

**EXECUTIVE, RESOURCES AND CONTRACTS POLICY DEVELOPMENT  
AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 22 November 2018

**Present:**

Councillor Simon Fawthrop (Chairman)  
Councillors Gareth Allatt, Julian Benington,  
Nicholas Bennett J.P., David Cartwright QFSM,  
Mary Cooke, Ian Dunn, Robert Evans, Will Harmer,  
Charles Joel, Keith Onslow (Vice-Chairman),  
Michael Rutherford, Stephen Wells and Angela Wilkins

**Also Present:**

Councillor Graham Arthur, Portfolio Holder for Resources,  
Contracts and Commissioning  
Councillor Aisha Cuthbert, Executive Assistant to the  
Leader  
Councillor Colin Smith, Leader of the Council

**65 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF  
SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Councillor Marlow submitted apologies for absence and Cllr Joel attended as alternate. Councillor Mellor submitted apologies for absence. Councillor Bennett, who arrived at 8.55pm, submitted apologies for lateness.

**66 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Simon Fawthrop and Councillor Will Harmer both declared interests as employees of British Telecom (BT). The Director of Corporate Services reported that a dispensation had been granted to both Cllr Fawthrop and Cllr Harmer to attend and speak at meetings where a report including reference to British Telecom (BT) was to be considered had been extended to cover consideration of a report on IT Transformation.

Councillor Robert Evans declared an interest as a Member of the Board of Bromley MyTime.

**67 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE  
PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING**

No questions were received.

**68 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE AND RESOURCES PDS  
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11 OCTOBER  
2018(EXCLUDING EXEMPT ITEMS)**

The Committee noted that Councillor Angela Wilkins had submitted apologies for absence.

The minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2018, were agreed and signed as a correct record, subject to the amendment outlined above.

**69 MATTERS ARISING AND WORK PROGRAMME  
CSD18168**

The Committee considered a report setting out matters arising from previous meetings and the Committee's work plan for 2018/19.

Referring to Minute 57 (Contract Monitoring: Total Facilities Management (AMEY)); the Committee requested that the Chief Executive provide an update concerning the enquiries that had been made with the Police and Health Services in relation to the member of the public who had brandished a meat cleaver outside the front entrance to the Civic Centre.

*Action Point 15: The Chief Executive to provide an update concerning the enquiries that had been made with the Police and Health Services in relation to the member of the public who had brandished a meat cleaver outside the front entrance to the Civic Centre.*

**RESOLVED: that**

- 1. Progress on matters arising from previous meetings be noted; and**
- 2. The 2018/19 Work Programme be noted.**

**70 RISK MANAGEMENT  
FSD18090**

The Committee considered a report which provided Members with the most recent Risk Registers for the areas falling under the Committee's remit.

In relation to Appendix C (Commission Risk Register) Ref 2 (Effective governance and management of contracts); the Committee considered what action needed to be taken to move the risk to amber/green. In response the Head of Audit reported that that the Director of Commissioning was not yet convinced that all officers had embedded the full commissioning cycle into their work practices. There had been a lot of recent training but it was now about taking that forward into identifying demand and shaping services. This would continue to be reviewed and updated in future risk registers and has also been noted as a risk going forward on the Annual Governance Statement.

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Members noted that in relation to Ref 1 (Failure to deliver the Council's target operating model as a "Commissioning Organisation") on Appendix C, weekly Commissioning Board meetings were listed as an existing control to mitigate the risk. Questions were raised concerning the work being undertaken to maintain the weekly Commissioning Board meetings. The Portfolio Holder for Resources, Contracts and Commissioning reported that the Commissioning Board was currently suspended to enable a process of change and the introduction of a Transformation Board which would replace the current Commissioning Board. The new Transformation Board would continue to scrutinise contracts in the same way as the Commissioning Board. The Portfolio Holder stressed the need to undertake a review of core services and the core Council structure in order to identify the most efficient way to deliver services in the future. Members emphasised that there was no scope for delays in the commissioning process as the Council structure was considered and the Transformation Board introduced. The Committee requested that the Chief Executive provide Members with the date of the next Commissioning Board meeting as well as the date for the launch of the new Transformation Board.

