

BUDGET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Budget Scrutiny Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne, on Monday 7th March 2016 at 1000 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:- Councillors A. Anderson, R.J. Bowler, P.M. Bowmer, G. Buxton, J.A. Clifton, C.P. Cooper, Mrs P.A. Cooper, H.J. Gilmour, R.A. Heffer, D. McGregor, C. Moesby, T. Munro, S. Peake, J.E. Smith, S. Statter, R. Turner, K.F. Walker, D.S. Watson and J. Wilson.

Officers: - B. Mason (Executive Director – Operations) and A. Bluff (Governance Officer).

Also in attendance at the meeting was C. Millington (Scrutiny Officer).

Councillor S.W. Fritchley in the Chair

0846. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors J.E. Bennett, D. Bullock, M. Dixey, A. Joesbury, E. Stevenson and B. Watson.

0847. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

0848. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

0849. MINUTES – 21ST JANUARY 2016

Moved by Councillor A. Anderson and seconded by Councillor S. W. Fritchley,

RESOLVED that subject to Councillor T. Buxton being changed to Councillor G. Buxton, the Minutes of a Budget Scrutiny Committee held on 21st January 2016, be approved as a correct record.

(Governance Manager)

0850. CHANGE TO ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chair consented to a change in order of business to that stated on the agenda. Agenda Item 7; CCTV, would be heard before agenda items 5 and 6, Update from Scrutiny Chairs and Local Government Budget Survey.

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0851. CCTV

Committee considered a detailed report of the Executive Director – Operations regarding a review of the future of BDC funded CCTV systems across the District. A slide presentation was also provided to Members in relation to the report.

Members were asked to note that the draft report was a discussion report for Budget Scrutiny Committee and was intended to progress to Executive following the discussion.

The report noted that as compliance with legislation concerning the operation of CCTV systems was becoming increasingly challenging, the Council may struggle to demonstrate that existing arrangements had a sufficiently positive outcome to justify the continued use of CCTV.

The replacement CCTV system was procured in 2012 and whilst the original tender aimed to provide a system that was the same quality as a town centre based system, with 24/7 monitoring, tenders came in significantly over budget.

As part of the negotiations to secure an affordable system and to maximise the contributions made by parish councils, (which excluded Bolsover as the Town Council did not consider it appropriate to make a contribution towards funding the scheme), a reduced scheme was proposed in March 2013. Costs were minimised by reducing the quality of the hardware, frequency of monitoring and increased reuse of existing kit.

A key fundamental change was the switch from hard wired to Wi-Fi links between the cameras and the monitoring centre. The system as commissioned was operational but problematic in that it did not meet expectations in respect of output quality, system downtime and providing robust data links. There had also been issues concerning where the appropriate location of the cameras was and with the monitoring service which was provided by a third party. In overall terms the picture which emerged was one of a service which fell significantly below expected standards.

Officers continue to work with the supplier to address performance issues and to secure improvements that would enable the system to meet the expectations of the Council and its partners. It was noted that the Council had only paid for those periods where there had been an acceptable level of monitoring.

As there was a general reluctance to undertake further investment in the system, with some of the partners in the town and parish councils withholding agreed contributions, it was necessary to consider the options in order to resolve the issues identified.

In terms of background information it was noted that while when CCTV was first introduced, the areas the cameras were currently based at enjoyed a significant night-time economy, that, over recent years there had been a decline in the number of pubs operating and a reduction in customers. This trend away from an active night time economy clearly works towards undermining the basis on which CCTV was originally installed.

The Surveillance Camera Code of Practice stated that cameras must be used “in pursuit of a legitimate aim” and to meet an identified “pressing need”. The Council was also required to publish performance statistics to demonstrate that need.

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A table in the report, which provided crime and anti social behaviour statistics in the relevant Safer Neighbourhood Areas since TIS took over the contract in 2013, suggested that since the contract had been in place there had been a 2.4% increase in crime in these areas and a 3% reduction in anti social behaviour.

A further table in the report suggested that from November 2013 to September 2015, a total of 66 incidents were recorded on CCTV. Moreover, the number of incidents had declined during the period from around 5 or 6 incidents per month to less than 2 incidents per month. There was no information on the number of prosecutions that had been successful as a result of the CCTV information and overall there was no substantive evidence that the CCTV system was acting as a deterrent to crime.

All aspects of CCTV were covered by the Data Protection Act 1998, Regulation of Investigatory Powers 2000 (RIPA), Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and the Human Rights Act 1998 (because the Council is a public authority). The Information Commissioner's Office Code of Practice for surveillance cameras and personal information (May 2015) governed how CCTV must operate and this year the Council had been asked to complete a Surveillance Camera self assessment tool under the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice (June 2013) and report back to the Surveillance Camera Commissioner.

By contrast to the other schemes, the CCTV system at the Riverside Depot was designed for the security of the building and the people who worked at the Depot and not designed to monitor public areas.

During 2012, there were incidents of theft and damage in the Depot yard totalling almost £25k. Since the installation of CCTV and the move of Central Control to the Depot there had been a significant decrease in thefts with only minor issues arising.

