

For Publication

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority  
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Item No. 6

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**REPORT AUTHOR:** COUNCILLOR F CHAPMAN  
**SUBJECT:** CORPORATE SERVICES POLICY AND CHALLENGE GROUP

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Background Papers: None

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Implications (tick ✓):

LEGAL		FINANCIAL	
HUMAN RESOURCES		EQUALITY IMPACT	
ENVIRONMENTAL		POLICY	
CORPORATE RISK	Known	✓	OTHER (please specify)
	New		CORE BRIEF

*Any implications affecting this report are noted at the end of the report.*

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**PURPOSE:**

To report on the meeting of the Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group held on 13 September 2018.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the submitted Minutes of the Corporate Service Policy and Challenge Group held on 13 September 2018 be received and the recommendations of the meeting, as noted below, be considered.

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### 1. Introduction

1.1 The draft Minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group held on 13 September 2018 are appended for Members' consideration.

1.2 The Corporate Services Policy and Challenge group made the following recommendations to the Fire Authority:

#### 18-19/CS/021 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme

- 1) That, the Authority be recommended to move the £90k underspend already identified to the Transformation Reserve.
- 2) That, the Authority be recommended to add the Asset Management/Fleet System to the 2018/19 Revenue Budget
- 3) That, the Authority be recommended to transfer Sharepoint and Xen Desktop capital schemes to revenue projects.

#### 18-19/CS/026 Asset Management Plan – Property

That, following due scrutiny by the Group, the updated Asset Management Plan for Land and Buildings be recommended for approval by the Authority (Appendix A).

**COUNCILLOR F CHAPMAN**

**CHAIR OF CORPORATE SERVICES POLICY AND CHALLENGE GROUP**

## MINUTES OF CORPORATE SERVICES POLICY AND CHALLENGE GROUP MEETING HELD ON 13 SEPTEMBER 2018

Present: Councillors Chapman (Chair), Duckett and Headley

ACO Z Evans, SOC A Peckham, Mr J Atkinson, Mr G Chambers and Mr A Dosanjh

### 18-19/CS/016 Apologies

16.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Downing and McVicar.

### 18-19/CS/017 Election of Vice Chair 2018/19

#### **RESOLVED:**

That Councillor Duckett be elected Vice Chair of the Policy and Challenge Group for the remainder of the 2018/19 municipal year.

### 18-19/CS/018 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

18.1 There were no declarations of interests.

### 18-19/CS/019 Communications

19.1 The Policy and Challenge Group received the Minutes of the meeting of the ICT Shared Service Governance Board held on 31 July 2018 for information.

19.2 There were no other communications.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the ICT Shared Service Governance Board held on 31 July 2018 be received.

## 18-19/CS/020 Minutes

### **RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2018 be confirmed and signed as a true record, subject to the word “approximately” being added before £10 in the second bullet point of Minute 11.4.

## 18-19/CS/021 2018/19 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme

- 21.1 Mr G Chambers, the Head of Finance and Treasurer, introduced his report which set out the forecast year end budget monitoring position as at 31 July 2018 and sought agreement to a number of recommendations contained within.
- 21.2 He reported on an underspend in his area resulting from the recalculation and reimbursement of business rates.
- 21.3 The current year to date spend appeared to be low for a variety of reasons detailed within the report. At 31 July 2018, there were no variances in the salary budget forecast outturns and a decision on the pay award for fire fighters was still awaited. A 2% award backdated to July 2018 was still out to consultation with the Fire Brigades Union. If agreed, this may result in an underspend of £198,000.
- 21.4 In response to a question, the Head of Finance and Treasurer confirmed that there would be salary variances reported in the next budget monitoring report. The final position was based on a decision on the national pay award being taken.
- 21.5 The Capital Programme was set out in Table 4 of the report. The Xen Desktop project may slip into 2019 and it was suggested that this be reallocated to revenue. It was also suggested that the Sharepoint scheme be reallocated to revenue.
- 21.6 It was noted that the procurement of a drone had been fully funded by the Authority, rather than purchased in partnership with Bedfordshire Police, in order to progress this.
- 21.7 The Asset Management System replacement was currently forecast at £300,000 in the 2020/21 Capital Programme and was required to be

brought forward into 2018/19, this consisted of an indicative revenue figure of £60,000 to implement the system, and an ongoing annual license fee of £24,000.

