

EXECUTIVE, RESOURCES AND CONTRACTS POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 15 September 2021

Present:

Councillor Christopher Marlow (Chairman)
Councillor Kira Gabbert (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Yvonne Bear, Nicholas Bennett MA J.P.,
David Cartwright QFSM, Mary Cooke, Nicky Dykes,
Robert Evans, Will Harmer, Colin Hitchins, Simon Jeal,
Melanie Stevens, Michael Tickner, Stephen Wells and
Angela Wilkins

Also Present:

Councillor Graham Arthur, Portfolio Holder for Resources,
Commissioning and Contracts Management
Councillor Colin Smith, Leader of the Council

29 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Pauline Tunnicliffe. Councillor Wells attended as substitute.

30 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no additional declarations of interest.

31 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING

No questions were received.

32 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE, RESOURCES AND CONTRACTS PDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 23 JUNE 2021 (EXCLUDING EXEMPT ITEMS)

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2021, were agreed and signed as a correct record.

15 September 2021

**33 MATTERS OUTSTANDING AND WORK PROGRAMME
Report CSD21093**

The report dealt with the Committee's business management including matters outstanding from previous meetings and the proposed work plan for the remainder of the year.

A Member reminded the Committee of the requirement to report to Members on the evaluation of contracts, once completed, as part of the Gateway process and requested an evaluation report for the Total Facilities Management (Amey) contract. Noting that the Committee was due to receive an update on the Transformation of the Property Service, the Chairman requested that this report include the evaluation for the Amey contract.

The Chairman also reported that the Vice-Chairman would lead a Housing and Capital Finance Task and Finish Group focusing on one of the Committee's priorities for the year – that of sources of funding for the Council's Housing and Capital Programme. The Vice-Chairman would be reaching out to Members in due course.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

34 STATUTORY FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

The Committee noted the statutory Forward Plan of Key Decisions covering the period August 2021 to November 2021. The Chairman highlighted that the Procurement of the HR/Payroll Software report had been deferred until October.

**35 RESOURCES, COMMISSIONING AND CONTRACTS
MANAGEMENT PORTFOLIO - PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY**

The Committee considered the following reports where the Resources, Contracts and Commissioning Portfolio Holder was recommended to take a decision.

**a CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING - 1ST QUARTER
2021/22
Report FSD21050**

On 15th July 2021, the Executive received a report summarising the current position on capital expenditure and receipts following the 1st quarter of 2021/22 and agreed a revised Capital Programme for the four-year period 2021/22 to 2024/25. The report highlighted changes agreed by the Executive and the Leader in respect of the Capital Programme for the Executive, Resources & Contracts Portfolio. The revised programme for the portfolio was set out in Appendix A and detailed comments on individual schemes were shown in Appendix B with details of the 2020/21 outturn position included in Appendix C.

In response to a question, the Director of Finance explained that one of the challenges with the HR/Payroll system was that it would need to link into other financial systems. It was recognised that any new system would need the flexibility to handle reducing personnel numbers. The report presented to October would set out any market testing undertaken to date.

The Director of Finance confirmed that further slippage of the report concerning the Civic Centre feasibility work was expected as there would now need to be a review of the impact of the increasingly agile ways of working following the Covid pandemic. This would be done as part of the wider Council Transformation work.

The Chairman requested that the outstanding post completion reports be expedited and that where necessary shortened reports drawing out key points be presented to the Committee.

RESOLVED: That the Portfolio Holder be recommended to note and acknowledge the changes agreed by the Executive on 15th July 2021.

36 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXECUTIVE REPORTS

The Committee considered the following reports on the Part 1 agenda for the meeting of the Executive on 22 September 2021:

(5) MAKING BROMLEY EVEN BETTER Report CSD21098

The report presented the refreshed corporate strategy “Making Bromley Even Better” 2021-2031. The ambitions outlined would be delivered through a wide range of strategic and operational plans across the Council and partner agencies.

In opening the discussion, the Chairman noted the extensive work that had gone into gathering comments and developing the refreshed strategy and thanked the Assistant Director for Strategy, Performance and Transformation for this work.

The Assistant Director reported that in developing the Strategy, she had engaged in one-to-one discussions with at least 20 Members and this had facilitated the development of the Strategy presented for approval by the Executive on 22 September 2021. There had also been an awareness of the need to reflect the requirements of the Council’s regulators, and this was one of the key reasons for updating the Corporate Strategy. It was recognised that the development of the Strategy had been unfortunately delayed by 12 months as a result of the demands imposed by the Council’s response to the Covid pandemic.

Whilst the Strategy was a high-level plan it was not static. The priorities set out in the Strategy would be delivered through the Portfolio Plans and delivery

15 September 2021

of objectives would be monitored through PDS Committees with amendments implemented as and when necessary.

