

## Appendix 3

### Issues and questions raised by members of Staff and Support Services Committee

- There is a need to address certain key issues fully when considering any outsourcing – pensions and TUPE, need to understand cost of these.
  - *At this time there were no clear cases on cost implications, this would depend on numbers of staff, salary levels and who had a pension. This, as well as the impact on existing services would be assessed within the individual business cases and could result in the decision being made to retain an in-house service.*
- Leisure@ - management was provided in-house, then outsourced, then brought in-house. CBC made it work, others didn't.
  - *Models being suggested - for example a leisure trust - would result in ultimate responsibility, not just day to day management, lying with the provider.*
- Torbay is a Unitary Council – not like us. Commissioning may be more appropriate for them.
  - *Torbay is a small unitary authority and as such has had to adopt alternative approaches, given its size. They had some great ideas which had demonstrated what a small authority could achieve. Torbay Council had some examples of projects in place, where they had bought together fragmented services, which resulted in less duplication and reduced costs; that principle could apply equally to CBC..*
- The NHS is different again – District Councils are much smaller – it is easy to see how they make scale work by standardising commissioning activity. Caution is needed when adopting a big organisation model to a small organisation.

- *The NHS is certainly different in both terms of service and scale, but CBC could still learn from them. Understanding the NHS better would also help us to work in partnership with the NHS in meeting outcomes.*
- The County Council is looking at commissioning and may look to districts to provide some services. We need to be ready to take on work in the areas we are good at. Our strength is that we know our community and our services are generally closer to people.
  - *This may be an exciting opportunity for CBC to grow in some areas and deliver services on behalf of other agencies, if we are better placed to do so.*
- In the present economic climate, will partners be more or less ready to achieve joint targets?
  - *Perhaps certain organisations would not be as open to the idea of working this closely at the present time, but we should be optimistic about the voluntary sector, Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) and the NHS all of whom are actively considering commissioning as a way of tackling the pressing financial issues.*
- A cultural change is what's needed – how we do things as much as what we do. Any size of organisation can take the concept and do it, it's a way of thinking. It's not about old style outsourcing.
  - *Cultural change is vital. We need to focus more on the outcomes that we want to achieve in Cheltenham and have a culture and a structure which helps us deliver on those.*
- New government could provide new freedoms and flexibilities we need to be ready for that
  - *It is likely that the government would look sympathetically on more freedoms but this may well not extend to allowing greater freedom of compete with the private sector as this might well be considered unfair competition when the council is supported from public funds*
- We need to look to share and grow what we are good at. Still not clear what we are going to gain from this
  - *A more agile organisation such as is envisaged could enable us, more easily, to take opportunities as they arise. For example, shared services is a form of commissioning but the decision to commission legal services and transfer staff to Tewkesbury*

*Borough Council had come from the vacancy at CBC for a Borough Solicitor and the instant savings sharing produced. This had not been scientific or methodical and there was a need to be more thorough in exploring options in our future approach. As another example, Gloucester City Council's leisure centre had been making an annual loss of around one million pounds but the formation of a charitable trust called Aspire had resulted in reduced running costs, better project management and an immediate saving of several hundred thousand pounds as a result of relief on business rates. It had also allowed them to enter into more competition which local authorities find it difficult to do.*

- What will members do when it is all in place?
  - *Members roles were extremely important in deciding the outcomes we need to achieve, taking a view on the market opportunities we should or shouldn't pursue and providing scrutiny of the way the council manages commissioning. The monitoring process might not be dissimilar to the group established to review the funding provided by CBC to outside bodies. Another vital role for members would be to champion the needs of their local community. Members would remain the link to the community and commissioning would not re-write the laws of the decision making process for local authorities.*