

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

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**Present**

Cllr M Mackrory (Chairman)  
Cllr J Beavis  
Cllr M Buckley  
Cllr M Garnett  
Cllr I Grundy (substitute)  
Cllr M Hardware

Cllr I Henderson  
Cllr V Metcalfe  
Cllr J Moran  
Cllr W Schmitt  
Cllr A Sheldon  
Cllr M Steptoe

**Apologies**

Cllr J Abbott  
Cllr R Pratt  
Cllr A Turrell

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Richard Buttress, Democratic Services Manager was supporting the meeting.

**1. Membership, Apologies and Declarations**

Apologies were received from Cllr J Abbott, Cllr R Pratt and Cllr A Turrell.

Cllr I Grundy substituted for Cllr R Pratt.

**2. Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 26 February 2019 were approved as an accurate record.

**3. Questions from the public**

None received.

**4. Future Resourcing Services – Temporary Workers Supply**

The committee received report CPSC/05/19.

Cllr M Mackrory welcomed the following to the meeting:

- Cllr Susan Barker, Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate
- Graeme Lennon, Head of People Operations.

Cllr Barker introduced the report:

- To note that the temporary workers contract is £17m, not £30 as stated in the report

Graeme Lennon also introduced the report:

- ECC will be going to the market in April 2019 with a view to the contract commencing September 2019

- The contract will be for two years with the option to extend for a further one
- The contract will have break clauses.

The committee were pleased to see that five of the six recommendations had been included in the contract.

Progress is being made in respect of I.T development and integration with Essex County Council's (ECC) systems.

The specification states that new companies must ensure their systems are compatible with ECC's.

The aim is to have less of a reliance on temporary workers in the future.

The impact of Brexit on temporary workers is currently unknown.

It is more cost effective to have a permanent employee than a temporary worker.

ECC is able to carry out DBS checks on applicants from countries outside of the UK.

### **Actions**

- 1) Clarification to be provided around extensions/break clauses in the contract.
- 2) Wording to be built into the specification that should not deter applicants who have been in some form of rehabilitation previously.
- 3) A further breakdown of the worker types as referenced in 5.8.
- 4) Disability and ethnicity data is not currently collected – more detail to be provided as to whether it will be in the new contract.
- 5) A further progress update will be given to the committee in June 2019.
- 6) The draft contract will be shared with the committee in October 2019.

## **5. Delivery Risk Assessment process for ECC savings**

The committee received report CPSC/06/19.

Cllr M Mackrory welcomed the following to the meeting:

- Cllr Louise McKinlay, Cabinet Member for Resources
- Tina French, Head of Strategic Finance and Insight
- Debbie Knopp, Director – Delivery Service and Design.

Cllr McKinlay introduced the report:

- This report provides the detail of the risk assessment that sits behind ECC's budget
- The pressures on the budget are well documented, which include Pay and Grading, fair funding and business rate retention
- The items marked as red in the budget does not necessarily mean it will not be delivered

- 19% is currently marked as red. In these cases, there are clear business plans which are monitored by CLT and PLT throughout the year
- If there is a saving that cannot be delivered, it will be mitigated by the Cabinet Member/Executive Director
- There is a £4m contingency built into the budget which is usually spent but due to the mild winter it has not yet so far this year. If it is not used, it will be carried forward for future years

It was noted there are a number of headings where risks are listed but no reference is made to outcomes.

There has been a pause on property investment as a result of Brexit. No further work will take place until the outcome is known.

ECC's borrowing is currently at £55m.

The impact of savings on communities is monitored by ECC's Cabinet. The budget is a way of delivering the policies rather than the other way around.

There has been an increase in borrowing forecasts which affects revenue.

An impact assessment is completed before savings are identified in terms of policies coming forward. The Council is mindful of the impact and is being looked into on a micro basis rather than the County as a whole.

Some of those savings listed as red and amber are a result of timing issues or because a consultation is still ongoing.

ECC has a good track record of mitigating savings. Reserves are used for savings that cannot be mitigated against.

When setting future budgets, core data around inflation, population growth and demographics are taken into account. £20m of savings for next year's budget is as a result of inflation.

### **Actions**

- 1) Regular updates to be provided on the progress of delivery risk assessment, appreciating that some information may be commercially sensitive.
- 2) Detailed information to be provided on budget assumptions – how the savings are actually identified.

## **6. Task and Finish Group: Ringway Jacobs Contract**

The committee received a verbal update from Cllr Tony Ball, who is the Chair of the Joint Task and Finish Group looking into the extension of the current highway maintenance contract.

The committee were informed of the following:

- All four meetings as set out in the scoping document have now been completed
- The debates at these meetings went constructive and the conversations were in depth and detailed
- So far, over 20 recommendations have been identified by the Task and Finish Group
- Thanked ECC and EH officers for their input into this piece of scrutiny work.

Reference to the high standard of information provided by officers was made by other members of the Task and Finish Group.

It was acknowledged there is still a lot of work to do to finalise the recommendations.

### **Actions**

- 1) The final report to be considered by the committee on 30 April 2019 ahead of it being submitted to the Cabinet Member.

### **7. Work Programme**

The updated work programme was noted by the committee.

### **8. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 30 April 2019 at 10:30am.

### **9. Urgent business**

None received.

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

None received.

The meeting closed at 12:02pm.

**Chairman**