

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5 July 2010
5.00 - 7.30 pm

Present: Councillors Taylor (Chair), Boyce (Vice Chair), Al Bander, Dryden, Herbert, Howell, Nimmo-Smith, Shah and Ward

Executive Councillors:

Leader of the Council – Cllr Reid

Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources – Cllr McGovern

Also Present:

Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health – Cllr Bick

Chair of Love Cambridge Partnership – Mr Ian Sandison

Officers Present:

Chief Executive - Antoinette Jackson

Director of Finance – David Horspool

Director of Environment and Planning – Simon Payne

Head of Customer Services – Nova Roberts

Head of Accounting Services – Julia Minns

Head of Strategy and Partnerships - Trevor Woollams

Committee Manager – Martin Whelan

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

10/36/SR Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

10/37/SR Declarations of Interest

Cllr Dryden a personal interest in item (10/43/SR) as a pub leaseholder and user of the CAMBAC system.

10/38/SR Minutes of the meeting held on 29th March 2010

The minutes of the meeting held on 29th March 2010 were approved as a true and accurate record.

The committee resolved to defer item 10/39/SR to later in the agenda, but for clarity the minutes have been produced in the order of the agenda.

10/39/SR Non Key Decision - Community Empowerment and Local Participation in Decision Making

Matter for Decision: To consider a proposal to pilot a participatory approach in the north of the city.

Decision of Executive Councillor:

1. Endorsed the proposal to pilot a participatory approach in the north of the City
2. Directed officers to arrange member workshops in the autumn to shape the pilot and agree the boundaries with which the pilot will operate.

Reason for the Decision: As set out in the officer's report.

Any alternative options considered and rejected: N/A

Scrutiny Considerations:

Members of the committee welcomed the report and proposed approach.

The following additional comments were made;

1. The approach needs to ensure that all members of the Council not just in North area were kept informed and have opportunities to influence the pilot and any future developments.
2. The need to engage beyond the normal area committee audience.
3. The need to provide clarity on the funding streams available to Area Committees to support this process, and the importance of establishing the overheads of managing this approach to decision making. *Officer confirmed that the pilot would be supported through existing resources in*

the first year, and that a budget proposal would be developed for subsequent years.

4. Where possible the need to address participation across the city, with particular reference to elderly and BME communities.

The Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health welcomed the comments, and outlined the developments since the last report in March.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and approved the recommendations by 9 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor agreed the recommendations.

10/40/SR Key Decision - 2009/10 Outturn - Strategy Portfolio

Matter for Decision: To consider the 2009/10 outturn and a carry forward request of £69,200.

Decision of Executive Councillor:

- (i) Resolved to recommend to Council for approval of a carry forward request of £69,200, as detailed in Appendix C of the committee report.

Reason for the Decision: As set out in the officer's report.

Any alternative options considered and rejected: N/A

Scrutiny Considerations: The Scrutiny Committee considered and approved the recommendations by 7 votes to 0.

The Leader agreed the recommendations.

10/41/SR Key Decision - 2009/10 Revenue and Capital Outturn, Carry Forwards and Significant Variances - General Fund - OVERVIEW

Matter for Decision: To consider the 2009/10 Revenue and Capital Outturn, Carry Forwards and Significant Variances.

Decision of Executive Councillor:

Revenue

- a) Resolved to recommend approval to Council for the carry forward requests totalling £1,034,280 (including £255,300 for Customer Access Strategy) as detailed in Appendix C of the committee report, subject to the final outturn position.

Capital

- b) Resolved to recommend approval to Council to carry forward (net) capital resources to fund re-phased capital spending of £3,643,000 as outlined in Appendix D of the committee report.

Reason for the Decision: As set out in the officer's report.

Any alternative options considered and rejected: N/A

Scrutiny Considerations:

Clarification was sought regarding the reasons for the under spend. The Head of Accounting Services explained that there were a number of reasons including rescheduling of projects and decisions resulting from the financial climate.

The Director of Environment and Planning agreed to provide the details of the food premises currently being prosecuted to members of the committee.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and approved the recommendations by 6 votes to 0.

The Leader agreed the recommendations.

10/42/SR Key Decision - Outturn 2009-10- Customer Services and Resources Portfolio

Matter for Decision: To consider the 2009/10 outturn and carry forward requests

Decision of Executive Councillor:

- (ii) Resolved to recommend to Council for approval a carry forward request of £23,440, as detailed in Appendix C of the committee report.
- (iii) Resolved to recommend to Council for approval a carry forward request of £255,300 for the Customer Access Strategy, as detailed in Appendix C of the committee report.
- (iv) Resolved to seek approval from Council to carry forward capital resources to fund re-phased capital spending of £668,000 from 2009/10 into 2010/11, as detailed in Appendix D of the committee report.

Reason for the Decision: As set out in the officer's report.

Any alternative options considered and rejected: N/A

Scrutiny Considerations: The Scrutiny Committee considered and approved the recommendations by 7 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor agreed the recommendations.

10/43/SR Annual update report on the first year of the Love Cambridge Partnership

The Chair of the Love Cambridge Partnership (Mr Ian Sandison) and the Head of City Management and Tourism presented an annual update on the work of Love Cambridge.