*Action Point 16: The Chief Executive to provide Members with the date of the next Commissioning Board meeting as well as the date for the launch of the new Transformation Board.*

It was suggested that the Terms of Reference of the Contracts and Commissioning Sub-Committee should be further reviewed to ensure that no conflicts arose and that thorough scrutiny took place.

The Chairman questioned the mitigation in place in relation to Appendix D (Finance Risk Register) Ref 5 (Failure to deliver a sustainable financial strategy). The Chief Accountant confirmed that in January and February the Director of Finance would be presenting two reports to the Committee concerning the 2019/20 budget and financial forecast. The Portfolio Holder for Resources, Contracts and Commissioning highlighted that the budget setting process was underway. It was suggested that consideration should be given to an 'amber' RAG rating as action was being taken to deliver a sustainable financial strategy.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

## **71 FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS**

The Committee noted the Forward Plan of Key Decisions covering the period November 2018 to February 2019.

## **72 MINUTES OF THE CONTRACTS AND COMMISSIONING SUB-COMMITTEE HELD ON 19 SEPTEMBER 2018**

The Committee received the minutes of the Contracts and Commissioning Sub-Committee meeting held on 19 September 2018. The Chairman of the

Contracts and Commissioning Sub-Committee reported that in recent meetings the quality of reports to the Sub-committee had noticeably improved. This suggested that the mandatory training that had been introduced could be having an impact.

**73 QUESTIONS TO THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS ATTENDING THE MEETING**

The following oral question was received from Councillor Ian Dunn:

**What public consultation is planned for the 2019/20 budget?**

**Reply:**

Two separate resident association meetings will be held on 27th November 2018 and 29th November 2018 relating to Looking to the Future – the Council's budget 2019-20 and beyond. Members of the public will be invited to let the Council know what is important to them, what the Council is doing well, where they believe improvements could be made and a greater focus placed, and how the Council can work better with communities to keep and improve the Borough as the great place it is to live, work, do business and relax in, as we move to the future.

There is background information on the website and a media release will be going out this week linking with social media. The outcomes will be reported to the 16th January 2019 meeting of the Executive.

Up to finalising the budget for next year, specific budget proposals will be submitted to PDS committees and Executive which will include the arrangements and the outcome of consultation with key stakeholders which may include the public, where appropriate.

Consultation papers on the 2019/20 Budget will also be sent to Bromley Business Focus, Federation of Small Businesses (Sevenoaks & Bromley Branch) and the 20 largest business ratepayers in the Borough. The outcome will be reported to Executive in February 2019.

**Supplementary Question:**

In previous years public meetings attended by Members of the Executive were held. Why are no such meetings being held this year?

**Reply:**

The Portfolio Holder said that he was not convinced that the public meetings represented value for money as in previous years less than ½% of residents attended. The Portfolio Holder cited an example of one meeting with the Executive attended by only 5 members of the public. The Portfolio Holder

said that he did not believe that this type of public meeting was the correct way to connect with residents and instead alternative mediums such as multimedia should be considered and that there should be a focus on this type of engagement going forward.

**Supplementary Question from Cllr Benington:**

What time are the Residents' Association Meetings being held?

**Reply:**

7pm

**Second Supplementary Question from Cllr Dunn:**

Cllr Dunn noted that he had been to public meetings that had been attended by several hundred members of the public. Cllr Dunn questioned whether there was another reason for not holding public meetings.

**Reply:**

The Portfolio Holder stated that he believed that Residents' Associations were representative of residents of the Borough and could provide accurate feedback to the Executive. The Portfolio Holder reported that his only marginal concern was that as a result of engaging with Residents' Associations it was harder to receive feedback from younger residents. However, to address this Members would be meeting with Bromley Youth Council. The Portfolio Holder stressed that there was an important role for elected councillors throughout the consultation process and that through their attendance at meetings where the budget was discussed Members should be representing all their residents.

