

OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE

26 September 2017 at 6.00 p.m.

Present: - Councillors Dingemans (Chairman), Mrs Bence, Edwards, Elkins, Hitchins, Hughes, Mrs Oakley, Oliver-Redgate, Miss Rhodes, Mrs Rapnik, Dr Walsh and Wheal.

Councillors Bence, Mrs Brown, Clayden, Haymes, Wotherspoon and Wensley were also present for all or part of the meeting.

[Note: The following Councillors were absent from the meeting during consideration of the matters referred to in the Minutes indicated:- Councillor Dr Walsh – Minute 194 (Part) to Minute 198].

189. WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed Members and Officers to the meeting and members of the public.

190. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors English, Blampied and Warren and from the Cabinet Member for Planning, Councillor Charles.

191. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Monitoring Officer has advised Members of interim arrangements to follow when making declarations of interest. They have been advised that for the reasons explained below, they should make their declarations on the same basis as the former Code of Conduct using the descriptions of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

Reasons

- The Council has adopted the Government’s example for a new local code of conduct, but new policies and procedures relating to the new local code are yet to be considered and adopted.
- Members have not yet been trained on the provisions on the new local code of conduct.

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- The definition of Pecuniary Interests is narrower than the definition of Prejudicial Interests, so by declaring a matter as a Prejudicial Interest, that will cover the requirement to declare a Pecuniary Interest in the same matter.

Where a Member declares a “Prejudicial Interest”, this will, in the interests of clarity for the public, be recorded in the minutes as a Prejudicial and Pecuniary Interest.

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

192. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2017 were approved by the Committee as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

193. SERVICE REVIEWS - UPDATE

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Corporate Support introduced this item and reminded Members that the idea of sharing services with neighbouring authorities had arisen from the Member workshops held during 2015 and had formed part of the Council’s 2020 Vision work programme.

Following Council approval back in July 2016, Arun had worked closely with Chichester and Horsham District Councils to explore the possibility of delivering some support services on a shared basis. Arun and Chichester had looked at sharing ICT, Revenues and Benefits and Customer Services. Horsham had worked with the two other Councils on proposals to share Internal Audit, Human Resources and Legal Services.

The three Councils then approved business cases for sharing each of these services subject to the development of more detailed business cases to establish the costs, benefits and savings allocation model to be applied. The full business cases had been produced in December 2016 and had been evaluated by senior managers and the conclusions discussed with the three Councils’ Leaders and relevant Cabinet Members.

The Chief Executive reminded the Committee that at its meeting held in January 2017, it had been advised that following a series of meetings, the three Council Leaders agreed that although the work undertaken to date on these projects had been valuable in analysing and comparing resources, operating methods and productivity, it had been agreed that considering the

projected scale and timing of savings; the degree of difference in the Councils operating modes, resources levels and systems; that this did not justify the costs and risks of implementing the shared services project.

Following discussion the Committee, at that meeting, approved that shared services would not be progressed at that time and that alternative financial savings would need to be met. It had also requested that the Committee be updated on the progression of the services reviews in due course.

The Chief Executive stated that since January 2017, work had been undertaken by the Transformation Director looking at each one of these services to see further savings could be made. There were a number of service projects that were progressing and discussions were currently taking place with UNISON. It was hoped that in the near future there would be outcomes that could be announced that would save the Council substantial sums of money.

The Chief Executive confirmed that following the work undertaken since January 2017, a further £320,000 of savings had been identified which would be made from 2018/19 onwards, earlier than anticipated from the shared services project. A 5-year saving would amount to £1.6 m which exceeded the potential savings of shared services and maintained local management of the services.

Work was now underway in looking at bringing systems and hardware in line for future possible shared services. An example of this was that a joint telephony system had been bought with Chichester District Council and it was hoped that further work with customer services could be explored in the future. Discussions were also taking place with neighbouring Councils in terms of how they could work together to achieve a better waste collection service.

In receiving the report, two Members made the point that more detailed information was needed in order for them to properly scrutinise the work undertaken on shared services. They questioned why this report had been brought before the Committee and asked why the Director of Transformation had left the authority. The Chief Executive responded referring to his introduction made earlier which had explained that the update had been requested by the Committee at its meeting held in January 2017. The Director of Transformation had left the authority as his work on shared services had been completed more quickly than anticipated. Now that the new Group Heads were in post, further work on savings was being undertaken by each Group Head in relation to their services areas. .

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A couple of comments were then made in support of the amount of savings achieved internally and that the Council’s sound operating models was down to this success. Mention was made of the space that the Council was renting to the Probation Service bringing in rent of £60k per year proving that the work undertaken to date was bringing in very sound results.