- 21.8 The Head of Finance and Treasurer reported on the projects listed in the savings and efficiencies programme that were RAG rated as Amber. Control income generation was Amber and liaison with Officers was ongoing. There had also been a change to the PPE Procurement as this had been delayed but should achieve around £100,000 in 2019/20.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the forecast outturns for revenue and capital be acknowledged.
2. That the Authority be recommended to move the £90k underspend already identified to the Transformation Reserve.
3. That it be noted that the Drone capital purchase is solely by the Authority.
4. That the Authority be recommended to add the Asset Management/Fleet System to the 2018/19 Revenue Budget.
5. That the Authority be recommended to transfer Sharepoint and Xen Desktop capital schemes to revenue projects.

18-19/CS/022 2019/20 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme (Planning Arrangements)

- 22.1 The Head of Finance and Treasurer, submitted his report on the current planning arrangements for the 2019/20 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme and sought the Policy and Challenge Group's approval of the proposed timetable.
- 22.2 He confirmed that a zero-based budgeting exercise would be undertaken in relation to the larger budget areas, including ICT, operational equipment, PPR procurement, property service agreements and pensions. Savings of £70,000 were forecast from this exercise.
- 22.3 It was proposed that the draft budget would be presented to the Authority on 13 December 2018, with the final budget considered on 7 February 2019.
- 22.4 Members requested an update of the results of the zero based budgeting exercise when completed.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report and timescales within be agreed.

18-19/CS/023 Corporate Services Programmes and Performance Report, Quarter 1 2018/19

- 23.1 ACO Evans submitted the 2018/19 first quarter report on the Corporate Services programme, projects to date and performance against Corporate Services performance indicators and associated targets.
- 23.2 It was noted that the Asset Management and Fleet System Project was also reported to the Service Delivery Policy and Challenge Group.
- 23.3 The Service Website Project had been completed and had come in under budget.
- 23.4 Phase 3 of the Prevention Replacement Management Information System Project (Safe & Well) was now live, following extended testing and training. Additional enhancements were now in development and the end date would need to be monitored.
- 23.5 The HR & Payroll Project Phase 2 (Recruitment – Green Book) had now commenced with an expected end date of January 2019, dependent on consultancy support being available from the provider.
- 23.6 The Cloud-based processes (Training Centre Administration) programme remained on Amber and SOC A Peckham reported on the need to explore various procurement routes and other solutions to ensure best value. Options included the use of PDRPro or iTrent.
- 23.7 The HR Payroll System and Services Phase 1 had been fully and successfully implemented, amber showed that the final budget was within 10%.
- 23.8 The Fire Safety Protection Replacement Management Information System remained on Amber due to issues identified during User Acceptance Testing which would take time to resolve.
- 23.9 There was also slippage on the Unified Communications and Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) Upgrade Project, which were interrelated, as a result of provider errors during the build stage. The timescale would also need to be moved to accommodate the Windows 10 upgrade. The Head of ICT and Improvement assured Members that the majority of facilities under Unified Communications would be rolled out with the upgrade to VDI.

23.10 ACO Evans reported that all the performance indicators were reporting as green during the first quarter.

23.11 The property indicators that could not be reported on at year end were included in Appendix C. These were also reporting as green.

**RESOLVED:**

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

18-19/CS/024 New Internal Audit Report Completed to date

24.1 ACO Evans reported that, although the internal audit of Governance had been received on 2 August 2018, additional work had been requested from RSM. A report on the audit may be submitted to the next meeting of the FRA meeting if it was available.