The Committee noted that monitoring would be undertaken through a formal annual report as well as through the Chief Executive's appraisal process. Through this monitoring process the corporate strategy would be reflective of Portfolio Plans and the key agendas within each Portfolio.

Members welcomed the document noting that it was important that, as a roadmap of the Council's future intentions, the document was reflective of any significant changes in the direction of corporate strategy and policy and was updated as and when necessary. It was suggested that as a working document it may be helpful to number paragraphs in future versions.

A Member suggested that there should be further clarity around the statistics relating to employment in the Borough, and it was noted that this detail was captured in the Economic Development Strategy. In addition, noting that Bromley had the highest number of settled travellers in the United Kingdom a Member suggested that in fact the Borough had the highest number of settled travellers in Europe (although this statistic may be difficult to verify).

Noting the description of the Borough as the fourth most affluent borough in London, a Member highlighted that the Council should not hide away from the considerable areas of deprivation in the Borough. In response, the Assistant Director highlighted that the Strategy included a number of actions and objectives setting out the ambitions for the more deprived areas of the borough.

The Committee noted that following Executive the Strategy would be presented to Full Council.

RESOLVED: That the Executive be recommended to approve the refreshed Corporate Strategy; Making Bromley Even Better 2021-2031

**(6) CRM REPLACEMENT PROJECT - WEBSITE REDESIGN AND UPGRADE
Report CSD21097**

The report provided an update on the CRM replacement project and sought Member's approval to progress the complimentary scheme to redesign and upgrade the Council's public facing website.

In opening the discussion and noting the estimated underspend of approximately £372K for the CRM capital project scheme, the Vice Chairman questioned whether there had been correct budgeting in the first instance. In response, the Assistant Director for Customer Services explained that the process had required a review of individual aspects of the project. Only once this process had been completed was it possible to reduce the scope of the

project, although it was recognised that the underspend represented a significant proportion of the original budget.

In response to a question, the Assistant Director confirmed that a review of all the web pages was already underway with a view to deleting or updating out-of-date content.

The Assistant Director reported that content could be updated quickly where necessary and this was facilitated by colleagues in Liberata who consistently achieved the required service levels.

In response to a question, the Assistant Director explained that Jadu were one of the market leaders in the provision of local authority websites and Bromley had a long-standing relationship with Jadu and had recently extended other contracts as part of the CRM project. As such, re-tendering and potentially breaking away from the Jadu suite of software invested in would create a disjoint in functionality and customer experience and lose some of the customer benefits being achieved. Liberata had recommended engaging with Jadu for the redesign.

A Member noted that the Council had a number of websites that sat outside the corporate website. These sites (e.g., parking permits and committee documents) were aligned to departmental back-end systems.

The Committee noted that as part of the project there would be engagement with a range of customers at an appropriate point. In addition, a Member walk-through and Member introductions were included within the project plan.

In summarising the discussion, the Chairman set out that whilst the Committee recognised the advantages of keeping eco-systems of products, in future Members would like to see exploration of other products in order to deliver an enhanced user experience.

RESOLVED: That the Executive be recommended to

- 1. Note the estimated underspend of approximately £372K for the CRM capital project scheme as outlined in this report. The actual figure will be confirmed within the capital scheme project closure report.**
- 2. Approve additional expenditure of £175K on the website redesign and upgrade project, to compliment the CRM replacement project.**
- 3. To fund the website redesign and upgrade project from the existing CRM capital programme provision and to amend the capital programme to reflect the revised total estimated costs to be funded of £625k.**

15 September 2021

37 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

**38 PART 2 CONTRACTS REGISTER AND CONTRACTS DATABASE
Report CSD21096A&B**

The Report presented September's Corporate Contracts Register and provided both the Council wide £200k+ register and the £50+ register specific to the Executive, Resources and Contracts Portfolio. The register presented in Part 2 of the agenda included a commentary on each contract to inform Members of any issues or developments.

The Chairman noted that there was a plan in place for the two flagged reports and that a Member decision was expected in October.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

PART 2 REPORTS

A Member suggested that when Committees moved into Part 2 of the agenda it may be helpful for the Chairman to state the relevant paragraph of Section 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 being relied upon.

Whilst appreciating that on occasions there were 'grey areas', the Chairman noted that the Committee agenda set out the relevant paragraph on which the Council was relying to move into closed session. It was further noted that agendas were published 5 clear days in advance of the meeting and it was suggested that any Member who wished to challenge an exemption should raise the issue with the relevant Chairman and open dialog prior to the meeting.

The Meeting ended at 7.54 pm

Chairman