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## **GOVERNANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of a Meeting held on Thursday 16 July 2015 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Matlock at 6.00 pm.**

### **PRESENT**

Councillor Jacquie Stevens - In the Chair

Councillors Deborah Botham, Albert Catt, Ann Elliott, Steve Flitter, Alyson Hill, Neil Horton, Jean Monks, Garry Purdy, Irene Ratcliffe, Lewis Rose, OBE, Colin Swindell and John Tibenham.

Dorcas Bunton (Chief Executive), Sandra Lamb (Head of Corporate Services), Karen Henriksen (Head of Resources), Rob Cogings (Head of Housing), Mike Hase (Planning Policy Manager), Mike Galsworthy (Estates and Facilities Manager), Jenny Williams (Interim Head of the Internal Audit Consortium), Deborah Unwin (Human Resources and Payroll Manager) and Christine Laver (Democratic Services Team Leader)

### **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chris Furness, Tony Millward and Mark Salt. Councillor Ann Elliott attended as a substitute Member.

### **69/15 – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Councillors Botham and Ratcliffe arrived at 6.05pm and Councillor Horton at 6.07pm during this item.

Mr Philip Sunderland presented a 2136 signature petition, as follows:

Petition for Public Toilets in Matlock Bath – “We petition Derbyshire Dales District Council to provide sufficient public toilets during the closure of the 12 permanent toilets in Memorial Park; currently only 2 Portaloos have been added.”

In presenting the petition Mr Sunderland, representing the Friends of Matlock Bath, stated their view that a permanent solution was needed as soon as possible but, in the meantime, the number of temporary toilets was insufficient to cope with the demand and there had been reports of people urinating in shop doorways and other inappropriate places. A

further problem seemed to be that the temporary toilets were locked in the early evening, when demand was often highest.

In response the Chairman thanked Mr Sunderland for his participation and advised that the temporary toilet blocks contained 3 cubicles and a baby changing unit in the ladies and 3 urinals and one cubicle in the gents. Although this was less than the previous provision it was all that could be accommodated on the site. However, the Council recognised that this may need to be increased during the Illuminations period. The Police had been informed of the problems experienced by traders and the temporary units were now open later than they had been originally.

## **70/15 – APPRENTICESHIPS PROGRAMME**

The Head of Housing presented a report that set out the background to the District Council's Apprenticeship Programme, that had been running since 2010. The programme had developed since its initial application within Leisure Services and currently nine apprentices were employed across a range of services. Six of the twenty apprentices who had benefitted from the experience and training provided by the scheme, since its inception, had moved on to permanent posts within the District Council.

A short video, with contributions from current apprentices, was shown.

The report showed the current four year programme of apprenticeships that would be funded by a combination of an initial grant from the Derbyshire County Council Community Housing Team, to support young adults in job training and employment, potential savings achieved within services and any additional external funding that was secured.

It was moved by Councillor Lewis Rose, seconded by Councillor Irene Ratcliffe and

**RESOLVED** That the District Council's Apprenticeship Programme, running until  
(unanimously) 2017/18, be noted with satisfaction.

## **71/15 – STRUCTURAL DAMAGE TO PUBLIC CONVENIENCES AT MEMORIAL GARDENS, MATLOCK BATH**

A programme of condition surveys for all the Council's key buildings had revealed significant structural defects in the public conveniences in Memorial Gardens, Matlock Bath. These affected the external walls and roof structure of the building and necessitated the immediate closure of the facility to ensure public safety. Temporary toilets had been installed, as described in the Public Participation item, above.

In April 2015 the Environment Committee considered a structural engineers report that estimated the cost of repairs to the building at £176,167.50. The extent of the defects was detailed in the report. The April report proposed that, due to the significant cost estimate for repairs, other options should be explored to ensure that the best possible, value for money solution was implemented.

The current report detailed the options put forward in April and additional options that had emerged in the meantime. The indicative cost, advantages, disadvantages and risk ratings of each option were tabulated in appendix 1 to the report.

The District Council has a legal duty to consult on any major change in provision of services to the public and authority was, therefore, sought to consult on some or all of the options put forward to date.

