

**MINUTES OF CORPORATE SERVICES POLICY AND CHALLENGE GROUP
MEETING HELD ON 27 NOVEMBER 2018**

Present: Councillors F Chapman (Chair), M Headley and D McVicar
CFO P Fuller, ACO Z Evans, Mr J Atkinson, Mr G Chambers and Mr P Hughes

18-19/CS/30 Apologies

30.1 An apology for absence was received from Councillor P Downing.

18-19/CS/31 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

31.1 There were no declarations of interests.

18-19/CS/32 Communications

32.1 The Policy and Challenge Group received the Minutes of the meetings of the ICT Shared Service Governance Board held on 11 September and 30 October 2018 for information. It was noted that the customer satisfaction results had been updated as there had been a miscalculation. The new results were being presented to the Group later in the meeting.

32.2 Mr P Hughes, the Service's newly appointed Head of ICT and Improvement, introduced himself and detailed his previous experience, having worked 30 years in ICT. Part of his new role was to drive forward the Council's digital transformation programme, which would enable the Service to deliver its services more effectively and efficiently.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meetings of the ICT Shared Service Governance Board held on 11 September and 30 October 2018 be received.

18-19/CS/33 Minutes

33.1 It was noted that the meeting had been inquorate for the last few items.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2018 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

18-19/CS/34 Corporate Services Performance Monitoring Report - Q2

34.1 ACO Evans submitted the 2018/19 second 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/35 Corporate Services Programmes to date - Q2

35.1 ACO Evans introduced a report for 2018/19 Quarter Two, detailing progress against and the status of the Corporate Services Programme and Projects to date.

35.2 ACO Evans reported that the Fleet Asset Management System Project was reported to both this Group and to the Service Delivery Policy and Challenge Group and that the Sharepoint Project was now underway.

35.3 ACO Evans then provided updates on the exceptions. The Prevention Replacement MIS was rated Amber as a result of capacity issues. These had now been resolved by the appointment of a new developer.

35.4 The Protection Replacement MIS was rated Amber as there had been previous over-runs and the Unified Communications Project was also Amber due to challenges with the infrastructure build.

35.5 The Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) Upgrade Project was reporting as Amber as there had been delays engaging with the supplier and scheduling issues.

35.6 ACO Evans advised that projects affected by historical over-runs were being re-baselined and would be reporting against their new timescales at the next meeting. All the above exceptions were being re-baselined to Green.

- 35.7 In response to a question, ACO Evans explained that the Prevention Replacement MIS would be used to monitor and log Safe and Well visits and record any action that was required as a result of the visits. This had been developed in-house.
- 35.8 The Protection Replacement MIS was an “off the shelf” solution that had been purchased by the Service.
- 35.9 Mr P Hughes, the Head of ICT and Improvement, advised that work was underway to ensure that the new systems were fully integrated.
- 35.10 It was recognised that the years of investment in the ICT were now starting to have a significant positive impact.

RESOLVED:

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

18-19/CS/36 Audit and Governance Action Plan Monitoring Report

- 36.1 ACO Evans introduced her 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.
- 36.2 Two actions were currently in progress, with the remainder having been completed.

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/37 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring 2018/19

- 37.1 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 October 2018 and sought agreement to the recommendations contained within.
- 37.2 There was currently no forecast underspend or overspend in relation to non-salary budgets.

A £464,500 underspend in relation to the salary budget was forecast as a result of:

- (i) the 2% pay award that had recently been agreed (against an assumed 4% in the budget); and
- (ii) a zero-based budgeting exercise had been undertaken in relation to employer pension costs for employees transitioning between pension schemes. There was also a £150,000 underspend against the retained salary budget due to vacancies.

37.3 There had been no changes to the Capital Programme.

37.4 The Head of Finance and Treasurer reported that the Procurement savings included in the savings and efficiencies plan had been deferred from 2018/19 was expected to achieve £100,000 in 2019/20.

37.5 It was noted that £350,000 of savings had been identified through the zero-based budgeting exercise

RESOLVED:

That the forecast outturns for revenue and capital be acknowledged.