The system at the Depot worked well but was monitored through the control centre at Chesterfield. With some minor investment, the system could be monitored within Central Control at the Depot and therefore saving on the ongoing revenue cost. A recommendation in the report was that the system be retained with the monitoring carried out by Central Control regardless of the decisions made on the other schemes.

With regard to the other schemes, officers considered that the current CCTV system did not provide value for money for the Council and that a reinvestment of current resources into deployable camera kits was likely to be both cheaper and provide better outcomes in terms of addressing criminal activity and anti social behaviour.

The potential costs of the various options were outlined in the report along with four recommendations that;

- The Council sought to conclude the current arrangements in respect of CCTV at the earliest opportunity,
- The CCTV system at the Riverside Depot be retained with monitoring being switched from Chesterfield to Central Control at the Depot and with consideration given to introducing a system on the Arc site at Clowne.
- The Assistant Director - Community Safety to write to the parish councils at Clowne, South Normanton and Creswell and also the Town Council at Shirebrook, to ask if they wished to take over the operation of the CCTV. If this was accepted, the

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equipment would be gifted to the relevant council on an “as seen” basis, while if the parishes did not wish to take responsibility for the systems, the equipment to be removed and disposed of appropriately.

- On conclusion of the above matters, a further report be brought back to Executive setting out the options for acquiring deployable camera kits for use by Environmental Health and the CAN Rangers and to consider whether installing upgraded CCTV at the Arc would be an appropriate option.

Members asked various questions.

Members noted that there were no views from the Safer Neighbourhoods Team or the Police and Crime Commissioner (P&CC) in the report to assist with evaluating the effectiveness of the current CCTV installations. .

A lengthy discussion took place.

Members felt that the report did not provide enough evidence to enable them to make a balanced, reasonable judgement regarding the options available in relation to the CCTV. They also felt a wider debate was necessary with the relevant people and that mobile cameras needed to be looked into further.

Moved by Councillor T. Munro and seconded by Councillor S.W. Fritchley

RESOLVED that (1) further evidence be presented to Members to enable a balanced, reasonable judgement to be made regarding the options available in relation to the CCTV, with a wider debate taking place with the relevant people,

(2) a more detailed look into mobile cameras

(Executive Director – Operations/Governance Manager)

0852. UPDATE FROM SCRUTINY CHAIRS

Customer Service and Improvement Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Bowler, Chair of Customer Service and Improvement Scrutiny Committee, advised the meeting that there was no further update since the last meeting of Budget Scrutiny Committee.

Healthy, Safe, Clean and Green Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Peake, Chair of Healthy, Safe, Clean and Green Scrutiny Committee, reported that the Committee had received a presentation from the Joint Housing Ambition Project, which highlighted to young people the financial burdens of running a home and to dispel the myths that young people could leave home and immediately be given a council house. Committee Members had felt the presentation was good. The presentation had also been provided to secondary schools in the District.

The project aimed to raise awareness of issues that could lead to homelessness amongst 13-17 year olds and the Ambition Mediation Service was a prevention tool to prevent 16 to 25 year olds having to leave the family home due to conflict. Similar schemes quoted an 80 - 87% success rate in preventing crisis homelessness. Comments from young people

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included that it was a successful presentation which made them think about their future. It was planned to receive a presentation to a future Member Development meeting. Councillor Peake had also attained a copy of a directory from a course she had attended in relation to raising awareness of mental health in young people. The directory included useful information and contact telephone numbers and this could be copied and passed on to community centres, parish councils etc. Members were welcome to a copy of the directory.

The next meeting of Healthy, Safe, Clean and Green Scrutiny Committee would receive a presentation on the Five/60 programme.

Growth Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Fritchley, Chair of Growth Scrutiny Committee, advised the meeting that the Committee was actively discussing ways to assist the Executive and officers in having a 'business like' approach to bringing income into the Council.

The Committee had met informally to discuss ideas of how to support the Authority and increase revenue income streams. Councillor Fritchley was due to meet with the Chief Executive officer to discuss some of these ideas.

0853. LOCAL GOVERNMENT BUDGET SURVEY

Members considered a document of the Council's external auditors, KPMG, in relation to a local government survey on budget monitoring. A slide presentation was also provided to Members in relation to the document.

The document was aimed at helping KPMG clients to take a fresh look at their approach to budget setting and monitoring.

Budgets would need to become more flexible and responsive to changes within financial years and the document highlighted numerous points for councils to consider, including;

- Measures used to balance budget
- Pay and Pension Increases
- Factors Impacting on Budget
- Level of Reserves
- Assets

A Member felt that the Government was answerable to the questions highlighted in the document as the Government had control over new homes bonus, national non domestic rates, devolution, 1% rent reduction and council tax etc. He also noted that the Council's Audit Committee looked at the issues raised in the document. The Executive Director – Operations added that KPMG also attended Audit Committee and Members were always welcome to ask questions at those meetings.

In respect of assets and risk, a Member referred to Pleasley Vale and felt that this needed to be looked at. The Executive Director – Operations replied that both a joint venture being looked at and also other options in respect of Pleasley Vale as it was a longer term risk.

The meeting concluded at 1120 hours.