
Minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee, held at 1pm on Monday, 20 May 2024 in Committee Room 1, County Hall, Chelmsford.

Present:

County Councillors:

Chris Pond (Chairman)
Jane Fleming (substitute)
Mike Garnett
Mike Mackrory (Vice Chairman from item 2)
Anthony McQuiggan
Clive Souter
Mike Steptoe (Vice Chairman from item 2)
Marshall Vance

Committee members joining remotely via Zoom:

Ivan Henderson
Wendy Stamp

Councillors from another scrutiny committee joining remotely via Zoom:

Alan Goggin, Chairman of the Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee (for agenda items 1-7)
Carlo Guglielmi, Vice Chairman of the People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee (for agenda items 1-7)

Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer, and Judith Dignum, Democratic Services Officer, were also present.

1 Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations

The report on Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations was received and noted. Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Lewis Barber, Simon Crow (for whom Councillor Jane Fleming substituted), Councillor Ivan Henderson (who attended by Zoom), Councillor Sam Kane and Councillor Wendy Stamp (who also joined remotely via Zoom).

In relation to social care and health issues raised under agenda item 6, Councillor Fleming declared that she was Deputy Cabinet Member to Councillor Spence, Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social Care and ICS Integration.

2. Appointment of Vice Chairmen

Nominations were sought for the appointment of two Vice-Chairmen for the 2024/25 municipal year.

- Councillor Steptoe proposed Cllr Mackrory, seconded by Councillor Pond;
- Councillor Mackrory proposed Councillor Steptoe, seconded by Councillor Pond.

With no other nominations received and by general consent, it was:

Resolved to appoint Councillors Mackrory and Steptoe as Vice Chairmen of the Committee for the 2024/25 municipal year.

3. Minutes and Matters Arising

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2024 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman of the meeting. Matters Arising were noted. The notes of a private briefing on budget pressures held on 18 April 2024 were also noted.

4 Questions from the public

There were no questions from the public.

5. Updated Terms of Reference

The Committee considered and noted report CPSC/10/24 relating to a change in the Committee's Terms of Reference.

6. Everyone's Essex Performance discussion: Quarter 3 2023/24 (October to December)

The Committee considered report CPSC/11/24 providing an update on the progress being made against strategic aims and priorities based on the Quarter 3 performance report, with some additional core updates up to March 2024. Also included was an opportunity to discuss the wider operational landscape of Essex, including other factors affecting residents.

The following joined the meeting for the duration of the item:

Councillor Kevin Bentley Leader (remotely via Zoom)
Richard Puleston, Director: Policy
Suzanne Barcz - Head of Performance and Business Intelligence

The introductory presentation included highlighting the following:

- Some updated measures were to be included in future reports.
- Performance in most areas continued to be strong and some examples were given.

- ECC was still waiting approval from the Secretary of State for the two 'part approved' coastal path stretches (Harwich to Shotley Gate and Wallasea Island to Burnham).
- Child Protection Plans had lowered over the quarter but remained just above the expected range.
- Completion of the LED Replacement Programme would now be during the current calendar year, rather than the original projected March 2024 date.

Key points highlighted and discussed during the subsequent discussion included:

- (i) ECC were looking to work with UK Power Networks to help improve response times to power outages. However this was a national issue as well as a local one.
- (ii) Fuel poverty and life expectancy varied across the county with concerning rates in Tendring particularly highlighted.
- (iii) ECC continued to work with partners to encourage further reductions in the amount of domestic and residential waste.
- (iv) 52% of adults were getting care at home through using enabling technology and members encouraged further increasing this number. There had been gross savings of approximately £25m since 2021 by using care technology functionality.

Conclusion

It was agreed that the following would be provided:

- (i) Further information on household domestic waste reduction in each borough/city/district council area.
- (ii) To clarify how flood risk properties were identified.
- (iii) Performance indicators for EHCP assessments to be included in future.
- (iv) Further information on the cost saving from service users using technology functionality to help their self-care and what plans were in place to enable those not currently using such functionality.

7. Estates Transformation Programme update (May 2024)

The Committee considered report CPSC/12/24 which detailed the latest scope of the Estates Transformation programme, work undertaken over the last year and the next steps to be delivered.

The following joined the meeting for the duration of the item:

Councillor Derrick Louis – Cabinet Member, Transformation.
Chris Bandy – Head of Property
Ben Finlayson - Director: Property and Investment and Delivery.
Elliot Smith - Head of Infrastructure Delivery.
Alison Woods - Director, People & Organisation Development.

Key points highlighted and considered during the discussion included:

- (i) The Property Strategy responded to how the use of buildings and the way ECC worked had changed over time and had been accelerated by the impact of the Covid pandemic. The Strategy set out the ambition for change, moving to a smaller, better and greener estate for ECC.
- (ii) Alongside the Property Strategy was a Workplace Strategy which included focussing on the benefits of creating well-designed office space and facilitating flexible working.
- (iii) A good example of reducing ‘footprint’ was the relocation of staff into Rowan House and sharing it with Colchester City Council staff. There had been positive staff feedback to the change.
- (iv) Short term and long-term proposals for the use of County Hall were being progressed. Utilisation of the site was significantly reduced post pandemic and some blocks had been hibernated which had saved £450,000 on operating costs. Specialist advisors were looking at the longer-term options for each Block and a business case was being developed seeking to significantly reduce annual running costs and future-proof the site. In the short term it was important to reduce the ‘footprint’, ensure that the office space that was being used was fit for purpose, and improve the collaboration spaces.
- (v) There were around 255 operational assets including libraries and Adult Community Learning sites. As part of an operational estate review there was ongoing collaborative work with One Estate partners and service areas to ensure the most appropriate and efficient use of assets going forward and how best to deliver value for residents. Possible alternative uses may include affording the opportunity for levelling up initiatives, developing enhanced community assets, co-location or shared usage, creating and/or increasing revenue streams and disposals.
- (vi) The general approach was to replace ageing heating systems within the ECC Estate with carbon neutral solutions where possible and appropriate. 26 core sites now had solar systems. The focus in 2024/25 remained on continuing solar installation programmes and energy efficiency projects. The cost of retrofitting the current estate was going to be significant so the work programme also linked in with the operational estate review work to ensure any investments being made were in the right sites and at the appropriate time. Pay-back periods

also could vary significantly depending on the equipment being updated and/or replaced.