The committee made the following comments on the presentation;

1. Clarification on the boundaries of the work undertaken by the partnership was sought. *It was confirmed that the main focus of the partnership was the city centre although there were no firm defined boundaries to this. For example the Partnership has worked closely with Mill Rd on their Christmas Lights projects. It was highlighted that given the resources available it was important for the partnership to ensure that the work undertaken remained sufficiently focussed.*

2. How many of the 130 members are residents associations or local community groups? *The Chair of the partnership advised that whilst there were 130 members these included companies with many hundreds of employees. It was agreed that detailed information about the breakdown of membership would be provided outside of the meeting, specifically the number of residents and local community groups.*
3. The need to promote the all year round offer of Cambridge not just Christmas. *The Chair of the partnership emphasised the importance of ensuring a strong viable Christmas, as well as promoting the all year round offer of the city.*
4. Has the partnership considered promoting collaborative recycling particularly involving smaller traders? *The Chair of the partnership explained that this area would be explored in the future, and that the partnership had already been approached regarding potential opportunities.*
5. The positive benefits of the use of the CAMBAC radio system were welcomed. It was noted that the Magistrate Courts were able to add individuals to the CAMBAC system, and failure to follow the instruction of the court was a criminal offence.
6. What are the governance arrangements of the partnership? Is the partnership subject to freedom of information and committed to transparency? *The Chair of the partnership explained that the minutes of the partnership were now published. The membership was confirmed as 143 directors covering a range of interests across the city including a City Councillor and a County Councillor. It was noted that structure and governance arrangements were based on the best practice from 500 similar partnerships.*
7. Can anyone join the partnership? *The Head of City Centre Management and Tourism confirmed that anyone who could positively contribute to the articles of the company was eligible to join. It was noted that no membership applications had been declined to date, and that the AGM was open to the public. The date of the AGM has been confirmed as the 14th September and it was agreed that the venue would be circulated separately once confirmed.*

8. How does the partnership manage competing interests? *The Chair of the partnership explained that was the role of an effective chair to manage.*
9. The possibility of engaging with local language schools was suggested. *The Chair of the partnership agreed to review the opportunity to work closely with these types of organisations.*
10. What is the current status of the charter? *The Head of City Centre Management and Tourism explained that 40 companies had already signed up to the charter, and that a programme of awards and seasonal publicity would be launched from September onwards. With respect to the Customer Services Awards the committee were advised that the most likely judging method would be review by a mystery shopping company.*

The Chair and the Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources thanked Mr Sandison and the Head of City Centre Management and Tourism for the update.

10/44/SR Non-Key Decision - Customer Access Strategy Outcomes

Matter for Decision: To consider the Customer Access Strategy Outcomes.

Decision of Executive Councillor:

- (i) Reviewed the outcomes and agreed the conclusion of the CAS programme and the transition from a project basis to one of continuous improvement in a 'business as usual' environment.
- (ii) Endorsed the delivery and achievement of the CAS business case position against the forecast payback model

Scrutiny Considerations:

The committee welcomed the development of the Customer Services centre and congratulated the Head of Customer Services and the project team on the significant achievements that had been secured through the project. They noted that the project had delivered improved customer services within the

budget allocated for the project and had generated more savings than originally estimated in the business case. It was noted that the Head of Customer Services was leaving the Council. Nova Roberts was thanked for the contribution to the Council and the committee wished her well in her future career.

The committee made the following comments;

1. Concern that certain groups in the community may struggle to access the centre due to the lack of parking within the vicinity of the centre.
2. The importance of sharing the learning from the project throughout the organisation as good practice for project management.
3. Clarification was sought on the arrangements for managing peak times in the centre. The Head of Customer Services outlined a number of processes which had been introduced to minimise the effect of peak times.
4. It was suggested that a facility to allow members of the public email enquiries from within the centre should be provided, rather than queuing.
5. A specific concern was raised as to whether the centre over centralised the administration of the authority and that more subtle interactions would be lost.
6. The potential future use of the Area Housing Offices as satellite centres was suggested. It was noted that the use of the Area Housing Offices would be reviewed in the spring of 2011.
7. The low level of staff turnover was welcomed and the committee agreed that this was a strong indicator of a successful implementation.
8. Members agreed that the layout and design of the centre was excellent and right for the service.
9. It was suggested that departments outside of the Customer Services Centre, should not routinely automatically re-direct calls

to the Centre without providing an opportunity to leave a message with the department.

10. It was agreed that there was a need to ensure all members of the community could access council services even if they didn't have access to email.

The Chief Executive outlined the history of the project and the reasons for the development of the centre, and that this was the beginning of a journey to improve customer services across the organisation. Members were advised that John Frost would be managing the centre prior to the appointment of a new Head of Customer Services following the departure of Nova Roberts.

The Executive Councillor welcomed the comments from the committee.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and approved the recommendations by 6 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor agreed the recommendations.

10/45/SR Non Key - Lease of Roman Court for Affordable Housing

The report was withdrawn.

10/46/SR Decisions by Executive Councillors

The committee noted the decisions taken by Executive Councillors.

The meeting ended at 7.30 pm

CHAIR