It was moved by Councillor Lewis Rose, OBE, seconded by Councillor Garry Purdy and

**RESOLVED**  
(unanimously)

1. That all the options in the report be taken forward for public consultation and that suggestions for alternative solutions be invited at the same time.
2. That the results of the consultation be the subject of a further report to a Committee or Council, as appropriate, during Autumn.

## **72/15 – CORPORATE CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT PLAN**

The Corporate Consultation and Engagement Plan was produced annually, in accordance with the District Council's Consultation and Engagement Strategy 2014/19, which describes the principles and priorities underpinning consultation and engagement activity undertaken by the District Council.

The report summarised the main aspects of consultation and engagement activities undertaken during 2014/15 and the key consultation tasks to be undertaken during 2015/16. The full Plan for the current year was appended to the report.

It was noted that the format of the plan had been amended to ensure greater integration of consultation and equalities activities by identifying whether an Equality Impact Assessment was required for a particular task.

It was also noted that Member training on equalities and diversity, in July 2015, would also highlight the principles of consultation and engagement.

It was moved by Councillor Irene Ratcliffe, seconded by Councillor Colin Swindell and

**RESOLVED**  
(unanimously)

1. That the Corporate Consultation and Engagement Plan 2015/16 be approved
2. That consultation and engagement activities undertaken by the District Council be reported to this Committee in future.

The Chairman agreed to change the order of the Agenda at this point to consider an urgent item.

## **73/15 – PLANNING FOR THE LOCAL COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME FOR 2016/17**

This report was tabled as an item of urgent business, as defined by the Local Government (Access to Information) Regulations 1985 (as amended), to enable the establishment of a sub-committee to undertake a specific piece of work in response to external influences. The Chairman agreed to the reason for urgency.

Since April 2013 Councils had been responsible for setting up their own Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme. The District Council's scheme for 2015/16 was approved by Council on 15 January 2015.

On 8 July 2015 the government announced changes to tax credits, disability benefits and housing benefits, including a reduction in the annual cap per household in respect of all benefits from £26,000 to £20,000, with any cap being applied to Housing Benefit. These changes would take effect in April 2016, with further changes planned for 2017.

Although full details of the changes had not been announced it was anticipated that they would have a knock-on effect on the cost of the Council's Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme and, consequently, the scheme would need to be amended to avoid it becoming unaffordable.

It was proposed that a sub-committee of the Governance and Resources Committee should be set up to develop option and monitor progress towards the implementation of a revised Local scheme by 1 April 2016.

The Terms of Reference for the Sub-Committee were set out in the report, together with the proposed membership to achieve the required political balance.

It was noted that any changes to the scheme would have to be approved by 31 January in the financial year preceding that in which they take effect. A proposed timetable was detailed in the report and this included provision for the District Council's legal obligation to consult stakeholders and carry out an equality impact assessment, if changes are proposed.

It was moved by Councillor Lewis Rose, seconded by Councillor Garry Purdy and

**RESOLVED**  
(unanimously)

1. That a Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme Sub-Committee of the Governance and Resources Committee be created to investigate and evaluate options within the terms of reference set out in paragraph 2.1 of the report.
2. That the Sub-Committee be comprised of 6 Members, based on the rules of political proportionality, with provision for substitute Members
3. That discussion be held with other Derbyshire local authorities with a view to reducing the differences on Local Council Tax Reduction Schemes across Derbyshire.
4. That Group Leaders provide nominations for Members and Substitute Members of the Sub-Committee to the Head of Corporate Services.

## **74/15 – INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS CONCLUDED UNDER THE 2014/2015 OPERATIONAL AUDIT PLAN AND FOLLOW UP OF PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Interim Head of the Internal Audit Consortium presented a report that provided a summary of Internal Audit Reports issued between 31 January and 22 May 2015, with responses to the recommendations made, and also detailed outstanding audit recommendations from previous years.

Only one of the eight reports issued in 2015 had an unsatisfactory opinion. This related to Arc Leisure, Matlock and the main issues were detailed in the report. Jenny Williams confirmed that all 17 recommendations made had been accepted and the majority had already been implemented. There was no indication of fraud.

It was moved by Councillor Lewis Rose, seconded by Councillor Steve Flitter and

**RESOLVED** That the findings and conclusions of the internal audit reviews and follow up of the implementation of previous recommendations be noted.  
(unanimously) That the appreciation of the Committee for the work of Internal Audit be noted.

