

**MINUTES OF CORPORATE SERVICES POLICY AND CHALLENGE GROUP
MEETING HELD ON 27 FEBRUARY 2019**

Present: Councillors F Chapman (Chair), P Downing and D McVicar
CFO P Fuller, T/ACO G Chambers, Mr J Atkinson, SOC C Ball, Mr P Hughes and GC I McLaren

18-19/CS/42 Apologies

42.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P Duckett, M Headley and R Saleem.

18-19/CS/43 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

43.1 There were no declarations of interests.

18-19/CS/44 Communications

44.1 The Policy and Challenge Group received the Minutes of the meetings of the ICT Shared Service Governance Board held on 8 February 2019.

44.2 Mr P Hughes, the Head of ICT, advised that the Shared Service had a long-standing vacant service engineer post. A number of recruitment exercises had been unsuccessful. The spinal column points were being readjusted from April 2019 and there would be an uplift in the salary for the grade of that post. If this was not sufficient to attract suitable candidates then a discussion may need to be held at a job evaluation panel to increase the grade so that the salary was set at an acceptable market rate.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meetings of the ICT Shared Service Governance Board held on 8 February 2019 be received.

18-19/CS/45 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2018 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

18-19/CS/46 Corporate Services Performance Monitoring Report - Quarter 3

46.1 The Temporary ACO submitted the 2018/19 third quarter report on the Corporate Services performance against Corporate Services performance indicators and associated targets. All indicators were reporting as green.

RESOLVED:

That the progress made and matters arising from the Corporate Services Performance be acknowledged.

18-19/CS/47 Corporate Services Programmes to date - Quarter 3

- 47.1 The Temporary ACO introduced a report for 2018/19 Quarter three, detailing progress against and the status of the Corporate Services Programme and Projects to date.
- 47.2 The Fleet Asset Management System was reporting as Green and the project was currently out to tender.
- 47.3 The KPI Data Hub had been added as a new project. The Head of ICT reported on a collaborative project with the University of Bedfordshire to build a data hub that would allow the Service to extract data from various sources to facilitate the use and reporting of performance information. Phase 1 of the project would include Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) around prevention, protection and response, with Corporate Services measures added later in the year. Data should be captured from the start of April 2019 onwards, with reporting available from the end of the first quarter of 2019-20 onwards.
- 47.4 In response to questions, the Head of ICT confirmed that the data hub would be capable of being integrated with the Service's other ICT systems. The brief given to the University had specified that the hub be built using a modular approach and that it would be able to be supported internally going forward.
- 47.5 Councillor Downing referred to a presentation that was recently given to the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on digitalisation. He would forward this to the Head of ICT for information.
- 47.6 The Temporary ACO reported that the Fire Safety Protection –Replacement Management Information System and Prevention Replacement Management Information System were both reporting as amber.
- 47.7 The Sharepoint Upgrade and VDI Upgrade Project were reporting as green.

47.8 In relation to the Unified Communications project, the Head of ICT advised that the project would be re-baselined. The Service was in the final stages of preparation for the supplier's health check on the system prior to it being handed over to the supplier. It was anticipated that project should be reporting as green at the next meeting of the Policy and Challenge Group.

47.9 It was noted that the HR/Payroll system project was due to be signed off as complete at the next programme board.

RESOLVED:

That the progress made to date on Corporate Services Programme and Projects be acknowledged.

18-19/CS/48 Proposed Corporate Services Indicators and Targets for 2019/20

48.1 The Temporary ACO presented the proposed suite of Corporate Services performance indicators and associated targets for 2019/20 and sought the Group's endorsement to incorporate these into the Service's performance management framework.

48.2 It was recognised that these may need to be revisited following the next meeting of the FRA if the changes proposed to the Policy and Challenge Groups were agreed.

48.3 The Temporary ACO advised that the only change proposed to the finance indicators was an increase in the target for FNP8 (return on investment) to 1.00%, in line with anticipated interest rate increases.

48.4 Two ICT targets had been amended following discussions at the Corporate Management Team meeting on 25 February 2019. The target for ICT1 (user satisfaction) had been increased from 80% to 85% and the target for IM1 (the Number of Incidents on Mission Critical services resolved within 1 Hour) had been increased from 85% to 90%.

48.5 In response to a question, the Head of ICT reported that there had been a recent restructure in ICT and expressed the view that the new structure would need time to bed in before any further increases in the target should be considered.

48.6 SOC C Ball reported that, as a result of the introduction of the new fleet asset management system and the ability of this system to extract more useful data, it was suggested that WS2a-WS4 be removed from the performance report.