**74 SCRUTINY OF THE EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE LEADER**

The Executive Assistant to the Leader, Cllr Aisha Cuthbert, attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Committee. Cllr Cuthbert gave a brief introduction highlighting the following issues –

- Appointed as Executive Assistant to the Leader in May 2018 and since that time had received a lot of support from the Leader.
- As a result of her professional background in housing time spent working with the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing as well as the Director of Housing and officers within the Housing Section to identify key issues around temporary accommodation and homelessness.
- In collaboration with Cllr Dykes (Executive Assistant for Children, Education and Families) had established an outreach service for harder to reach families called "Talk, Tots and Tumblers". The outreach service was based in the soft play area of The Glades and provided an

opportunity for families to get information on the support and services that were available.

Cllr Cuthbert then responded to questions, making the following comments –

- There was a need to consider the provision of housing for older people. Often one older person occupied a 4/5 bedroom house that would better accommodate a family. Consideration had to be given to ensuring an adequate supply of affordable housing for older people.
- Whilst Officers approached housing from an operational perspective she approached issues from the perspective of residents, taking more of a holistic approach.
- In relation to illegal sub-letting of social housing, many Housing Associations had Anti-Social Teams who dealt with this issue. Proactive investigations took place where there was evidence of illegal sub-letting.
- The impact of Universal Credit would need to be closely monitored. As claimants moved to Universal Credit they often fell into high rent arrears. This made it difficult for them to budget and as a result there was a risk of eviction. This in turn increased pressure on the Local Authority in terms of temporary accommodation.
- The average turnaround time for an empty property was approximately a week depending on the state in which the property had been left.
- In terms of ensuring an adequate supply of homes for first time buyers, provision could be secured through s.106 contributions and shared ownership schemes. In relation to foreign investors buying properties in Bromley in order to speculate, developers needed to be held to account and asked to restrict the purchase of starter homes to Bromley residents.
- The “Talk, Tots and Tumbles” outreach service had not been extended across the Borough. There was very little costs attached to the Service, just Councillor time. It would be possible for other Councillors to set up similar support groups. It was still early days for the Outreach Service however feedback from the young families was positive. Cllr Cuthbert confirmed that she was looking to connect with other organisations such as charities and children’s centres who may be able to offer expertise.

The Chairman thanked the Executive Assistant to the Leader for her presentation to the Committee.

## **75 RESOURCES PORTFOLIO - PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY**

The Committee considered the following report where the Resources Portfolio Holder was recommended to take a decision.

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**a TREASURY MANAGEMENT - QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE  
2018/19 & MID YEAR REVIEW  
FSD18093**

The Committee considered a report summarising treasury management activity during the second quarter of 2018/19. The report also included a Mid-Year Review of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy. The report ensured that the Council was implementing best practice in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management. Investments as at 30<sup>th</sup> September totalled £309.5m and there was no outstanding external borrowing. For information and comparison, the balance of investments stood at £303.6m as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2018, £284.8m as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018, and at £347m as at 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

As the classification of Constant Net Asset Value (CNAV) funds would now only apply to funds mainly consisting of low yielding government debt, the Council's existing Money Market Funds would convert into the new Low Volatility Net Asset Value (LVNAV) category. It was therefore proposed that the Treasury Management Strategy was amended to the following:

“The Council may invest in AAA rated Money Market Funds, including Constant Net Asset Value (CNAV) Funds, Low Volatility Net Asset Value (LVNAV) funds and Variable Net Asset value (VNAV) funds. The total invested in each of the CNAV and LVNAV Funds must not exceed £15m at any time and £10m for VNAV funds. This includes the Payden Sterling Reserve Fund for which a limit of £15m is also applied. No more than £25m in total may be invested in VNAV funds at any time.”

The Committee also noted that at its meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2018, Members discussed the option of not reporting on treasury management activity quarterly unless Officers felt that a matter should come before the Committee sooner. As Financial Regulations currently required quarterly reports, the report requested that the Portfolio Holder recommended that Council formally approved this change. There were three reports required by the Code of Practice, and it was intended that in year monitoring would be incorporated into these reports.