24.2 CFO Fuller confirmed that he had met with RSM the previous day and that he had requested that they provide suggestions for improvement.

**RESOLVED:**

That the progress made to date be acknowledged.

18-19/CS/025 Audit and Governance Action Plans Monitoring Report

25.1 ACO Evans introduced her report on progress made to date against current action plans arising from internal and external audit reports. One extension had been requested to a low priority action arising from the audit of risk management to introduce formal risk management training for risk owners and other key staff. An extension was being requested from August 2018 to 31 December 2018, as resources had been allocated to support the HMICFRS inspection.

25.2 All other actions from previous audits had been completed or were in progress in accordance with their completion dates.

25.3 All actions arising from the Annual Governance Statement were currently in progress.

**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/026 Asset Management Plan - Property

26.1 The Head of Finance and Treasurer introduced the updated Asset Management Plan in respect of land and buildings. The current value of the land and buildings owned by the Authority was approximately £25 million.

26.2 Changes to the previous Asset Management Plan were highlighted in yellow and included the following:

- Inclusion of the new consistently used Corporate Planning Framework.
- Reference to the interest-free loan granted through OPE Round 6 for a feasibility study for a joint headquarters. It was noted that a report would be presented to the next meeting of the Authority on the options for a joint headquarters.
- Following a comprehensive stock condition survey being undertaken by the Property Manager, it was likely that there would be an increase in the maintenance costs over the next ten year period for the Authority as the estate was ageing. This amount would flex each year.
- Reference to the new Intelligence Led Response review.
- The Capital Projects for 2018/19 had been updated, as had the project plan for the property team.
- Inclusion of a list of significant achievements over the past few years.
- Reference was made to the commissioning of the Carbon Trust to undertake an assessment which was being funded through OPE Round 5 funding.

26.3 The Head of Finance and Treasurer reported that consideration was being given to commissioning a specialist Utilities Management Agent to undertake the management of utilities. Given the size of the property team, there was not resource available to proactively identify any changes in utility usage quickly, such as the underground water leak that had occurred at Biggleswade Fire Station.



- 26.4 The usage figures for water, electricity and gas were considered, as was additional information on anomalies identified in 2016/17. Insulation works to the gas pipes had been carried out at Dunstable Community Fire Station in June 2018 and usage would be monitored.
- 26.5 The stations where the Police were now co-located as a result of collaborative working arrangements were expected to have increased usage, particularly in Leighton Buzzard. A fair charge based on occupancy was being levied.
- 26.6 Members noted that if a utility management company was appointed, the Policy and Challenge Group could receive more regular updates on utility usage.

**RESOLVED:**

That the updated Asset Management Plan for Land and Buildings be recommended for approval.

18-19/CS/027 Annual Review of the Operation of ICT Shared Service Agreement

- 27.1 Mr A Dosanjh, Head of ICT and Improvement, submitted the outcome of the annual review of the operation of the ICT Shared Service Agreement for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018, undertaken by himself and the ICT Shared Service Manager. The Shared Service agreement had been extended for a further five-year period by the Authority earlier in the year.
- 27.2 The restructure of the ICT Shared Service had commenced during the year and was due to be completed by January 2019. This had led to an increase in vacancies and, potentially, a corresponding decrease in levels of customer service as the reorganisation was implemented.
- 27.3 In response to a question, ACO Evans assured Members the new structure was being monitored following the changes which always brings with it a transition and bedding in period.
- 27.4 A concerted effort was being made to replace contractors with members of permanent staff, except in cases where additional project support was required.