48.7 It was also proposed to increase the targets for WS5 (the total time expressed as a % when ALL appliances were available for operational use after the turn-a-round time and idle time are removed from the total time in the reporting period) to 95% and for WS6 (annual services undertaken) to 100%.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed suite of Corporate Services performance indicators and targets for 2019/20 be endorsed.

18-19/CS/49 New Internal Audit Report Completed to date

- 49.1 The Temporary ACO introduced the report on the audits completed since the last meeting of the Policy and Challenge Group. Two internal audits had been completed in the period: Key Financial Controls and Risk Management.
- 49.2 An opinion of substantial assurance had been given in relation to Key Financial Controls with only one low priority recommendation being identified.
- 49.3 Risk Management had been awarded a reasonable assurance opinion, with four medium priority and four low priority actions identified.
- 49.4 GC I McLaren advised that, arising from the Risk Management audit, the use of the Abriska system was being expanded.

RESOLVED:

That the attached internal audit report be received and the associated management comments/actions which will be added to the Audit and Governance Action Plan Monitoring report be endorsed.

18-19/CS/50 Audit and Governance Action Plan Monitoring Report

- 50.1 The Temporary ACO introduced the report on progress made to date against current action plans arising from internal and external audit reports and the Fire Authority's 2018/19 Annual Governance Statement.
- 50.2 Three actions had been superseded by the Risk Management Audit, with the other actions having been completed.
- 50.3 It was noted that the review of effectiveness had been deferred to 2020 as a result of the governance review.
- 50.4 It was suggested that Members may wish to consider what reports were submitted to the new Policy and Challenge Groups to make the most effective use of resources.

RESOLVED:

That the issues raised in the report and the progress made to date against the action plans be acknowledged and the recommendation to extend the completion date be approved.

18-19/CS/51 Revenue Budget and Capital Monitoring Programme 2018/19 as at 31 January 2019

- 51.1 The Temporary ACO introduced his report which set out the forecast year end budget monitoring position as at 31 January 2019.
- 51.2 There were variations in the following areas: Head of Response (£80,000 underspend), Head of Service Support (£51,000 overspend) and Head of Human Resources (£8,000 underspend). There was also a forecast salary underspend of £474,000.
- 51.3 In relation to the Capital Programme, Members were advised of the £63,000 underspend on the server hardware renewal project.
- 51.4 The savings and efficiencies were also noted. The Temporary ACO advised that the external auditors had requested information on the savings that had been realised over the last few years through efficiencies.

RESOLVED:

That the forecast outturns for revenue and capital be acknowledged.

18-19/CS/52 Treasury Management Strategy and Practices

- 52.1 The Temporary ACO submitted the review of the Authority's Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Treasury Management Policies. There had been no significant changes.
- 52.2 The FRA currently had total borrowing of £9.987 million, short term investments of up to £10 million and budgeted interest of £90,000 in 2019/20.
- 52.3 The Temporary ACO reminded the Policy and Challenge Group that Members received treasury management training on a regular basis, with the next training being made available for Members following the Annual General Meeting in June 2019.
- 52.4 The interest rate forecast was received and it was noted that there was a forecast increase to 1% in September 2019.
- 52.5 The FRA held a wide ranging investment portfolio with assets both within and outside of Europe. These were held for less than 365 days and scheduled to mature at different times. This should mitigate against any effects of Brexit.
- 52.6 In response to a comment on the role of the Section 151 Officer and Treasurer to the FRA being separated if the Temporary ACO was made permanent, the CFO confirmed that a number of options were currently being considered.

RESOLVED:

That the Fire and Rescue Authority be recommended to adopt the updated:

- i. Treasury Management Strategy Statement
- ii. Minimum Revenue Provision Policy and Annual Investment Strategy
- iii. Treasury Management Practices

18-19/CS/53 Corporate Risk Register

- 53.1 GC I McLaren introduced the report on the review of the Corporate Risk Register. There were no changes to the risk ratings and four updates to the risk narratives.
- 53.2 In response to questions about Brexit, the CFO advised that a report on preparations for a hard Brexit would be submitted to the next FRA meeting. This would be informed by advice from the National Fire Chiefs Council and the Bedfordshire and Luton Local Resilience Forum (BLLRF). BLLRF was currently holding weekly strategic meetings.

RESOLVED:

That the review by the Service of the Corporate Risk Register in relation to Corporate Services be approved.

18-19/CS/54 Review of Work Programme 2018/19

- 54.1 Members received the Work Programme for 2018/19.

RESOLVED:

That the Work Programme be received.

The meeting ended at 10.54 am