**RESOLVED: That the Portfolio Holder be recommended to:**

- 1. Note the Treasury Management performance for the second quarter of 2018/19;**
- 2. Recommend that Council approves the inclusion of the new Low Volatility Net Asset Value (LVNAV) category of Money Market Funds into the Treasury Management Strategy, as set out in the report.**

- 3. Recommend that Council approves the non-reporting of treasury management activity quarterly, as set out in the report.**

**76 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXECUTIVE REPORTS**

The Committee considered the following reports on the Part 1 agenda for the meeting of the Executive on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2018:

**(6) BUDGET MONITORING 2018/19  
Report FSD18085**

The Committee considered a report which provided the second budget monitoring position for 2018/19 based on expenditure and activity levels up to the end of September 2018. The report also highlighted any significant variations which would impact on future years as well as any early warnings that could impact on the final year end position.

In response to a query concerning the length of time it would take to fill the two vacated shops in Bromley the Director of Corporate Services confirmed that work was underway with regard to one of the properties. The Chief Accountant agreed to make enquiries and provide Members with an update.

**RESOLVED: That the Executive be recommended to:**

- (a) consider the latest financial position;**
- (b) note that a projected net overspend on services of £1,506k is forecast based on information as at September 2018;**
- (c) consider the comments from Chief Officers detailed in Appendix 2;**
- (d) note a projected variation of £98k credit from investment income as detailed in sections 3.5 and 3.6 of the report;**
- (e) note a projected variation of £1,454k in the Central contingency, as detailed in section 3.2 of the report;**
- (f) note a projected reduction to the General Fund balance of £1,085k as detailed in section 3.3 of the report;**
- (g) agree to the release of £165k from the 2018/19 Central Contingency relating to the cost of Local Elections as detailed in para. 3.2.2 of the report;**
- (h) agree to the release of £500k Improved Better Care Funding from the 2018/19 Central Contingency as detailed in para. 3.2.3 of the report;**

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- (i) **approve the drawdown of £1.5m Health Funding to the CCG from Health and Social Care earmarked reserves as detailed in para. 3.9.1 of the report;**
  - (j) **recommend to Council that £3.5m be set aside in the Technology Fund earmarked reserve from underspends in the 2018/19 Central Contingency for the Council's IT Transformation scheme as detailed in para. 3.2.6 of the report;**
  - (k) **note the full year cost pressures of £5.2m as detailed in section 3.4 of the report;**
  - (l) **identify any issues that should be referred to individual Portfolio Holders for further action.**
- (7) CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING – 2<sup>nd</sup> QUARTER 2018/19 Report FSD18094**

The Committee considered a report summarising the current position on capital expenditure and receipts following the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2018/19 and seeking the Executive's approval of a revised Capital Programme.

A Member raised concerns around the proposals to remove £8k from the Betts Park Canal Bank Stabilisation Project as a recent visit to the site had indicated that the project was not yet fully complete. It was agreed that the recommendation should be removed and the situation further investigated prior to the Q3 Capital Programme Monitoring Report.

**RESOLVED: That the Executive be recommended to:**

- (a) **Note the report, including a total re-phasing of £28,311k from 2018/19 into future years, and agree a revised Capital Programme;**
- (b) **Approve the following amendments to the Capital Programme:**
  - (i) **Reduction of £192k to the Transport for London (TfL) funded Traffic and Highways schemes;**
  - (ii) **Removal of £4k from the Woodlands Improvements Programme Scheme;**
  - (iii) **Note that a report elsewhere on the Agenda requests the addition of £100k to the Capital Programme for Housing Development Feasibility;**
  - (iv) **Note that a report elsewhere on the Agenda requests the allocation of £800k to the Affordable Housing capital scheme and £206k to the Property Acquisitions scheme from Housing Payment in Lieu Funds;**

- (v) **Note that a report is due elsewhere on the Agenda which requests the addition to the Capital Programme of the IT Transformation scheme; and**
- (vi) **Note that the Council has been allocated funding of £1.1m from the Department of Transport, and that a report will be submitted to a future meeting of the Executive detailing the proposed use of this funding.**

**(8) COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT/REDUCTION SCHEME 2019/20  
Report FSD18082**

The Committee considered a report advising Members of the recent consultation exercise and seeking approval of the scheme to be forwarded to Full Council for approval.

