

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON TUESDAY 10
JULY 2018, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor M Allen (Chairman)
Councillors S Bull, M Casey, G Cutting,
B Deering, I Devonshire, H Drake, J Jones,
P Moore, M Stevenson and N Symonds

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors K Crofton, T Page, M Pope and
P Ruffles

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lorraine Blackburn	- Democratic Services Officer
Jonathan Geall	- Head of Housing and Health
Helen Standen	- Director

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Scott Crudgington	- Chief Executive, Stevenage Borough Council
Richard Protheroe	- Stevenage Borough Council
Clare Fletcher	- Stevenage Borough Council

Rob Gregory - Stevenage Borough Council
Paul Tyler - Stevenage Borough Council

80 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors D Abbott and Mrs D Hollebon.

81 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2018 were considered. Councillor J Jones requested an amendment to Minute 54 (Proposed Capital Development of Hertford Theatre and Surrounding Areas) as follows:

- Paragraph 11, third line after the word “had”, insert “without consultation with Members and Local Members”.
- Councillor M Stevenson also requested an amendment:
- Paragraph 11, ninth line after the word “generation”, a new sentence be inserted as follows. “Councillor M Stevenson commented that she had been involved as part of the Health and Wellbeing Forum”.

It was moved by Councillor M Allen and seconded by Councillor M Casey that the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2018 as now amended, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2018 as now amended, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

82 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed Officers from Stevenage Borough Council to the meeting.

The Chairman reminded Members that in the interests of transparency of decision making, recommendations needed to be moved and seconded other than for presentations and items for noting.

The Chairman also reminded Members that under the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations), it was the responsibility of Members to ensure that reports with confidential papers were disposed of safely and not recycled. He added that the Democratic Services Officer would be happy to collect agendas after the meeting.

83 SHARED SERVICES UPDATE: IT

The Director submitted a report on the Shared IT Service arrangements with Stevenage Borough Council (SBC). She provided historical background which culminated in the shared service arrangements. This aimed to provide value for money and stability of service. The Director explained that savings had been achieved and that there was an emerging ICT strategy and significant investment particularly over the last six months.

Scott Crudginton, the Chief Executive of Stevenage Borough Council introduced his team and their areas of

expertise. Mr Crudgington reminded Members of the financial crisis which had hit the country in 2008 in terms of local government cuts and the austerity measures which had followed triggering a number of Councils to investigate partnership working arrangements; the first of which was to share revenues and benefit service arrangements. Mr Crudgington referred to the challenges still facing both Councils with shared IT arrangements and of the successes with shared services including revenues and benefits and the CCTV partnership working.

The Committee Chairman commented on the need to look at service provision going forward and what it could do better.

Councillor M Casey referred to the projected savings of £400K a year cited within the business plan in the context of the outturn figures for 2016/17 and 2017/18. He queried what had happened to the £400K savings.

Claire Fletcher (Finance Officer, SBC) explained how the costs of moving to a shared service arrangement including staffing changes (e.g. TUPE) had impacted on the projection and synchronising of projects.

Clarification was sought and provided on the table in paragraph 4.1 of the report submitted, in relation to retained costs by each council. By way of example Mr Crudgington explained that SBC still held housing stock and the implication of this on IT management. Mr Tyler explained that £386K was retained by EHDC and how this was broken down to support various services, e.g. Revenues and Benefits.

The Committee Chairman sought and was provided with

clarification on the potential impact if each Council did not have a shared service arrangement. Mr Crudgington referred to the impact on data integration, the need to develop data centres and the re-employment of staff who had TUPE'd over.

The Director explained that if both Councils had continued to provide separate IT services, then annual costs would have risen year on year and that it was unlikely that savings would have been achieved. She explained that both Councils now had significant resilience through a variety of means and of the importance of investment. The Director added that the emerging ICT strategy would inform the direction of travel over the years and provide an indication of what investment levels were needed.

Councillor B Deering thanked the Officers for the report. He was concerned to read (in paragraph 6.11) that projects and business as usual work was "uncontrolled" and how this had impacted on maintaining day to day services. He expressed concern about the decision to extend the partnership arrangement to 31 March 2019 to enable a revised agreement for a further three years to be approved by both Councils. Councillor Deering suggested that Officers should provide further information including extraction costs, to see if EHDC wanted to carry on with the shared arrangement .

The Director referred Members to the ever changing environment of IT and the anticipated review following the appointment of a new Shared Service Technology (Transformation) Manager.

She explained that a separate arrangement would mean increased staff costs at both sites.

Councillor M Casey commented that it appeared to him that the savings achieved had been spent on equipment and licences. He sought and was provided with clarification in relation to the suggestion that a third Council might be encouraged to join the shared service arrangement.

Councillor M Pope felt that there had been a lack of planning in the infrastructure phase due to the increase in costs in the life of the shared service arrangements. The Director explained that the significant investment in supplies and services was necessary to ensure that the Council had the right platform for its services and residents. She explained that without the right platform, it could not move forward and there was a need to continually invest.

The Director was keen to see what proposals the new IT Manager might have in relation to the ICT strategy and both Councils' vision. She explained that she would be happy to report back in terms of the developments.

