

**Minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee, held in Committee Room 1, County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH on Tuesday 26 November 2019**

---

**Present**

Councillor Mike Mackrory (Chairman)	Councillor Valerie Metcalfe
Councillor Malcolm Buckley	Councillor John Moran
Councillor Mike Garnett	Councillor Mike Steptoe
Councillor Derrick Louis (substitute)	Councillor Anne Turrell
Councillor Malcolm Maddocks	Councillor Julie Young

**Apologies**

Councillor Michael Hardware  
Councillor Ron Pratt  
Councillor Andrew Sheldon

**Other Members**

Councillor Anthony Jackson

---

Richard Buttress, Democratic Services Manager was supporting the meeting.

**1. Membership, apologies and declarations**

Apologies were received from:

- Councillor Michael Hardware
- Councillor Ron Pratt
- Councillor Andrew Sheldon (substituted by Councillor Derrick Louis).

**2. Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 29 October 2019 were approved by the committee as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

**3. Questions from the public**

No questions from members of the public were received.

**4. Delivery Risk Assessment**

The committee received report CPSC/11/19.

The Chairman welcomed Debbie Knopp, Director, Transformation Delivery and Support and Kevin Mitchell, Senior Finance Business Partner to the meeting.

- When the budget is set, it is assumed that all savings identified will be made. This is a healthy way of setting the budget so long as risk is factored in

- The gap closure encompasses a number of different factors:
  - Efficiencies
  - Service choices
  - Transformation
  - Commercial Fees and Charges
  - Council Tax/ASC precept
- The Delivery Risk Assessment process has been in place since October 2018 and makes sure there is clear evidence to show they are achievable
- Monthly reports on progress are presented in three different components:
  - Portfolio Book
  - Delivery Risk Assessment
  - Transformation Exception Report
- Non-deliverables could be where investment from central government has been received. The saving would still be classed as non-deliverable as the saving was not achieved as originally planned
- Non-deliverables are presented to ECC's Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and Investment Board.

The committee asked several questions and received the following responses:

- Ongoing fostering project which now has a new five-year strategy
- SEND continues to be a challenging area and finance have initiated a deep dive into the detail of this
- Perception that the savings on home to school transport were not achieved. Due to the large uptake of SEND demands on home to school transport then the overspend would be much larger
- Non-deliverables for 2019/20 were declared early enough to be included in the budget setting process for 2020/21
- The majority of mitigations in Adult Social Care are as a result of vacancies and they have re-built their workforce strategy to counter this
- Reduction in income as a result of behaviour change around bus lane cameras
- If savings cannot be made it is managed by CLT and Political Leadership Team, but these occurrences are rare.

## **Actions**

1. The committee to be provided with a copy of the five-year fostering strategy?

## **5. Property Portfolio**

The committee received report CPSC/12/19.

The Chairman welcomed David Evans, Head of Property, to the meeting.

### Appendix A – Property Portfolio

- 75% of ECC's property portfolio relates to schools
- If the £150m repair requirement was spent all at once, then it would mean that there were not any repairs outstanding across the estate
- The average occupancy rate for the 908 freehold sites is around 47%. Most of the time there is an under occupancy and ECC need to make better use of the portfolio
- There has been a huge shift to hot desking and renting offices.

The committee asked several questions and received the following responses:

- There is a planned maintenance programme for the ECC estate
- ECC has a contract with Lambert Smith Hampton to provide property support services. The contract with Mitie is for maintenance support
- ECC's property has reduced in size over the years. Currently made up of five officers and recruitment is currently active
- The aim of the team is to drive forward income streams and capital receipts.

### **Actions**

1. The committee to be provided with a full list of ECC's property assets, broken down by area/division, including cost and revenue generated
2. How many properties (and which ones are they) are offered a peppercorn rent that bring no revenue to ECC?
3. How many of the 1595 ECC property assets are used by ECC itself and those that are considered community assets?
4. How much of the £150m repair requirement relates to schools?
5. What is the programme to bring that require repair up to the relevant standard?
6. The committee to be provided with evidence of good news stories
7. Is ECC's contract with Lambert Smith Hampton and Mitie entwined?

## Appendix B – Property Disposal Strategy

- When a disposal of a property takes place, the money received goes back into a central fund but is it the service area who decide whether a property is surplus to requirements
- Social value is considered when disposing of a property. Good relationship with Essex Housing who are funded for commercial developments
- Essex Housing are due to become a traded service and be completely separate from ECC.

### **Actions**

1. The committee to be provided with a copy of the 'rules of engagement' that were agreed in 2011
2. The committee to receive an amended version of the disposal process flowchart

### **6. Work Programme**

The current work programme was noted by the committee.

### **7. Date of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting will be held on Tuesday 28 January 2020 at 10:30am.

### **8. Urgent business**

No urgent business was received.

### **9. Property Investment Fund**

The committee received report CPSC/13/19.

The Chairman welcomed James Cook, Head of Finance – Major Programmes and Commercial Finance, to the meeting.

### **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

On the proposal of the Chairman, the committee resolved that the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting since it is likely that if members of the public were present during the remaining items of business, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information falling within paragraph 3 schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as amended.

- Commercial Investment Programme of £50m started a few years ago
- No further purchases have been made since July 2018

### **10. Urgent exempt business**

No urgent exempt business was received.

The meeting closed at 4:14pm.

**Chairman**