Finally, the Chief Executive confirmed that a report would be submitted to the next Full Council meeting on 8 November 2017 providing a further update for Members on the on the 2020 vision.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the potential level of savings made from the areas included in the earlier shared service project be noted and welcomed.

194. REVIEW OF CONCESSIONS

Before inviting the Property & Estates Manager to introduce this item, Councillor Mrs Oakley stated that she wished to have placed on record her concern at the lack of notice given to Members in circulating information and background papers on this item.

The Head of Council Advice & Monitoring Officer outlined that the papers circulated to Members via email were for information purposes only. There was no report for Members to consider for this meeting. The Property & Estates Manager would be presenting the full detail of the background information circulated so that Members could scope a future review of concessions and could work out and agree on the content of the review. The full report with suggested outcomes would then be reported to the Committee’s meeting to be held on 20 March 2018. The Head of Council Advice & Monitoring Officer added that Councillor English (as Vice-Chairman of the Committee) had requested this review when the Committee had discussed and prepared its Work Programme back in March 2017. As Councillor English had not been able to attend this meeting, he would be given the opportunity and time to feed in his comments to the Chairman.

The Property & Estates Manager then worked through his information report and stated that its purpose had been to provide Members with some background to the service and to confirm current arrangements. The facts supplied were that:

- This set out clearly all assets held including concessions and their value to the Council
- The long-term plan was to move away from the term ‘concessions’ – with all commercial leases and licences to be referred to as ‘businesses’.
- The Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Chichester District Council (CDC) for the management of some estate management functions under contract ended on 31 April 2017 and the estate management function brought back in-house.
- The length of leases offered to concessions located on the promenade in Bognor Regis had been limited primarily due to the uncertainty surrounding the timescale for regeneration of the adjacent areas of the Town as well as development of the seafront.
- In Littlehampton work was progressing with landowners to seek mutual agreement due to the existence of restrictive covenants
- Usual seasonal factors had to be taken into account when setting rent levels
- There were new lease and licencing opportunities that were being looked at by the Council’s Asset Management Group. The Cabinet Member for Technical Services, Councillor Haymes, attended these meetings.
- Property & Estates were working to review all general fund assets held including concessions in order to maximise revenue created and to ensure optimum financial performance of the Council’s general fund property portfolio accords the District.

The Property & Estates Manager stated that he hoped that his presentation had provided sufficient insight to allow Members to confirm their scope and requirements for a review of the concessions businesses operated.

The following points were made by Members:

- Looking at the types of leases that the Council had, was there a lease based on a multiplier of turnover? It was explained that the Council considered all types of leases.
- The point was made that concessions should not always be based upon the financial return to the Council. It was important to also consider public viewpoint and the quality and consistency of a concession. The length of the lease offered to a concessionaire was critical in terms of the quality of service provided. If the length of the lease was short, the concessionaire would then not invest in that business. There

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needed to be a shift of emphasis in terms of more quality and what the customer wanted instead of just profit. The option of looking at other leaseholds should be explored.

- Questions were asked about the end of the SLA with CDC.
- Comments were made that there were too many food outlets in Littlehampton from running from Pier Road to Gloucester Road. In response, the aims of the Seafront Delivery Plan, already approved by all Members at Full Council, was referred to.
- The length of Leases was again discussed with Members agreeing that leases should not be under a period of 5 years. The point was made that more concessions should be open 364 days a year as this would attract visitors and residents to the District’s seafronts. It was felt that this point needed to be looked at.
- In looking at the scoping of concessions information was needed in terms of best value to the customer and rent levels. Different types of licences needed to be looked at, set against the asset and in terms of the income that the Council could achieve. This needed to be looked at for Arundel, Littlehampton and Bognor Regis. From this Members could explore opportunities for other areas of the District [projects using moveable portable cabins].
- The relocation of the Bandstand in Bognor Regis and the Bognor Regis Seafront Delivery Plan was discussed. Councillor Hitchins stated that the feasibility study needed to be completed as this affected the seafront area in Bognor Regis and the future of concessions in this area in terms of their location and pitch size.
- The Chairman asked if this work could be included as part of the Concessions report. The Property & Estates Manager confirmed that he would need to discuss this point with Council Officers.
- Members stated that they needed to know the number of outlets; what they were and the service/goods they were aiming to sell/offer.

In summing up the points raised, the Chairman stated that he felt that the spreadsheet supplied with the background report provided the Committee with a good starting point for the review. He felt that the scope of the review could be based on the points that had been raised above.

