacked clarity and detail, with confusion as to what outcomes the Council wanted to achieve. He stressed that some of the risks such as educational attainment he would consider were objectives and possibly not a risk, and he suggested that it would be more useful to align risk to what the Council needed to deliver or were desired outcomes in the Budget.

A Member commented that he appreciated it was good practice in compiling a risk register, however many aspects were outside of the Council's control, and it may be more useful to have a register that had more tangible, localised risks.

The Strategic Director Corporate Services acknowledged the comments and highlighted that in assessing risk a wider view had to be taken, so that the Council was aware of these risks. In addition aligning our risk register to our budget objectives and corporate planning would be better starting point.

In response to a question on how Services identified risks, the Head of Internal Audit stated that Services identified risks pertinent to them, and although we could advise on how to manage a particular risk, ultimately it was the responsibility of individual departments.

A Member suggested that the respective Overview and Scrutiny Committees have an oversight on risk in their area of responsibility and that Portfolio Holders are also fully apprised of the situation, and it was therefore:

Resolved –

- (1) That the Executive ensures that Portfolio Holders review Departmental Risk Registers in their respective areas of responsibility.**



- (2) That this Committee requests that all Overview and Scrutiny Committees consider Departmental Risk Registers relevant to their area of responsibility.
- (3) That a progress report be presented to this Committee in 12 months time.

ACTION: City Solicitor (1) / Overview and Scrutiny Lead (2)

83. CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17

The Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee submitted a report (**Document "AJ"**) which set out the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme for 2016/17.

Resolved –

That an item on managing migration be added to the Work Programme.

ACTION: Overview and Scrutiny Lead

Chair

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

THESE MINUTES HAVE BEEN PRODUCED, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, ON RECYCLED PAPER