In response to a question, the Head of Revenues and Benefits confirmed that the Local Authority could adopt a scheme with different discounts for different bands. The Committee requested that a breakdown of the number of people claiming in each band be provided.

*Action Point 17: A breakdown of the number of people claiming in each band be provided.*

With reference to the response provided by the GLA and the comments made relating to collection practices; the Head of Revenues and Benefits confirmed that where small sums of money were owed the Local Authority worked with the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and applied for liability orders where necessary.

The Committee noted that in relation to the Hardship Fund, in 2017/18 £28k of the £100k fund was used. Members noted that it was not possible to accurately ascertain the number of applications. Officers often signposted residents to the fund and the number of completed forms did not bear any relation to the number of applications.

A Member suggested that the impact of Universal Credit on working families needed to be taken into consideration. It was suggested that a more sophisticated approach needed to be taken with increased spending to support families in order to save more in relation to the cost of temporary accommodation. In response the Chairman reported that Bromley had a low council tax with high collection rates of at least 80%.

The Chairman proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. The motion was put to a vote:

11 in favour  
2 against.

The motion was CARRIED.

**RESOLVED: That the Executive be recommended to:**

- (a) Note the updated Impact Assessment at Appendix 1 of the report;**
- (b) Note the responses of the public consultation exercise at Appendix 3 of the report;**
- (c) Consider that the Council Tax Support/Reduction scheme for 2019/20 retains the calculation of entitlement for working-age claimants on 75% of the households Council Tax liability. Thereby the maximum assistance provided to a claimant of working-age is 75% of his/her Council Tax liability.**
- (d) Recommend to Council the Council Tax Support/Reduction scheme for 2019/20.**

**(14) IT TRANSFORMATION  
Report CSD18176**

The Committee considered a report which provided details of a major re-fresh of the IT infrastructure supporting the Council's core IT and business systems which was required as a result of the cessation of several manufacturers support during the next two years. The report outlined the significant risks and the required changes that were needed to ensure that the Council retained a significant number of critical infrastructure platforms.

A Member noted that the move to Office 365 involved costs of over £300k and queried the additional costs. In response the Head of ICT reported there were one-off licenses for Office 2010 however Office 365 was subscription based and this accounted for the additional revenue costs. In response to a question about the cost of Office 2019, the Head of ICT agreed to provide the information following the meeting.

*Action Point 18: Information concerning the cost of Office 2019 be provided following the meeting along with a diagram of the current Bromley network.*

The Committee noted that the current total number of users was in the region of 1600-1650 LBB employees, 200 agency staff and 200 contractors who had equipment supplied. Members noted that the number of users continuously fluctuated.

The Chairman raised concerns that Office 365 did not support PST files and that this would have implications for Councillors who were Data Controllers in relation to the personal data of residents who made contact. The Head of ICT confirmed that consideration had been given to this and the recommendation

from Microsoft was that PST files were not used. However, with the move to O365 PST files will be ingested into the mailboxes and therefore available to user that could be accessed at any time. The Head of ICT confirmed that there would be a project plan around this issue involving full engagement with Members.

In response to a question, the Head of ICT confirmed that there had been extensive consultation with Departments prior to the report being drafted. The report presented to the Committee was based on business requirements and the ambition to further facilitate mobile working for those staff who worked remotely. The Strategy presented to the Committee was a Corporate strategy reflecting input from all departments across the Council.