- (vii) Offices and then libraries, comprised the two largest estate costs. However, it was highlighted that there were 74 libraries and that the cost per individual library was not significant and the purpose of the operational estate review project was not about reducing the number of libraries.
- (viii) Team Charters should be based on finding the most productive place for staff to work. Some key performance indicators were being developed in relation to this. Councils had been requested to report to government on Productivity Plans by mid-July 2024.
- (ix) Line management guidance and Team Charters should set out when and how often staff teams should come together and the frequency of check-ins with line management to avoid staff feeling isolated by working from home. From a property management perspective, and to maximise the efficient use of buildings, it was desirable to flatten peaks in usage and get broadly the same numbers using sites across the whole working week.
- (x) Business proposals were being developed for the future use of Shire Hall. In the meantime, it had been used for some filming and this type of activity could continue to contribute to the Trust's business plan if possible. The primary issue with Shire Hall was its restricted accessibility. Reinstatement costs for any works were significant and difficult due to the building being listed.

Conclusion

The following actions were agreed:

- (i) To provide further information on the percentage of ECCs usage of electricity and heating which was carbon free and the aspiration to purchase all electricity in future from green sources.
- (ii) To provide staffing numbers for the last six years.
- (iii) To consider a further staff consultation on attitudes towards working from home and particularly any issues around isolation.

8. Annual Total Facilities Management Contract Review

The Committee considered report CPSC/13/24 which comprised an update on Facilities Management (FM) and Property Management services in place at ECC under the current Total Facilities Management (TFM) contract provided by Mitie.

The following remained from the previous agenda item:

Councillor Derrick Louis – Cabinet Member, Transformation.
Chris Bandy – Head of Property
Ben Finlayson - Director: Property and Investment and Delivery.
Elliot Smith - Head of Infrastructure Delivery.

and were joined by:

Catherine Martin – Procurement Specialist.
Ryan Nelson, Mitie
Mike Gibson, Mitie
Richard O'Connell – Lambert Smith Hampton

- (i) An overview of Mitie was presented including their market position, partnership ambitions with ECC and delivery performance under the current contract. Included in this was their role in offering and supporting apprenticeships and their participation in the Public Sector Decarbonisation scheme.
- (ii) Mitie had assisted in improving efficiencies across the ECC Estate and significantly reducing carbon output from its contractual activities.
- (iii) Mitie had recently attended and presented at two events at HM Prison Chelmsford with the second event modelled more as a Careers Fair. Mitie had funded some work experience for ex-offenders.
- (iv) Mitie had policies to help some staff install electric vehicle charging points at home. There was also work underway between ECC and Mitie to establish similar charging points on the ECC Estate.
- (v) Amongst staff benefits offered by MITIE was access to a private general practice health provider and the offer of shares in Mitie.
- (vi) Mitie now had family friendly employment policies and acknowledged that learning from recent adverse publicity had been taken on-board in relation to maternity arrangements.
- (vii) An overview was given on the Lambeth Smith Hampton (LSH) part of the contract (LSH being a sub-contractor to Mitie delivering some Property Management services), including core and ad hoc services. Opportunities for graduates and apprenticeships were also outlined.
- (viii) The LSH element of the contract was a 'pass through' with no extra contract management cost passed onto ECC.

Mitie and LSH representatives then left the meeting and discussion focussed on some initial considerations for the re-procurement of the contract.

- (ix) The strengths of the current contract arrangements were outlined. Some current contract areas that could be improved were also outlined including the difficulty sometimes in transparency of pricing when everything was lumped into a fixed fee. Full sight of how much each service cost in each building would help ECC make more informed decisions around the estate.
- (x) The market for facilities management was stable with the top 10 suppliers having only seen one new entrant in the last 10 years. Whilst total facilities management contracts were becoming more common in the private sector they were less so in the public sector.
- (xi) ECC had undertaken some peer-to-peer benchmarking in preparation for the re-procurement. ECC was already talking to potential future suppliers and had hosted a recent Round Table event for all potential suppliers to see what they could offer and the types of contract terms that they each looked for. This process of working with the market would continue throughout the year.
- (xii) A focus in the re-procurement process would be on how to structure the contract to help manage change and have in-built flexibility to accommodate, for example, future removal of estate assets from it.
- (xiii) Capital maintenance works and repairs for core estate and schools were currently placed with Mitie who would project manage a tender and works process in consultation with ECC.

Conclusion

It was agreed to provide an age breakdown of apprenticeships at Mitie.

9. Work programme

The Committee considered and noted report CPSC/06/24 which comprised the current work programme for the Committee.

10. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was currently scheduled for 27 June 2024.

11. Urgent Business

No items were raised.

The Chairman then closed the meeting at 4.10pm.

**Chairman
27 June 2024**