- 27.5 Performance had remained consistently high over the reporting period, with only one indicator missing its target by 1%.
- 27.6 It was noted that the target for IM1 (the number of incidents on mission critical services resolved within 1 hour) had been reduced at the last target-setting meeting as it was recognised that, due to the small number of incidents, one incident unresolved within that time would cause the Service to miss its target.
- 27.7 Mr Dosanjh reported that extended hours were being considered as there were a low number of calls following improvements being made to the service.
- 27.8 In relation to project delivery, the restructure had created more server engineer posts to support project work.
- 27.9 Improvements had also been made to cyber security defences.
- 27.10 It was noted that it had been a challenging year but that the restructure should result in demonstrable service improvements.
- 27.11 ACO Evans thanked the Head of ICT and Improvement for his contribution to Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service as his contract with the Service ended the following day.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the progress in achieving the aims of improved resilience, flexibility, cover, quality and customer focus be acknowledged and the need to review the structure and capacity of the function be recognised.
2. That the Policy and Challenge Group's thanks to the work undertaken by Mr Amrik Dosanjh to improve the ICT Service during his employment with the Service and the Policy and Challenge Group's best wishes for his future be recorded.

(Please note that Councillor Duckett left the meeting after this item and the remainder of the meeting was held informally as the Policy and Challenge Group was inquorate.)

## 18-19/CS/028 Corporate Risk Register

- 28.1 SOC A Peckham introduced his report on the review of the Corporate Risk Register. The full extract of the Corporate Risk Register for Corporate Services was displayed and SOC Peckham summarised all 18 risks contained within it, 10 which were treated and 8 were tolerated.
- 28.2 There were no changes to the risk ratings. There were four changes to the risk ratings as follows:
- 28.3 CRR29 (if we do not communicate well, both internal and external to the Service, then we will suffer from poor staff morale, miss the opportunity to promote ourselves and the excellent work that we do and potentially impact upon our ability to deliver a full range of services): the new website had been launched on 21 May 2018 and was being continually monitored to ensure that all links and platforms functioned correctly. Analytics were being measured to monitor hits on the website and retain a focus on customer engagement. Work was ongoing to ensure that the .gov.uk website featured at the top of google search lists.
- 28.4 CRR43 (if the Service suffers a terrorist attack then there is the potential for elements of the Critical National Infrastructure (CNI) to be compromised, our ability to respond to emergency incidents could be significantly affected, we would be unable to fulfil our duties under the Civil Contingencies Act and our reputation could be adversely affected): awareness training on Project Griffin was being rolled out across the Service facilitated by National Inter-agency Liaison Officers (NiLOs) who had received training from the Metropolitan Police. If the Service was able to roll this out to all staff, it would be the first Service in the East of England to do so.
- 28.5 CRR16 (if there is an unforeseen change of direction for the FRS (e.g. government request to do something which does not currently fall under the remit of the UK FRS), or there are changes in Government or EU policy on fire and rescue matters or other policy directly affecting the FRS then this may have an impact on our ability to deliver a full range of services due to the need to resource such changes): the HMICFRS inspection of the Service had taken place in July 2018 focusing on effectiveness, efficiency and people. The draft report was expected in October 2018 with the final report being published in December 2018. An update report on the process would be submitted to the next meeting of the FRA in October.
- 28.6 CRR48 (there is a risk that the Service may be subjected to a fine from the ICO due to not implementing GDPR resulting in poor data security and process): A review of the action plan had taken place and resources were being allocated to ensure

that amended completion dates were achieved. Thomas Warner was now undertaking some GDPR work now that the bulk of the work relating to the HMICFRS Inspection had been completed.

**RESOLVED:**

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

18-19/CS/029 Work Programme 2018/19

- 29.1 Members received the Work Programme for 2018/19. ACO Evans advised that the report requested at the Policy and Challenge Group's next meeting on fixed rate exposure and variable rate exposure would be submitted to the next meeting of the Policy and Challenge Group.
- 29.2 It was noted that, once again a meeting of this Policy and Challenge Group was inquorate. Measures had been put in place following the AGM to ensure that there were at least six Members appointed to each Committee/Policy and Challenge Group, but retaining a quorum depended on the appointed Members attending meetings.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Work Programme be received.

The meeting finished at 11.24am