Highlighting that the IT Strategy should deliver benefits to the Council moving forward, the Chairman raised a series of technical concerns concerning the need to give further consideration to alternative WAN and LAN connections. In response the Head of ICT confirmed that a number of options had been considered in detail prior to the proposals being presented in the report. Following an options appraisal by BT a recommendation had been made to pursue the MPLS route in order to deliver savings. The Head of ICT confirmed that in layman's terms the proposal was to move towards a cloud based system.

The Committee felt that to deliver the maximum benefits from the Strategy service transformation would be required across the organisation moving forward. In response the Director of Corporate Services stressed that the IT Strategy before the Committee was one of many building blocks and there was a lot more work needed to be done. However, agreeing the IT Strategy upfront would provide the flexibility that was necessary to develop other aspects.

The Head of ICT confirmed that a lot of work had already been undertaken. Meetings had taken place with other local authorities who had gone down the route proposed in the report in order to ensure that lessons could be learnt. As a result of the work that had already been undertaken the Head of ICT confirmed that he was quietly confident that the project would be delivered on time.

The Committee recommended that in the next phase of work consideration should be given to how IT transformation could be used to improve services, improve the lives of staff in terms of flexible and home working, and deliver efficiencies. In addition to this the Committee recommended that all options concerning WAN and LAN connections should be considered further.

**RESOLVED: That the Executive be recommended to:**

**(a) Endorse the ICT strategy attached as Appendix 1 of the report.**

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- (b) Note the information and agree to the procurement of End of Life (EoL) IT infrastructure and the proposed work to be undertaken to upgrade and replace the platforms as set out in this report.**
- (c) Recommend that Council approves the addition of £5.381m to the Capital Programme to undertake the delivery of the ICT transformation project between 2019 and 2022, funded from a total reduction of £1.925m to existing IT capital schemes, and £3.5m set aside in the Technology Fund earmarked reserve from underspends in 2018/19.**
- (d) Agree a hybrid approach of ‘on premise’ and cloud IT infrastructure to facilitate the upgrade requirements as detailed in paragraph 3.6.7.**
- (e) Agree that the Director of Corporate Services is given delegated authority in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to agree the cloud or 3<sup>rd</sup> party cloud solution, as needed for Disaster Recovery (DR) and for Business Continuity (BC).**
- (f) Agree the use of Westminster Pan-London Framework and utilise the current service provider, BT, to deliver the upgrade and procure the services and supplies detailed in the report Where in the opinion of the Director of Corporate Services a separate procurement is required or desirable, agree to delegate authority to the Director of Corporate Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to authorise the use of an appropriate framework or alternative procurement route.**
- (g) Agree the creation of up to 3 FTE temporary posts if required to support, coordinate and manage the delivery of the projects for a period of 27 months, as set out in the report.**
- (h) Agree that any future development costs for systems will be funded from the Capital Programme, as and when new system development is required, enabling revenue saving of £170k to reduce the growth.**
- (i) Agree additional net growth of £92k for 2018/19 and £394k per annum from 2019/20 to cover the licensing, support and system running costs.**
- (j) Note that it is estimated that a further £250k may be required to undertake the reviews of the LoB Systems and the potential replacement costs for those Line of Business Systems could be up to £5m in the next three years;**
- (k) Agree that in the next phase of work consideration should be given to how IT transformation could be used to improve services,**

**improve the lives of staff in terms of flexible and home working, and deliver efficiencies; and**

- (l) Agree that all options concerning WAN (including SD WAN and WAN over the internet) and LAN connections should be considered further.**

**77 BENEFITS SERVICE MONITORING REPORT  
Report FSD18080**

The Committee considered a report which provided information regarding the performance of the benefits service provided by Liberata during the period 1 April 2018 to 30 September 2018. A letter from Amanda Inwood-field, Liberata's London Regional Contract Director, providing Liberata's perspective on performance, together with an update on initiatives to be introduced in the coming months was attached to the report.

In opening the discussion the Chairman noted that good progress had been made and that the targets were moving in the right direction with the report indicating that the contract was working well.

In response to a question the Committee was informed that a project targeting Temporary Accommodation cases had been undertaken earlier in the year and as part of the project Liberata staff had been proactively engaging with individuals. The project had a positive impact which has resulted in an increase in the number of new claims; the additional time taken to process the new claims was reflected in the claim processing figures for June and July 2018.

