

EFFICIENCY AND PERFORMANCE SUB (FINANCE) COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 15 November 2017

Draft Minutes of the meeting of the Efficiency and Performance Sub (Finance) Committee held at Guildhall, EC2 on Wednesday, 15 November 2017 at 11.00 am

Present

Members:

Jeremy Mayhew (Chairman)
Deputy Jamie Ingham Clark (Deputy Chairman)
Alderman Peter Estlin
Ian Seaton
Deputy Philip Woodhouse

Officers:

John Cater	-	Town Clerk's Department
Peter Kane	-	Chamberlain
Paul Wilkinson	-	City Surveyor
Kate Smith	-	Town Clerk's Department
Neil Davies	-	Town Clerk's Department
Philip Gregory	-	Chamberlain's Department
Geoff Parnell	-	Chamberlain's Department
Christopher Bell	-	Chamberlain's Department
Adam Perry	-	Chamberlain's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Randall Anderson.

2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED - That the public minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2017 be agreed as an accurate record.

4. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Town Clerk which set out the outstanding actions from previous meetings of the Sub-Committee.

The Town Clerk distributed a renewed outstanding actions sheet.

RESOLVED – that Members noted the Report.

5. WORK PROGRAMME AND FUTURE REPORTING

5.1 Work Programme for future meetings

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Town Clerk which set out the work plan for future meetings.

The following point was made; Officers queried whether retaining the currently planned cycle of meetings for the first half of 2018 – January, March, April and June would be the most practicable - it was proposed that the January and March session could be merged into a February meeting. The Chairman responded that it was important to retain the January meeting, however, the Town Clerk should investigate whether it was possible to move the meeting (currently scheduled for the 12th) to later in the month.

RESOLVED – That the Sub-Committee notes the report.

5.2 Departmental Reporting

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Town Clerk which set out the focus of departmental reporting to the Efficiency & Performance sub-Committee in 2018 and beyond. The following points were made.

Members were keen to explore ways in which they could encourage change and positively reward departments for good performances; the Chairman suggested that there was a range of options the Sub-Committee could pursue, with the Audit and Risk Management Committee providing a useful exemplar of how Members can be both challenging and supportive. The Town Clerk would work with the Chamberlain to develop a revised workplan, including an officer mechanism for reviewing and filtering departmental reports, and agreeing which need to go to the Sub-Committee.

A member queried whether it would be a useful exercise for members to go into departments, both to get an understanding of some of the day-to-day challenges facing officers and as a way of demonstrating the value and reputation of the Sub-Committee in supporting the work of departments across the City Corporation. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman would speak to the Chamberlain about the practicalities of taking this idea forward.

The Town Clerk agreed to revise the work programme and departmental reporting proposal to reflect this discussion.

RESOLVED – that Members noted the Report.

6. SBR CROSS-CUTTING REVIEWS

The sub-Committee received a joint report of the Chamberlain and the Town Clerk on SBR Cross-Cutting Reviews. The following point was made.

In response to a Member query relating to paragraph 33, officers confirmed that the City Corporation continued to subsidise means-tested bursaries for Independent Schools.

The Chairman formally thanked Neil Davies for his contribution to the Sub-Committee; Neil's successor would be in place in the middle of January 2018.

RESOLVED – That members noted the report and endorsed the proposal for future reporting to the Sub-Committee.

7. CORPORATE & DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS PLANNING

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Town Clerk on Corporate and Departmental Business Planning. The following points were made.

Officers confirmed that the Corporate Plan and departmental business plans would be aligned. Members would see this in forthcoming committee meetings in the run-up to Christmas. The Chairman stressed that it was important for officers to highlight and communicate to Members what had changed in departmental high-level business plans.

Members were eager to view this as an opportunity to encourage greater collaboration and participation. The Sub-Committee should be enabling people and resources across the Corporation to come together. To generate momentum, it was important to focus on 5 or 6 strategic outcomes that the City wishes to promote, and for officers and Members to work at pace. Once the outcomes were agreed, the "hows" should be devolved, with officers working within a framework providing both accountability, and the flexibility to adjust course if things don't run as anticipated. Bureaucracy should be avoided wherever possible.

RESOLVED – that Members noted the Report.

8. EFFICIENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY PLAN UPDATE - CENTRAL RISK REVIEW

The Sub-Committee received a Report of the Chamberlain on the Efficiency and Sustainability Plan – Central Risk Review. The following points were made.

Members expressed unease about underspends. Officers responded that a risk-averse approach, in recent years, had been a problem; however, departments were getting to a better place, but more work was needed. The Chairman was concerned that changes to the policy on material departmental underspends (at end of financial year), should not result in the unintended consequence of departments rushing to spend their remaining budgets in the final few weeks before 31st March - this would be bad practice, and was unlikely to result in longer term benefits.

Officers responded that departments currently had the fall-back options of carry forwards and earmarked reserves. The Chairman stressed that the Chamberlain's Department should be alert to behavioural changes; any

unintended consequences of a shift in policy on underspends needs to be identified quickly.

RESOLVED – That Members note the Report.

9. **CHAMBERLAIN'S DEPARTMENT EFFICIENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY PROPOSALS**

The Sub-Committee received a Report of the Chamberlain on the Chamberlain's Department Efficiency and Sustainability Proposals. The following point was made.

The Corporate Efficiency and Sustainability Plan requires Chief Officers to identify sustainable efficiencies of 2% each year for the three years from 2018/19. For

the Chamberlain's department, this equates to approximately £460,000 in the first year.

The Chamberlain drew Members attention to paragraph 9, which provided a menu of efficiency proposals for 2018/19, and stressed the importance of working with other departments. In addition to direct action to reduce the department's own cost base, the Chamberlain's department plays an important role in supporting all other departments in achieving their efficiency plans. Finance teams were embedded within departments, working in partnership to ensure value for money. Similarly, procurement and commercial management teams were working with colleagues across the organisation to secure the most advantageous contract arrangements for the City Corporation.

RESOLVED – that Members noted the Report.

10. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE**

There were no questions.

11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

There were no items of urgent business.

12. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED - That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

13. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED - That the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 26th September 2017 be agreed as an accurate record.

14. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM NON-PUBLIC MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

Members received a Report of the Town Clerk on outstanding actions from the non-public minutes of previous meetings.

RESOLVED – that Members noted the Report

15. **EFFICIENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY PLAN UPDATE - CHIEF OFFICER PEER REVIEW**

Members received a Report of the Chamberlain on the Efficiency & Sustainability Plan Update – Chief Officer Peer Review

RESOLVED – that Members noted the Report.

16. **SBR DEPARTMENTAL SAVINGS**

Members received a joint Report of the Chamberlain and the Town Clerk on the SBR Departmental Savings.

RESOLVED – that Members noted the report.

17. **FACILITIES MANAGEMENT REVIEW**

Members received a joint Report of the Town Clerk, the Chamberlain, and the City Surveyor on the Facilities Management Review.

RESOLVED – that Members noted the Report.

18. **COMMERCIAL CONTRACT MANAGEMENT**

Members received a Report of the Chamberlain on commercial contract management.

RESOLVED – that Members noted the Report.

19. **NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were no questions.

20. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

There was no other business.

The meeting ended at 1.00 pm

Chairman

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