

## **CABINET – 18 SEPTEMBER 2018**

### **Comments from the Performance Scrutiny Committee on IMPLEMENTING A NEW OPERATING MODEL FOR OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

At its September meeting the Performance Scrutiny Committee reviewed the business case being put forward to Cabinet on the proposed new operating model for the County Council.

This report details the comments raised by the committee for consideration by Cabinet in agreeing a way forward.

Overall the Committee accepts there is need to change the way the organisation works. Improved coordination across the whole authority for the benefit of Oxfordshire residents must be the way forward, but the risks associated with this change need to be properly managed.

The points the Committee wishes to raise with Cabinet are:

- The business case provides insufficient detail about implementation to give members and the public confidence that there will not have to be further cuts to front line services to make the required savings. No 'Plan B' is outlined in the report.
- There is a lack of evidence in the business case that similar models have worked elsewhere. More evidence should be included to demonstrate the benefits of a different approach and enable Cabinet to make a robust decision.
- Members were sceptical that implementation could be achieved within 3 years. A more realistic timetable should be developed.
- Councillors are great collectors of local intelligence; the interface with councillors and the public as the operating model is embedded will be important. Elected members need to be involved in shaping and overseeing this process and there needs to be clear evidence along the way that benefits are being realised.
- The levels of staff engagement and involvement in the design of the model; if staff have not 'bought into' the new ways of working, they are likely to find work arounds which could negate planned efficiencies and savings.
- Members were mindful that potential redundancy costs have not yet been factored into the financial model and are concerned about the impact this could have on the identified savings.
- The need to ensure that vulnerable people are still supported to access vital services, in light of a heavy reliance on technological solutions in the new model. Members queried how we will ensure investment in new technology will deliver the best results.
- The proposed approach to business intelligence has the potential to be transformative in itself and members hope this will lead to better decision-making and management of the organisation.

Going forward, the committee is keen to have oversight of the implementation of the model, in particular to scrutinise how effective the changes are in improving performance and delivering better outcomes for residents.

Councillor Liz Brighthouse  
Chairman of the Performance Scrutiny Committee

September 2018