The Head of Revenues and Benefits reported that in terms of Members being able to objectively assess whether a good service was being delivered, the appendix to the report provided a comparison with other London boroughs. There were no detailed statistics concerning the costs per claim to enable benchmarking; however, the Head of Revenues and Benefits stated that informal evidence suggested that those authorities that performed better spent more on delivering the service.

Turning to the issue of Budgeting Support to those on Universal Credit being provided by Bromley Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and their partnership between the DWP and Bromley CAB; the Head of Revenues and Benefits confirmed that the decision that Local Authorities would no longer have a role in assisting their residents had been taken by the DWP. The Head of Revenues and Benefits suggested that the CAB were in a difficult position as they were working for the DWP and as a result of this there could be some conflict meaning that some residents may continue to approach the Local Authority for advice and support.

In response to a question from the Vice-Chairman, the Head of Revenues and Benefits confirmed that work was underway in terms of procurement

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processes for the new contract, timescales were in place and the new contract would be delivered on time.

**RESOLVED: That the report and the letter provided by Liberata be noted.**

**78 REVENUES SERVICE MONITORING REPORT  
Report FSD18052**

The Committee considered a report providing information regarding the performance of the Revenues Service provided by Liberata for the 6 months up to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018. A letter from Amanda Inwood-Field, Liberata's London Regional Contract Director, providing an update on each individual service along with statistical data relating to the Revenues Service was included within the report.

In opening the discussion the Chairman suggested that the Committee should make a recommendation to the effect that further consultation take place concerning increasing the empty homes premium as soon as possible.

The Chairman requested that the Committee's thanks be extended to all those involved in processing business rate relief last year. Feedback from businesses received by the Chairman had indicated that the efforts had been appreciated by businesses.

The Chairman noted that it was a very good report and that good progress was being made. The Committee noted that there had been some slippage in relation to collection of business rates however, other local authorities had been experiencing similar issues.

In response to a question surrounding long outstanding Council Tax arrears, the Head of Revenues and Benefits confirmed that in many cases repayment arrangements were in place and the outstanding sum reducing, albeit slowly.

The Committee discussed the possibility of using the electoral register to cross-reference empty properties. The Director of Corporate Services reported that there were restrictions on the use of the electoral register which meant that there were constraints around what the Council could do in terms of data. The Committee requested that the Director of Corporate Services provide a briefing note for the Committee regarding the rules around and constrains on the use of the electoral register in relation to cross referencing empty properties.

*Action Point 19: The Director of Corporate Services to provide a briefing note for the Committee regarding the rules around and constrains on the use of the electoral register in relation to cross referencing empty properties.*

In response to a question the Head of Revenues and Benefits outlined the internal complaints procedure and confirmed that any resident not satisfied with the way in which the Council had handled their complaint could refer the matter to the Ombudsman.

The Committee agreed that the Executive and Officers should be asked to explore options around applying the Empty Homes Premium as soon as possible.

**RESOLVED: That:**

- 1. The report and the letter from Liberata be noted; and**
- 2. The Executive and Officers be recommended to explore all options to consider applying the Empty Homes Premium as soon as possible.**

**79 EXCHEQUER SERVICE - CONTRACT PERFORMANCE  
REPORT  
Report FSD18091**

The Committee considered a report providing information regarding Liberata's performance in the provision of Exchequer Services for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018. A letter from Amanda Inwood-Field, Liberata's London Regional Contract Director, provided an update on each individual service along with statistical data relating to the services was included within the report.

In response to a question concerning the reasons for the high level of utility debt relating to Virgin Media, the Committee noted that the debt could be due to new invoices linked to the report production process. Members also noted that some utility companies could take longer to process payments. The Head of Exchequer Services confirmed that currently no late payments charges were levied by the Local Authority unless they were contractual. This was something that was being reviewed in relation to commercial debt although this had been put on hold whilst the new debt management system was being implemented. The Head of Exchequer Services confirmed that implementation of the new debt management system should be completed by the end of the financial year and once completed further consideration could be given to introducing late payment charges for commercial debt. The Chairman requested that the Head of Exchequer Services write to Members of the Committee to provide a date for when the debt management system would be implemented and consideration given to late payment charges for commercial debt.

