

Finance and Assets Policy Development Advisory Group
8 MAY 2017

Present: Councillors: Brian Donnelly (Chairman), John Bailey, John Chidlow, Paul Clarke, David Coldwell, Leonard Crosbie and Nigel Jupp

Apologies: Councillors: Adrian Lee, Tim Lloyd, Stuart Ritchie and Simon Torn

Also Present:

27 **TO APPROVE THE NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Group approved the notes of the meeting held on 18th April 2017.

28 **RE-PROVISION OF THE REVENUES AND BENEFITS SERVICE**

The Director of Corporate Resources presented the revenues and benefits update. A report was due to be presented to Cabinet on 25th May 2017 which was likely to recommend that the Council use a distant partnership for its revenues and benefits service called LGSS.

The LGSS was highly experienced in providing this service, Members noted that it provided an excellent training approach, with a good track record of recovering councils from subsidy loss and that it was anticipated that the new partners would also use many of the existing Horsham CenSus staff.

The LGSS were already operating successfully in Northampton and Milton Keynes.

The report to Cabinet would be recommending not to go 'in-house' to provide the revenues and benefits service for reasons such as lack of experience and higher costs.

Also, Members would be recommended not to outsource the service either, due to the risks involved, the small scale savings and the high transition costs.

Estimated comparative figures for annual operational costs and transition costs for all three options were provided for the Group. However, it was noted that there was a level of uncertainty in the comparative figures.

At the Cabinet meeting, officers would be seeking the approval to move forward and look further into the most suitable option, which at this stage appeared to be using the LGSS.

Members noted LGSS was well established and was currently providing the revenues and benefits service to a number of councils. LGSS would also

endeavour to use the existing Horsham District Council staff by allowing home working, therefore reducing the number of redundancies and the costs involved.

Members questioned the direction of Adur District Council, the other partner previously involved in the CenSus Partnership; Adur's service would merge with Worthing Borough Council's in-house service, in line with other shared services between the two councils. The difference between Adur's situation and Horsham's was Adur's existing partnership with Worthing meant it had access to Worthing's already established revenues and benefits service in place.

If the LGSS was selected as the best option, potentially the contract could commence at the beginning of April 2018.

Members noted, in addition to the business of the meeting, that Horsham would be receiving £460,000 to use to set up a Discretionary Business Rates Relief Scheme following announcements in the budget in March.

The meeting closed at 5.51 pm having commenced at 5.00 pm

CHAIRMAN