Councillor M Stevenson sought and was provided with clarification by Mr Protheroe (SBC) on the use of consultants in the past and whether this would increase.

The Committee Chairman queried what other platforms had been considered. Mr Tyler explained that many applications centred on Microsoft and it was important to consider how other applications could be supported in terms of the whole.

Councillor B Deering queried whether the Council might consider outsourcing or privatising this service, adding that

it was important to have a system which delivered what was needed. The Director commented that she was happy to review options.

Mr Crudgington acknowledged that there were some areas where improvements could be made.

Councillors N Symonds commented on the unreliability of the service and its potential vulnerability. Mr Crudgington stated that they were doing all they could to improve resilience.

Councillor M Pope sought and was provided with clarification by Mr Tyler (SBC) about projects to build on resilience.

Councillor H Drake was concerned about having to adopt different approaches to different projects because Stevenage had some specific needs which EHDC did not. She stressed the need for consolidation. The Director assured her that synergies were discussed when any decisions needed to be made to buy new systems, adding that both Councils did a lot of things the same but some things differently.

The Committee Chairman sought and was provided with clarification by Mr Tyler (SBC) on the issue of GDPR and how and what data should be retained, anonymising data and shoring up security systems.

Councillor I Devonshire praised the support provided by IT staff. He was surprised that the "Cloud" could not be used to store data. Mr Crudgington explained the difficulties moving from Office 365 to a corporate environment and the need to ensure all systems could interact with one

another.

The Director explained that moving forward, it would be necessary to get the views of the new IT (Transformation) Manager. She anticipated being able to circulate Members with further information by Christmas 2018 and then set up another special meeting. This was supported.

The Committee Chairman, on behalf of Members thanked all those concerned for the update.

It was moved by Councillor M Allen and seconded by Councillor M Casey that the recommendations as detailed, be supported including a recommendation to report back by Christmas 2018. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the recommendations were declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) the value for money assessment of the Shared IT Service be noted;

(B) current proposals to help ensure continued value for money be supported; and

(C) Officers report back with an update by Christmas 2018.

84 SHARED SERVICES UPDATE: CCTV

The Head of Housing and Health submitted a report on the shared service arrangements currently in place, hosted by Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) through which CCTV cameras in the District were monitored.

The Head of Housing and Health provided an update on

the background of the CCTV partnership, what cameras were deployed, profits and losses incurred by the trading arm owned by the four partners and how this was apportioned. The Head of Housing and Health explained why the trading arm had been established and the potential for developing the service commercially.

Councillor J Jones praised the CCTV partnership and queried whether the service could be utilised by Buntingford Town Council. The Head of Housing and Health explained the costs of running the service and confirmed that it could be extended. He agreed to discuss the matter further with the Member or the Town Council.

An update was provided in relation to the governance review and the development of a business plan for growth to accommodate the demands for CCTV assistance.

In response to a query from Councillor N Symonds, the Head of Housing and Health explained that mobile cameras were moved to the best vantage points and power sources possible.

Clarification was sought and provided by Ms Fletcher (SBC) regarding the profit and losses made by the CCTV Partnership's trading arm and how these were distributed. She explained that there had been a small surplus last year and that the partnership needed to look at the costs of the partnership and the most tax efficient methods for the company to work, particularly in relation to acquiring cameras and how and where the costs should be accounted whether within the company or the Partnership itself.

The benefits of hard wired systems versus mobile

arrangements were discussed. It was noted that the governance review would be completed by the autumn 2018. The Head of Housing and Health anticipated being able to report back to Members in September 2018. It was moved by Councillor M Allen and seconded by Councillor B Deering that the recommendations as detailed, be supported. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the recommendations were declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - that (A) the shared CCTV arrangements detailed in the report be noted and Members' comments be taken on board by the Head of Housing and Health for consideration at an operational level;

(B) the reviews of the operational and governance aspects of the shared CCTV service currently under way be acknowledged and Members' comments be taken on board by the Head of Housing and Health; and

(C) the Head of Housing and Health submit a report to Members to consider the outcome of the reviews.

At 8.49pm, the meeting was adjourned. The meeting reconvened at 8.55pm.

85 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Councillor M Allen moved, and Councillor M Casey seconded, a motion that under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of Minute 86 – Potential Kingsmead Scheme, on the grounds that it

involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act. After being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of Minute 86 (Potential Kingsmead Scheme) on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said act.

86 POTENTIAL KINGSMEAD SCHEME

The Head of Housing and Health provided a presentation on the potential for the improvement and/or redevelopment of the Pinehurst Community Centre, the adjacent shop and flats on the site referred to as the Kingsmead site. He provided background information on the history of the site and its configuration, key issues and opportunities arising from the options appraisal.

Members considered three possible initial options:

- refurbishment of the community centre and shop with no changes to the residential flats;
- disposal of the site to a housing association or developer; and
- Council-led redevelopment of the site.

The advantages and disadvantages of each option were debated at length.

It was moved by Councillor M Allen and seconded by Councillor B Deering that the recommendations as detailed, be supported. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the recommendations were declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - that the Executive be advised that the Committee support:

(A) the option of a council-led redevelopment of the site as detailed in the report;

(B) Officers be requested to conduct more detailed financial modelling.

The meeting closed at 9.37 pm

Chairman
Date