## **75/15 – INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15**

This annual report summarised the work undertaken by Internal Audit during 2014/15, provided an opinion that internal control systems were working satisfactorily or well and noted that Data Protection had been raised as an issue in the Annual Governance Statement because some of the planned actions had not yet been implemented.

The report also noted that 91.4% of planned audits had been completed during the year with only 3 being deferred due to management requests or reviews taking place. Appendix 3 to the report provided details of progress against an improvement plan designed to ensure compliance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. Quality Control measures had been implemented to ensure compliance with PS/AS.

Finally, it was considered that the requirements of the Audit Charter, approved by the Corporate Committee in September 2014, had been met.

It was moved by Councillor Garry Purdy, seconded by Councillor Steve Flitter and

**RESOLVED** That the Internal Audit Annual Report for 2015/15 be noted.  
(unanimously)

## **76/15 – INFORMATION GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK AND STRATEGY 2015/16**

This report set out the reasons why it is necessary for the District Council to have an Information Governance Strategy and Framework to set out the requirements, standards and best practice to be applied to the handling of information.

The draft Framework and Strategy for 2015-2018 was appended to the report and this included:

- Key principles designed to set the direction of the Information Governance Strategy
- Ownership and governance arrangements
- The need to produce guidance and to raise awareness on data protection/information governance issues across all employees and members. Mandatory training is recommended and information will be made available on the intranet.
- A requirement to produce a comprehensive Information Asset Register
- A need for the Document Retention Policy to be brought to the attention of all employees and members
- The need for further work on storage and archiving
- Consideration of the introduction of an Information Classification System, a System of Protective Marking and Encryption of emails.

An Information Governance Board, established in 2014, met quarterly and was responsible for setting the direction for information governance and monitoring the Council's performance in this area.

As reported previously in the agenda an Internal Audit Review had concluded that data protection arrangements were unsatisfactory and an action plan had been agreed. It was expected that all actions would be complete by 31 October 2015.

It was moved by Councillor Garry Purdy, seconded by Councillor Irene Ratcliffe and

**RESOLVED** That the Derbyshire Dales Information Governance Framework and  
(unanimously) Strategy 2015/2018 be adopted.

## **77/15 – REVENUES AND BENEFITS SERVICES AND INVOICE PROCESSING CONTRACT – PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The District Council transferred its Revenues and Benefits and Invoice Processing services to Avarto on 1 June 2013, with the contract period running until October 2020.

The report showed performance to date against the Key Performance Indicators that were included in the Service Level Agreement with Avarto. All targets had been met with the exception of the percentage of council tax collected within the year. This target had been missed by 0.1% in 2013/14 but the Council had not enforced the financial penalty as the shortfall was marginal and factors beyond the control of Avarto had contributed to this.

The contract was on track to realise the predicted saving of £84,000 per annum until 2020.

It was moved by Councillor Lewis Rose, seconded by Councillor Colin Swindell and

**RESOLVED** That the report be noted.  
(unanimously)

## **78/15 – PROMOTING EQUALITY – EQUALITY PLAN 2015 – 2016**

The Committee considered a report that set out the District Council's Equality Plan for 2015/16 and report performance against the plan for the previous year. The purpose of the plans is to set out how the District Council will meet its public sector equality duties. These comprise both a general equality duty and specific equality duties and the main requirements of each were set out in the report.

It was moved by Councillor Colin Swindell, seconded by Councillor Alyson Hill and

**RESOLVED**  
(unanimously)

1. That the updated equality information published in January 2015 be noted.
2. That progress towards the District Council's equality objectives during 2014-2015 be noted.
3. That Priority Equality Impact Assessments for 2014/2015 be noted
4. That the Equality Plan 2015 – 2016 be approved.

## **79/15 – RISK MANAGEMENT – CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNUAL REPORT**

The Chief Executive's Annual Risk Management Report is a requirement of the District Council's Risk Management Strategy and includes the current risk management arrangements and details of how Key Strategic Risks are being managed.

The report described the processes and working practices that had been embedded, following an extensive review and refresh exercise during 2013, to ensure risk management arrangements continued to be effective, timely and fit for purpose, providing the Council with the correct levels of insight and support in relation to its risk exposure.

