

MINUTES of the meeting of the **COUNCIL OVERVIEW BOARD** held at 10.00 am on 18 January 2017 at Members Conference Room, County Hall, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 2DN.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Wednesday, 1 February 2017.

Elected Members:

* present

- Mr Steve Cosser (Chairman)
- * Mr Eber A Kington (Vice-Chairman)
- * Mr Mark Brett-Warburton
- * Mr Bill Chapman
- * Mr Stephen Cooksey
- Mr Bob Gardner
- * Mr Michael Gosling
- * Dr Zully Grant-Duff
- * Mr David Harmer
- * Mr Nick Harrison
- * Mr David Ivison
- Mr Colin Kemp
- * Mrs Denise Saliagopoulos
- * Mrs Hazel Watson
- * Mr Keith Witham

Members in attendance

Mr Mel Few, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Wellbeing and Independence, Surrey County Council

1/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Steve Cosser, Bob Gardner and Colin Kemp. Eber Kington, as Vice-Chairman, chaired this meeting.

2/17 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 14 DECEMBER 2016 [Item 2]

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

3/17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were no declarations of interest made.

4/17 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

There were no questions or petitions submitted to the Board.

5/17 RESPONSES FROM THE CABINET TO ISSUES REFERRED BY THE SCRUTINY BOARD [Item 5]

No issues were referred to the Cabinet by the Board at its last meeting.

6/17 RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 6]

Key points of discussion:

Recommendations Tracker:

1. Recommendation reference A7/2016. The Board were notified that scrutiny of the Shareholder Board and the Surrey Choices business plan was scheduled for COB's next meeting on 1 February 2017.
2. Recommendation reference A9/2016. The Board were informed that this recommendation was being addressed as part of the ongoing work of the Scrutiny in a New Environment task group.
3. Recommendation reference R12/2016. The Board noted that an item detailing the success of the investment strategy had been requested for COB's meeting on 1 March 2017.

Forward Work Programme:

1. The Board were informed that the planned update from the Scrutiny in a New Environment task group had been deferred. It was explained that the group had met three times so far and were in the process of drafting some conclusions and recommendations. It was evident, however, that the group would benefit from more meetings and were also keen to engage with the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council post-Budget, therefore it was decided that this report would be scheduled for 1 March 2017 meeting.
2. The Board noted the terms of reference for the Agency Staffing Task Group on pages 19-21 of the agenda, and the Vice-Chairman explained that the task group were due to meet in the coming weeks to investigate the agency staff spend within IT & Digital.
3. The Board were informed that an update on the 3SC devolution bid had been agreed and would be on the agenda for 1 March 2017 meeting.

7/17 FINAL BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS [Item 7]

Declarations of interest:

None

Witnesses:

Mel Few, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Wellbeing and Independence

Kevin Kilburn, Deputy Chief Finance Officer

David Harmer, Chairman, Economic Prosperity, Environment and Highways Board

Mark Brett-Warburton, Chairman, Education and Skills Board

Bill Chapman, Chairman, Wellbeing and Health Scrutiny Board

Keith Witham, Chairman, Social Care Services Board

Key points raised during the discussions:

1. The Vice-Chairman agreed for the meeting to be taken into Part 2 to discuss this item.

RESOLVED: That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information under the relevant information under the relevant paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Denise Saliagopoulos entered the meeting at 10:26am.

Keith Witham and Michael Gosling left the meeting at 12:00pm

Recommendations:**Savings**

- a) That there is a major reduction in paper based public communications issued by the central communications team and individual services including an end to the production of Surrey Matters and annual reports. Documentation should still be available to the public digitally.
- b) That there is a review of the necessity of everything the Communication Service does. Ask the question 'do we need to do this and, if so do we need do this in that way'? with a target cut in head count or % financial savings
- c) That there is a review of the necessity of everything the Policy & Performance Team does. Ask the question 'do we need to do this and, if so do we need do this in that way'? With a target cut in head count or % financial savings
- d) That a continued review of staffing roles and levels and salaries across the council should take place, particularly at senior level
- e) That there is a continued drive to review vacant property with a view to disposal, cost reduction and income generation
- f) That a review be undertaken of the financial and operational benefits of reducing four main council buildings to three
- g) That there is a reduction of the spend on agency staff across all services
- h) That there is a review of Member responsibility allowances

- i) That there is a review of major IT projects, to cover the costs and added value and the use of agency staff to deliver these projects
- j) That there is investment in key-worker housing, as per the motion to Council on 6 December 2016, to facilitate staff retention and a reduced reliance of agency staff

Process

- k) A revision in the way that accounts are reported to enable better monitoring of expenditure through the identification of areas of spend on frontline and back office staff. The Board agreed to this recommendation by a vote carried by eight votes to three.
 - l) That regular Rapid Improvement Events are revived as an instrument for identifying efficiencies
 - m) That the information that details the Council's unit costs is updated
 - n) That a clear message is needed from the Cabinet on the background on any call for an increase to the council tax precept via referendum
- 3 Additionally, the Economic Prosperity, Environment & Highways Board recommended that:
- a) Plans to reduce the funding available to Local Committees should not be progressed
 - b) Analysis is undertaken to optimise the use of winter maintenance services
 - c) Plans are made to recommence the budget scrutiny process earlier in 2017, and from July.

8/17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 8]

The next meeting of the Board will take place on Wednesday 1 February 2017 at 10:00 am.

Meeting ended at: 12.34 pm

Chairman