*Action Point 20: The Head of Exchequer Services to write to Members of the Committee to provide a date for when the debt management system will be implemented and consideration given to late payment charges for commercial debt.*

In relation to telecoms debt, the Committee noted that this type of debt was a relatively small proportion of the overall debt. Where possible appropriate action was taken to secure the debt. Members also noted that the intervention in relation to the BT Openreach debt was relatively new and it would take a few months to measure the impact of the intervention. The Head of Exchequer Services confirmed that the report due to be considered by the Committee in July 2019 should reflect a decrease in the level of debt.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

**80            CUSTOMER SERVICE MONITORING REPORT  
                 Report CSD18165**

The Committee considered a report which provided information on the performance of the Customer Service contract provided by Liberata for the period 1st June 2018 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018. A letter from Amanda Inwood-field, Liberata's London Regional Contract Director, providing an update on each individual element was included within the report.

The Committee noted with disappointment that traffic through the website had not increased during the reporting period. In response the Head of Customer Services reported that the report covered a relatively short reporting period (4 months) and that the summer months were traditionally quieter. A proactive approach was taken to encouraging people to access the Council's website. Members suggested that it was possible that website use had not increased as the Council had already attracted the optimum number of website users. Members noted that from their own personal experience they had limited need to access the website due to factors such as paying Council Tax by direct debit. The Chairman further noted that a number of services that residents would use (such as brown bins) required users to access external sites.

A Member stressed that the end of year report presented to the Committee should provide a comparison with other Local Authorities to enable Members to objectively compare performance. The Committee agreed to recommend that in future any Liberata end of year report presented to Members should provide a comparison with other local authorities.

**RESOLVED: That**

- 1. The report and the letter provided by Liberata be noted; and**
- 2. In future, any Liberata end of year report presented to the Committee to provide a comparison with other local authorities.**

**81            AGENCY STAFF CONTRACT MONITORING REPORT  
                 Report CSD18174**

The Committee considered a report providing information on the performance of the Agency Staff Contract with the Council's Managed Services provider Adecco for the period 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018 against the key performance indicators contained within the contract.

It was agreed that following the meeting the report author should be asked to clarify the difference between the Agency Fee and the Management Fee.

*Action Point 21: the report author to clarify the difference between the Agency Fee and the Management Fee.*

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

**82            LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE  
                 LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION)  
                 (VARIATION) ORDER 2006, AND THE FREEDOM OF  
                 INFORMATION ACT 2000**

**RESOLVED that the Press and public be excluded during consideration of the items of business referred to below as it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that if members of the Press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information.**

**The following summaries  
refer to matters involving exempt information**

**83            EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 OCTOBER  
                 2018**

The Part 2 (exempt) minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2018 were agreed, and signed as a correct record.

A Member queried why the minutes were classified as Part 2 as they did not appear to contain any exempt information. It was noted that the Director of HR had previously requested that the minutes be exempt from publication. The Director of Corporate Services agreed to discuss the issues with the Director of HR and depending on the outcome of the discussions the minutes would be moved into Part 1.

**84            EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE CONTRACTS AND  
                 COMMISSIONING SUB-COMMITTEE HELD ON 19  
                 SEPTEMBER 2018**

The exempt (Part 2) minutes of the Contracts and Commissioning Sub-Committee were noted. The Committee queried why the minutes were in Part

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2 as they did not appear to contain any exempt information. It was agreed that the Committee would recommend to the Contracts and Commissioning Sub-Committee that the minutes be Part 1.

**85            AGENCY STAFF CONTRACT MONITORING REPORT  
                 APPENDIX B**

The Committee noted the Part 2 appendix.

The Meeting ended at 9.40 pm

Chairman