

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STRATEGY COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, CORKS LANE, HADLEIGH ON THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2015

PRESENT: Jennie Jenkins – Chairman

Clive Arthey
Simon Barrett
Sue Carpendale
Alan Ferguson
David Holland

Richard Kemp
Frank Lawrenson
Jan Osborne
Peter Patrick

16 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None declared.

17 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on [9 July 2015](#) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

18 PETITIONS

None received.

19 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None received.

20 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

21 FORWARD PLAN

The Corporate Manager – Governance submitted [Paper R41](#) relating to items which had been identified on the Forward Plan. Members were aware that the Plan is updated on an on-going basis to reflect changing timescales and with a view to managing agendas.

RESOLVED

That the contents of Paper R41 be noted.

22 FINANCIAL MONITORING 2015/16 – QUARTER 1

Jennie Jenkins, Finance and Resources Portfolio Holder, introduced [Paper R42](#) covering the forecast position based on the financial performance of the Council during the first three months of the financial year.

She drew Members' attention to some of the key points as set out in the report in relation to the favourable variance on the General Fund, the review of the HRA Business Plan, the reduction in the Capital Programme overall and the removal of the Regeneration Fund, which has now been superseded by the approval of £25m in the 2015/16 Capital Programme.

The Interim Corporate Manager – Financial Services, the Strategic Director (Corporate) and the Strategic Director (Place) responded to questions from Members on various matters including the following:-

- Definition of terms used in the 'Risk Management' section – information will be supplied to Members outside the meeting.
- ICT overspend – para 9 of Paper R42 – now moving towards a reduced baseline.
- Use of Transformation Fund – para 10.6(b) to fund the general budget – not appropriate to reduce reserves further at this stage. Income from the development of new revenue streams and via house building and increased Business Rates will be required to increase income in future years.
- Benchmarking – confirmed that this is in place across a wide range of services including Local Land Charge Searches (the effect of the increase in personal searches was noted) and HRA management costs.
- Solar Panels – Strategic Director (Place) to email Members with an update on the current discussions between officers and contractors and in relation to the Feed in Tariff changes.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the new 'outcome focused approach' to financial monitoring be noted.**
- (2) That the potential or likely variations in relation to the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Programme compared to the Budget be noted.**
- (3) That, subject to any further budget variations that arise during the rest of the financial year, General Fund savings of £8,000 referred to in sections 10.5 (a) and (b) and 10.6 (c) of Paper R42 be transferred to the Transformation Fund.**
- (4) That the revised 2015/16 Capital Programme referred to in Appendix B of the report be approved.**

23 STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE OUTCOME REPORTING – QUARTER 1

Karen Coll, Business Improvement Manager – Corporate, introduced Paper [R43](#) which provided Councillors with information on the developing new joint 'outcome focused performance approach' whilst demonstrating that the existing framework continues to be managed until the new approach launches in December.

The Business Improvement Manager – Corporate referred to the aim of the new approach which is to understand outcomes and support strategic priorities through the use of small baskets of outcome and impact measures, focused case studies and transparent data.

The Business Improvement Manager – Corporate, and the Strategic Director (Place), Lindsay Barker, then answered questions from Members about various aspects of the report, including:-

- Item 9, Appendix A – average time to re-let council houses – Action Plan in place to reduce times which are affected by eg – condition of the property or being in a ‘hard to let’ category
- Item 11, Appendix A – increase instead of decrease against the baseline – % based on a small sample
- Reservations expressed about quarterly reports being replaced by self-serve data access in relation to ensuring that differences/discrepancies are apparent – Lindsay Barker confirmed that reporting draft ‘baskets’ to Portfolio Holders should mean early identification of any such issues.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the developing new joint ‘outcome focused performance approach’ be noted.**
- (2) That the frequency of quarterly reports (in line with budget monitoring reporting) be approved.**
- (3) That the performance monitoring information contained in Paper R43 for 2014/15 and the first quarter of 2015 be noted.**

24 ACCOMMODATION UPDATE

Jennie Jenkins, Finance and Resources Portfolio Holder, introduced [Paper R44](#) to update the Committee on the changing context for the Accommodation Review and seek its steer on the way forward. The report proposed the production of a plan for short term accommodation usage and a longer term strategy based on the ‘hub and spokes’ model previously approved.

During the course of the discussion reference was made to the development of some ‘spokes’ in market towns and the Strategic Director (Corporate) confirmed that discussions were on-going regarding Sudbury Town Council’s building. Members were aware of the Suffolk-wide collaborative working and that questions of public access, resources, democratic identity, co-location and the digitalisation agenda were all being taken into account.

Jennie Jenkins, Finance and Resources Portfolio Holder, and the Strategic Directors (Corporate and Place) answered questions from Members.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the update on the Accommodation Review, as set out in Paper R44, including the changing context for the Review, be noted.**

- (2) That the next steps as set out in paragraph 13.1 of the report be agreed.**

The business of the meeting was concluded at 6.10pm

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Chairman