

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) held
at 10.00 am on Monday, 5 March 2018

Present:

Members: Councillor R Singh (Chair)
Councillor S Bains
Councillor J Blundell
Councillor R Brown
Councillor L Harvard
Councillor T Sawdon
Councillor K Taylor

Other Members: Councillor Clifford

Employees:

People: G Haynes

Place: C Sinclair, J Smith, B Strain

Apologies: No apologies

Public Business

22. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

23. Minutes

(a) The minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2017 were signed as a true record.

(b) Matter arising: Minute 18 (Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018-2021)

The Minute reflected the Board's request to consider 'Business Rates' as a scrutiny topic. However it subsequently transpired that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee would be considering this matter as part of their 2018/19 work programme. It was therefore agreed to remove it from this Board's work programme to avoid duplication.

24. Outstanding Issues Report

There were no outstanding issues.

25. Impact of changes to Local Council Tax Support Scheme - 18 month review

The Board considered a briefing note which provided an update on the impact of the Council's revised Council Tax Support scheme in the first 18 months of operation.

Data on collection rates and the impact on customers was set out in the briefing note.

The Scheme required low income households to contribute towards their council tax liability. It was acknowledged from the outset that collecting council tax from people impacted would be challenging and would need to be undertaken with sensitivity. It was reported that the vast majority of people have paid and were paying their council tax.

In year two, the Council had committed not to enforce court costs for CTS cases and would continue to work with colleagues in the advice sector to understand and mitigate where possible the impact of the new scheme on low income households. It was reported that this Council had committed not to increase the minimum CTS contribution in 2018/19.

The Board noted the 18 month review of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme.

26. Leadership Development Investment

The Board received an update on the investment being made to develop existing and aspiring leaders across the organisation as part of the Council's wider Leadership Development Framework which was launched in 2017.

The aim was to create a culture whereby leaders and managers at all levels across the organisation were able to deliver the outcomes within the Council Plan and Workforce Strategy and perform their existing roles as highly capable individuals and team members.

In 2017, the City Council launched its Leadership Development Framework (which was attached as an appendix to the briefing note) The Framework was designed to establish an organisational structure for leaders and managers which would build capacity to respond to a new and challenging local government.

It was reported that skilled leaders and managers were the key to success and the framework was underpinned by the following principles that would develop their skills and abilities:

- Enabling leaders and managers to deliver great people management practice on a day to day basis.
- Creating an environment which motivates, inspires and energises people.
- An environment where leadership is distributed and dispersed and goes beyond boundaries and spans of authority
- Deliver a customer focussed approach
- Supporting a commercially focussed environment
- Creating an innovative culture which thinks outside the box by giving space to all employees to be creative.

The framework was designed to reflect the different levels of leaders and managers and was referred to as 'emerging', 'aspiring', 'future' and 'senior' leaders

and would offer various development opportunities across four development pathways. For 2017/18 the focus for development had been across the Council's Future and Senior Leadership cohorts.

The Board questioned the Officer on aspects of the report including funding and service providers for the programmes. The Board also sought and received assurance that an understanding of the work of members be included in the workforce programmes where appropriate. In addition, the Board asked for an evaluation on how effective the training was to the individual and the organisation.

RESOLVED to receive a training evaluation report and an impact assessment on the programme when available and to endorse and commend the work of Grace Haynes and her team in the development and roll out of the Leader Development Framework.

27. **Apprenticeships and Apprenticeship Levy**

The Board considered a briefing note which provided an overview of the current number of apprentices currently on Coventry City Council's Apprenticeship Programme and the progress being made to ensure that the City Council spends its £1m contribution to the Apprenticeship Levy fund.

The Council's Apprenticeship and Early Careers Team which formed part of the Council's HR and OD service were responsible for managing the Council's Apprenticeship Programme and implementing the action set out in the Council's Apprenticeship Strategy 2016-19.

The Council currently had 100 apprentices on its programme. 35 were located within service areas across the Council and 65 were located in maintained schools across the City.

The Council currently had 7 Apprentices who were Looked After Children (LAC).

The Apprenticeship Team were making good progress with the implementation of actions set out within the Apprenticeship Strategy. Further work was currently being undertaken to ensure that the Council widened participation by targeting under-represented groups such as young people with a disability, NEETs, young refugees, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) young people and looked after young people. In addition further work was required to ensure that effective workforce planning takes place across all service areas so that the City Council were able to provide permanent employment for our Apprentices as part of the Council's 'Grow Our Own' and succession planning model.

The Board questioned the officer on aspects of the briefing note including how maintained schools could best ensure they get value for money in terms of the apprenticeship levy. In response, it was reported that officers had attended Primary Schools Head's meetings with a view to looking how best to utilise the levy across schools.

Arising from discussion, members also asked for data on the residential wards of apprentices. It was agreed that this be circulated when the data had been gathered.

RESOLVED to note the document and endorse the work undertaken to date.

28. Work Programme

In noting the work programme, it was agreed that the following items be removed as they would now be considered by the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:

- (a) Business Rates
- (b) Outside body reports.

29. Any other items of Public Business

There were no other items of business.

(Meeting closed at 11.30 am)