18-19/CS/38 Treasury Management Mid Year Report to 30 September 2018

38.1 The Head of Finance and Treasurer submitted the Treasury Management Mid-Year report. In doing so, he advised that the prudential indicators had been updated in accordance with the revised Code and that the indicator that was the subject of a query for further information by Members was now no longer used and had been removed.

38.2 There had been no changes to capital expenditure since the Capital Programme was agreed by the Authority and no changes to the financing of the projects in the Programme. There had also been no changes to the capital financing requirement.

38.3 The total long term debt was £9.987 million. There were just under 40 years left on the Public Works Loan Board loans. The financial penalty for repayment of these loans was high.

38.4 The Head of Finance and Treasurer referred to the borrowing and investment strategy set out in the report and reported on the recent investments that had been made.

38.5 The current level of investment was £11.75 million. Link Asset Services had been appointed as the Authority's treasury management advisors and the Authority was the best performing in terms of investment rates achieved, out of the nine Fire and Rescue Services that Link Asset Services support.

38.6 Members were reminded that treasury management training would be provided in summer 2019.

38.7 In response to a question about whether the Authority's treasury management advisors had provided Brexit advice, particularly in the event of a "no deal", the Head of Finance and Treasurer advised that he had not yet seen this himself but that he would check to see whether it had been received.

38.8 The Head of Finance and Treasurer advised that property fund investments would be considered in future.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and that it be noted that Members have requested the Head of Finance and Treasurer to confirm whether treasury management Brexit advice has been received from Link Asset Services.

18-19/CS/39 Update on Annual Review of the Operation of the ICT Shared Service Agreement

39.1 Mr P Hughes, the Head of ICT and Improvement, provided an update to section 5.3 Customer Satisfaction Survey Results of the Annual Review of the Operation of the ICT Shared Service Agreement report received by the Group at its meeting last meeting (Minute 18-19/CS/027 refers). These had been incorrectly reported at the Group's last meeting as there had been errors in the matrix.

39.2 The updated data confirmed that customer satisfaction continued to improve year on year.

39.3 It was recognised that the quality control measures in place had failed and this was being addressed.

39.4 The Head of ICT and Improvement advised that an automated dashboard was being created which would provide additional quality control. This would be rolled out across all performance indicators, with operational measures having priority.

RESOLVED:

That the update be received and the revised figures and the process in place to ensure that mis-reporting of this information did not occur again be noted.

18-19/CS/40 Corporate Risk Register

40.1 ACO Evans introduced the report on the review of the Corporate Risk Register. There were no changes to the corporate risk register individual risk ratings but eight updates to the individual risks in the corporate risk register.

40.2 In relation to CRR04 (if there are a large number of staff absent from the workplace then our ability to deliver services to our communities is severely compromised and our reputation will be adversely affected), ACO Evans reported that the Fire Brigades Union had recently submitted a 17% pay settlement proposal and the threat of industrial action remained.

40.3 In relation to 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 was being provided and the Service continued to take part in multi-agency exercises.

- 40.4 ACO Evans confirmed that CRR45 (exchanges of information, attacks and or hacking, email, web browsing, removable media, exposes the Service to malicious code and content (Virus/malware). There is a risk this could seriously damage the confidentiality, integrity and availability of our Service's information and ICT resulting in disruption to the delivery of our Services, loss of sensitive information, resulting in material financial loss and legal or regulatory sanctions) continued to be an area of focus for the Service.
- 40.5 In relation to 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), it was noted that the Police were providing support to the Service and an action plan had been created and was in the process of being implemented.
- 40.6 In response to a question about contingency arrangements, the Group was advised that, in addition to the formal arrangements currently in place with Essex Fire and Rescue Service, the Service also had an on-site generator and a paper-based telephone system to fall back on in the event of a power failure.
- 40.7 The Head of ICT and Improvement advised that the Service was seeking cyber essentials accreditation. This was a Government backed scheme and the Service had already achieved 95% compliance. It was anticipated that the accreditation would be achieved by Quarter 1 of 2019/20. There was a raft of security measures in place to prevent against cyber security attacks.

RESOLVED:

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

18-19/CS/41 Review of Work Programme 2018/19

- 41.1 Members received the Work Programme for 2018/19.
- 41.2 An update on Brexit preparations was requested for the Group's next meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Work Programme be received.

The meeting ended at 10.49 am

