

CUSTOMER SERVICE AND TRANSFORMATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, the Arc, Clowne, on Monday 4th September 2017 at 1000 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:- Councillors Mrs P.M. Bowmer, P. Cooper, M.G. Crane, R.A. Heffer, A. Joesbury, D. McGregor, J.E. Smith, E. Stevenson and R. Turner.

Officers:- D. Swaine (Chief Executive Officer) (to Minute No 0181 only), D. Clarke (Assistant Director Finance, Revenues and Benefits) (to Minute No 0181 only), P. Campbell (Assistant Director – Community Safety and Head of Housing) (to Minute No. 0182 only), D. Cairns (Governance Manager (Acting)) and A. Bluff (Governance Officer).

Councillor R.J. Bowler in the Chair

0175. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Mrs P.M. Bowmer and R.A. Heffer and L. Cheong (Scrutiny Officer (Acting)).

0176. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

0177. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

0178. MINUTES – 24th JULY 2017

Moved by Councillor J.E. Smith and seconded by Councillor R.J. Bowler

RESOLVED that the Minutes of a Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 24th July 2017, be approved as a correct record.

0179. LIST OF KEY DECISIONS AND ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE.

Moved by Councillor J.E. Smith and seconded Councillor R.J. Bowler

RESOLVED that the List of Key Decisions and Items to be considered in private document be noted.

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0180. TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME – PRESENTATION BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The Chief Executive Officer provided a presentation to Members in relation to an update on the Council's Transformation Programme.

The presentation covered the background to the Transformation Programme, which was initially launched in January 2014 and revised in September 2015, to deliver a savings target of £600,000 per Council (Bolsover District and North East Derbyshire District Councils) for 2015/2020/21.

The Programme was a list of 36 initiatives or projects - some across the Strategic Alliance and some distinct to Bolsover District Council. The list classified the 36 initiatives into headings of transforming assets, services and workforce.

Reporting of progress towards the £600,000 target was done collectively via the quarterly performance reports.

The current position was that £260,000 of savings had been delivered so far with £340,000 remaining to meet the target.

Other savings, which had been identified in 2016/17, had reached an outturn of £1.43m, however, although these savings or 'additional income' contributed to the Council's financial position, they were not reflected in the list of Transformation initiatives or projects as they were considered as budgetary savings or surpluses, i.e., not considered as part of an agreed Transformation programme.

The Council needed to ensure that savings or income were based on clear, accepted and endorsed operating principles.

A table in the presentation set out the extent of the challenge to the Council for 2020/21 and showed the budget shortfall for each year and the options identified to address it.

These were;

- National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) Growth Target
- Transformation, Secondments and Joint working
- Vacancy Management
- Assumed Council Tax Increase
- Unidentified savings target / call on reserves

Key Issues

Even with assumptions of NNDR Growth, vacancy management and Council tax increases there was still a significant shortfall from 2018/19.

The 2019/20 figures were based on the assumption that the loss of Revenue Support Grant (RSG) was offset by the existing arrangement for NNDR redistribution. This was a risk because if it reduced then the shortfall would increase. Further, if economic growth slowed, there would be additional pressure.

The existing programme did not specify how the unidentified savings targets would be met. The Council needed to determine how useable reserves could be maximised.

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Actions

The Council needed to;

- Review the existing programme
- Agree the foundations for a future programme
- Develop, deliver and monitor the revised programme

A new programme would need to be based around clear operating principles;

- Business cost reduction
- Service redesign
- Income maximisation

A new programme would also need to be;

- Understood and agreed by Members
- Developed involving staff so it became part of the way the Council does business
- Using Scrutiny to help with developing and delivering the content

Members welcomed the presentation and a discussion took place.

Members felt that the Council should consider whether greater risk taking with respect of investments and treasury management would be appropriate. The Assistant Director Finance, Revenues and Benefits advised the meeting that the Council's Treasury Management advisors, Arlingclose Ltd, could provide Members with a presentation on this.

The Chief Executive Officer noted that the Council needed a clear strategy on financial risk taking; although more could be done, full Council approval would be required which would also need to be part of the Council's financial management programme.

Committee agreed with the Chief Executive Officer's comments.

A Member felt that the Council needed to look at how it operated as a business and that Cabinet be asked to look at ways for all Scrutiny Members to be involved and understand the path that the Council needed to take in developing the transformation programme.

The Chief Executive Officer suggested that Scrutiny Committees could be involved individually as well as all Members being involved collectively through Council meetings, and that a wider engagement of Members' ideas could be held through workshops.

Members thanked the Chief Executive Officer for his presentation and requested a copy of the slides to be emailed to them along with a list of Transformation Programme Projects which were agreed in September 2015.

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor and seconded by Councillor E. Stevenson
RESOLVED that the presentation be noted.

The Chief Executive Officer and the Assistant Director Finance, Revenues and Benefits left the meeting.

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0181. NEW BOLSOVER DRAFT LOCAL LETTINGS SCHEME

Committee considered a draft Local Lettings Scheme in relation to properties at New Bolsover.

Section 166A(6)(b) of the Housing Act 1996, enabled housing authorities to allocate particular accommodation to people of a particular description outside a council's standard allocations procedure, provided that overall the authority was able to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of S.166A(3), '*to give overall priority for an allocation to people in the reasonable preference categories*'. This was the statutory basis for 'local lettings schemes', which may be used to achieve a wide variety of housing management and policy objectives.

The New Bolsover Local Lettings scheme would apply to all 196 Council owned properties at New Bolsover; the majority of which were or would be 2 bed houses after refurbishment works had been carried out.

The refurbishment required relocating tenants and residents, therefore, the scheme would only apply to all new lets, (i.e. to tenants who were not current Bolsover tenants at New Bolsover) and any subsequent lets thereafter for a total of three years; the three years commencing after the completion of works to the final property.

A Member queried why this type of lettings scheme couldn't be carried out District wide. The Assistant Director – Community Safety and Head of Housing replied that New Bolsover had had a high level of anti social behaviour in the past and this local lettings scheme would ensure a balanced, sustainable community.

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor and seconded by Councillor R.J. Bowler
RECOMMENDED that Council approve the draft Local Lettings Scheme for New Bolsover.

(Assistant Director – Community Safety and Head of Housing)

Councillor Stevenson and the Assistant Director – Community Safety and Head of Housing left the meeting at this point.

0182. WORK PLAN 2017/2018

Committee considered their Work Plan which would be updated with items raised by Members under the Chief Executive Officer's presentation on the Transformation agenda. Members also discussed whether the Committee's Work Plan might have capacity to consider a review of the Strategic Alliance during 2017/18 and agreed to consider this at the next meeting.

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor and seconded by Councillor R.J. Bowler
RESOLVED that the Work Plan be noted.

(Governance Manager (Acting))/Scrutiny Officer (Acting))

The meeting concluded at 1115 hours.