It was moved by Councillor Albert Catt, seconded by Councillor Steve Flitter and

**RESOLVED** That the report be noted.  
(unanimously)

## **80/15 – JOINT ICT SERVICE STRATEGY 2014-2017 AND DDDC ICT STRATEGY 2015-2018**

The District Council is part of the Joint ICT Service which is a shared service partnership between three district councils: Bolsover, Derbyshire Dales and North East Derbyshire. The Joint ICT Service started on 1 January 2010, with Bolsover joining on 1 January 2011. A Service Level Agreement governs the Joint ICT Service, and there is a Joint Management Team (officers) and Shared Service Committee (members) providing oversight.

It was noted that the Joint ICT Strategy had expired and the draft strategy, appended to the report had already been adopted by the other partners. The Draft Strategy sets out the

framework for delivery and management of the joint service and focusses on the transformation agenda or channel shift. The key points were detailed in the report.

The draft Derbyshire Dales ICT strategy was also appended to the report. This council-specific strategy focused on the service improvements, both in systems and hardware that the District Council will be seeking to make over the next two years. It highlighted services where IT-related improvements were sought, and areas where technology would need to be replaced due to expiry of licences or simply becoming obsolete. Other opportunities were also detailed. Again, the key points were detailed in the report.

It was moved by Councillor Lewis Rose, seconded by Councillor Albert Catt and

**RESOLVED**

(unanimously)

1. That the Joint ICT Service Strategy 2014-2017 be adopted.
2. That the Derbyshire Dales District Council ICT Strategy 2015-2018 be adopted.
3. That Council be requested to approve the funding for the ICT Investment Plan from the Technology Renewals Reserve and the Invest to Save Reserve

**81/15 – PROPOSAL TO CLOSE THE TOWN HALL BETWEEN CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR**

The Committee considered a report that proposed the closure of the Town Hall, annually, for the three working days between the Christmas and New Year Bank Holidays.

The report detailed consultation that had taken place with staff and the report detailed the service delivery issues that had been considered in making the recommendation for closure.

It was moved by Councillor Jean Monks, seconded by Councillor Colin Swindell and

**RESOLVED**

(unanimously)

That the Town Hall be closed between Christmas and New Year, annually.

**82/15 – PROPOSAL TO END WEEKLY PAY AND FOR ALL STAFF TO BE PAID MONTHLY**

The Committee considered a report that proposed ending weekly pay for all employees and moving those who are currently paid weekly to monthly pay. This change would affect 134 staff, in total, and 73 of those had already agreed to the change. The report detailed the ongoing consultation, advice and support available to staff affected by the change.

The Joint Consultative Group had considered the issue and had recommended that the move to monthly pay should go ahead.

A deadline of 6 December 2015 had been set for voluntary moves to monthly pay. If any staff had not agreed to the change by that date a collective agreement would be sought

with the trade unions, whereby they would be put on notice and offered re-employment on a new, monthly contract.

It was moved by Councillor Jean Monks, seconded by Councillor Colin Swindell and

- RESOLVED**
1. That the weekly payroll end, with effect from 6 December 2015 and all staff will be paid monthly from December 2015.
  2. That any members of staff who do not choose to transfer to monthly pay before 6 December 2015 have the change imposed by means of a dismissal and re-engagement of contract with 3 months' notice.

<b>Voting</b>	In favour	10
	Against	3
	Abstention	0

### **83/15 – REFERRED ITEMS**

The Committee considered two items referred by the Joint Consultative Group on 23 June 2015. These related to the Employee Code of Conduct and Sickness Absence Outturn 2014/15.

It was moved by Councillor Steve Flitter, seconded by Councillor Colin Swindell and

- RESOLVED**  
(unanimously)
1. That the revised Employee Code of Conduct be adopted
  2. That the sickness absence outturn 2014/15 be noted.

### **84/15 – JOINT CONSULTATIVE GROUP MINUTES**

It was moved by Councillor Garry Purdy, seconded by Councillor Jean Monks and

- RESOLVED**  
(unanimously)
- That the minutes of the Joint Consultative Group meeting held on 23 June 2015 be received.

**MEETING CLOSED 8.10PM**

**CHAIRMAN**