In summary these were:

- How concessions are assessed and established
 - The quality and customer perspective over revenue
 - That all types of leases be explored
 - That longer opening hours be encouraged [364 days per year]
 - To seek a justification and logic for rent levels based on discussion

- Looking at seafront locations – ensuring an even spread of usage as concern had been expressed at the number of food outlets over a very short stretch of area

- What the impacts of the feasibility study could mean for the location of the Bandstand in Bognor Regis
 - That the study needed be undertaken as soon as possible to assess impacts with the results being included within the concession review

- How to measure the value of a concession
 - Could this be an asset rather than being based on revenue
 - Could there be benchmarking or comparison with other authorities

- How opportunities for further leases and temporary buildings could be accommodated to offer more portability and flexibility in future concessions

This was noted by the Committee.

195. DATA PROTECTION POLICIES

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Corporate Support introduced this item and stated that as part of the ongoing review of data protection policies and guidance in preparation for the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the Committee was being asked to consider a new policy to support non-contractual home working by the Council’s employees; and a revised policy for permanent contractual home working.

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The Council already had a policy in place for staff contracted to work from home on a permanent arrangement. This had been considered by this Committee on 23 September 2014, following a pilot in the Revenues & Benefits Team, and was subsequently adopted by Full Council on 5 November 2014. The opportunity had been taken to revise this policy to reflect current practices and latest guidance. In addition, this did not cover arrangements for those working at home on a non-contracted basis and so a second policy has been developed to cover these working practices.

Councillor Wensley then introduced the Council’s Service Development Manager who highlighted the key areas of the two policies and what the key differences were.

In response, the Committee agreed that the policies offered sound guidance for the Council. A request was made by one Councillor to change a few of the words in the Policies provided. The Group Head of Council Advice & Monitoring Officer undertook to update the policies with the minor amendments requested in time for consideration by Full Council in November 2017.

Comments made focused upon:

- Rest breaks for employees and how these were and would be monitored
- Whether the costs had been approved by the Internal Audit team
- The need to ensure that the well-being of staff was monitored. It was explained that ongoing liaison took place with the Health Officer and the individual’s Line Manager, in terms of the do’s and don’ts. Health and Safety Assessments were issued to staff that had responsibility to ensure that requirements were followed. When needed, reviews were undertaken to assess any change in the need of the individual or their working environment. It was outlined that the Policies had been discussed in detail with UNISON who had accepted their content.
- Were staff able to access the content of the Policies and what proof would be kept on file that staff had signed up to the requirements of each Policy – it was explained that the policies formed part of the suite of data protection policies coming through in preparing for the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation. A new Data Protection area had been placed onto Sharepoint for staff to view. A new section on Homeworking would also be added to the IT page on Sharepoint

providing e-forms; policies and a guidance document. It was explained that the addition to the IT page would be launched with a latest news item on the front page and mentioned in the Chief Executive’s blog too. After that, an article would be set up in the Hints and Tips section to remind staff of the process. It was confirmed that staff would not be permitted to work from home in any capacity until they had signed the Home Working Policies.

The Committee

RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL – That

- (1) The Homeworking Policy (Regular Non-Contractual) as set out at Appendix 1 to the report be approved;
- (2) The revised Homeworking Policy (Regular Contractual) as set out in Appendix 2 of the report be approved;
- (3) The Guidance for Managers document as set out in Appendix 3 of the report be noted; and
- (4) The Group Head of Council Advice & Monitoring Officer or his/her nominated representative be delegated authority to make any necessary consequential changes to the Homeworking Policies as result of new legislation or alternative processes.

196. CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS AND UPDATES

The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services, Councillor Wotherspoon, stated that following the questions asked by the Committee at its last meeting on Corporate Plan Performance Indicators around recycling, he had provided by email to the Committee the following update. This stated that:

- The Council’s Combined Cleansing Services Contract was generally performing well and that missed collections were well within the required contractual targets.
- He was pleased with the Council’s 1st quarter recycling rate of 42.87% This was the highest ever performing quarterly recycling rate for Arun and focused on green waste collections particularly where tonnages had exceeded expectation with 300 tonnes

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more composted than compared with the corresponding period last year.

- The partnership working undertaken recently with West Sussex County Council to deliver the HMO (Houses in Multiple Occupation) project was progressing well. The results showed a big improvement in recycling quality which was very encouraging and so the Council was looking forward to delivering further projects such as these in partnership moving forward.

197. FEEDBACK FROM THE COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT WORKING PARTY HELD ON 10 AUGUST 2017

The Chairman of the Council Tax Support Working Party, Councillor Hitchins, presented the Minutes from the meeting of the Council Tax Support Working Party held on 10 August 2017.

198. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman advised Members that the planned update on the HRA Business Plan on 21 November 2017 would be deferred to the Committee’s meeting on 20 March 2018 because the new plan which had only been agreed by Full Council on 13 September 2017 required a period of operation before this could be reviewed.

The Committee noted this change to its Work Programme.

(The meeting concluded at 7.40 pm)