

Briefing paper on 2018/19 Value for Money and Customer Service O&S items

The VFM CS O&S Committee considered a wide range of items in 2018/19. The items of work which were suggested to return to the Committee are listed below, with explanatory detail, in order for the new Committee to decide whether or not they should be included in its work programme for 2019/20.

Each item should be thoroughly tested through the work programme criteria and have a clear purpose for scrutiny. Items of interest without clear potential to add value ('update' or 'to note' items) should be circulated to the Committee members.

1. Review of value for money achieved through the Housing Service kitchens and bathrooms contract

At the Committee meetings in January and February 2019 attention was drawn to the amount budgeted for in the 2019/20 Housing Revenue Account kitchens and bathrooms rolling programme (£800,000). The Committee (endorsed by the Coordinating Board) suggested undertaking a Scrutiny review regarding the Housing Revenue Account procurement policy and value for money achieved.

- The Committee is asked to decide if it would like to undertake this review and, if so, how it would like to achieve this (in the Committee or through a working group).

2. Corporate Performance Reports

The performance of the Council across all services is reported through the quarterly (September, November, February and June) Corporate Performance Reports. They contain information on all corporate key performance indicators (KPIs), Service Plans and areas of concern. Performance reports enable the Committee to monitor the performance of the Council and potentially identify further areas for scrutiny.

- The Committee is asked to decide if it would like to continue to receive the quarterly Corporate Performance Reports.

3. Workforce Profile Report

For the last two years the Committee has received an annual Workforce Profile report containing information on turnover rates, sickness levels and staff satisfaction survey results. The last time the Committee considered the report it asked for more information on analysis of turnover to be included in the next report.

- The Committee is asked to decide if it would like to continue to receive this annual report, and
- If it would like the next annual report to include the detail on turnover.

4. Customer Service Programme (CSP) summary document

The Council is currently undertaking a major project which aims to transform customer services, with the goals of making savings identified within the Medium Term Financial Plan and improving customer experience by, amongst other things, providing a wider offering of digital self service opportunities for customers. The project got fully underway in autumn 2018 and a report came to the November 2018 meeting to update the Committee on the progress of the project. At that meeting the Committee requested an item containing an overall summary of the key aspects of the individual workstreams.

- The Committee is asked to decide how it wishes to continue to monitor the progress of the CSP, and whether or not it would like the item detailing the workstreams as set out above.

5. Review of the Property Investment Strategy

In March 2018 a working group of the VFM CS O&S Committee completed an in-depth piece of work on the Property Investment Strategy and the Strategy was agreed by Council in April 2018. Six months after its implementation (at the November 2018 Committee meeting) the Strategy was scrutinised by the Committee and it was suggested that another review of the Strategy should take place one year after the 6 month review (November 2019).

- The Committee is asked to decide if it wishes to add the review of the Property Investment Strategy to its work programme.

6. Fees and charges review

At the Budget Scrutiny meeting on 22 January 2019, it was noted that the schedule of fees and charges (forming part of the general fund budget) is currently considered without the benefit of the context of comparable rates of other local authorities or commercial providers. It was suggested that scrutiny of the basis for individual fees and charges should be considered by the Committee in the next Council year.

- This Committee is asked to decide if it wishes to undertake this piece of work and, if so, how (within a committee meeting or as a working group).

7. Capital expenditure process and management review – follow up

In March 2018 a working group of the VFM CS O&S Committee completed a review of the process and management of the Council's capital expenditure programme. The recommendations were accepted by the Executive in June 2018 and a report detailing their progress was brought before the Committee in February 2019. At this meeting, it was suggested that the Committee continue to monitor the progress of the recommendations and the impact they have had on the project and financial management of capital projects.

- The Committee is asked to decide if, and how, it wishes to continue to monitor the impact of the recommendations.

8. Acquisitions through the Property Investment Strategy

The Property Investment Strategy states that a quarterly performance report on property acquired under the Strategy will be available to the VFM CS O&S. These reports have been provided to the Committee in exempt session since the Strategy was implemented and include properties acquired prior to the Property Investment Strategy implementation.

- The Committee is asked to decide if it wishes to continue to receive these reports at Committee or if they would be better circulated for information and any issues for scrutiny proposed to the Committee as and when they arise.

9. Brightwells Yard

Brightwells Yard is a regeneration scheme in Farnham, preparatory work for which began on site in May 2018. The development is now in construction stage and due to be fully completed in 2022, with phased opening starting in spring 2021. Brightwells Yard is a significant development for Farnham and is also an important element of the Council's economic development strategy.

- The Committee is asked to decide if it wishes to add an item on Brightwells Yard to its work programme (standing or one-off) and, if so, agree the purpose of this item.