

CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING Monday, 8th February 2021

PRESENT: Councillor O'Neill (Vice Chair in the Chair); Councillors Boriss, Holly, Nolan, O'Rourke and Wraighte.

OFFICERS: J. Searle (Director of Economy), J. Rooney (Assistant Director – Information, Customers and Communities), A. Ibrahim (Assistant Director – Legal, Governance and Workforce/Monitoring Officer), R. Huddleston (Corporate Strategic Lead - Transformation and Reform – Resources) S. Smith (Deputy Chief Finance Officer) and P. Thompson (Resources Directorate).

40 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bamford, Joinson, Mir, Rana and Robinson.

41 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interests.

42 MINUTES

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held 24th November 2020 be approved as a correct record and that the 'actions list' appended thereto be noted.

43 CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2020/2021

Members considered the Committee's Work Programme for 2020/2021, which outlined the scheduled programme of reports for the remainder of the 2020/2021 municipal year. In considering the report a member asked if a report could be submitted, to a future meeting detailing pay and working arrangements for senior staff within the Council.

Resolved:

1. The Committee's Work Programme 2020/2021 be noted.
2. The Head of Workforce and Organisational Development be requested to prepare a report, to be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee, detailing pay and working arrangements for senior staff within the Council.

44 FINANCE UPDATE REPORT 2020/21 PERIOD 8

The Committee scrutinised a report of the Chief Finance Officer which detailed the Council's financial situation at the end of Period 8 – 2020/2021. The report informed Members of the Council's forecast 2020/2021 financial position as at the end of November 2020, and it also detailed additional Covid-19 funding that been received.

The Finance Update report contained details of:

- a. The forecast Revenue outturn position, which is an in-year saving of £2,162k. The General Fund net pressure relating to Covid-19 was £559k, largely offset by the use of government funding. Non-Covid-19 in-year savings are currently reported at £2,721k. The net saving of £2,162k is an increase of £417k from the period 6 position.
- b. Details of the continuing pressure on the High Needs Block Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The 2020/2021 in-year pressure is £1,700k which would leave a closing 2020/2021 deficit position on the DSG reserve of £4,900k.
- c. Savings plans of £4,169k ongoing and £280k of 'one off' savings had been included in the 2020/2021 budget. There was a balance to address of £367k relating to the impact of Covid-19, which was £523k less than the period 6 forecast, due to mitigating actions in Adult care service.
- d. An update on the Health & Social Care Pool Fund position, which, after the application of Covid-19 Emergency funding, will leave a breakeven position.

The purpose of the report was to keep Members updated on the financial position of the authority, as effective budget management was considered to be critical to ensuring the financial resources were spent in line with the budget and that they were targeted towards the Council's priorities. The report focused on the forecast 2020/2021 financial position as at 30th November 2020.

The Committee was advised that the submitted report was due to be considered by the Cabinet at its next meeting on 9th February 2021.

In considering the report a member referred to the Waste Bin Replacement Programme, which had been implemented in 2020/2021 and requested that a report detailing the impact of this programme be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

Resolved:

1. That the report be noted.
2. The Director of Neighbourhoods be requested to submit a report, to a future meeting of the Committee detailing the progress of the Waste Bin Replacement Programme.

45 DISCRETIONARY FEES AND CHARGES

The Committee scrutinized a report of the Chief Finance Officer, which presented proposed Discretionary Fees and Charges for 2021/2022. Discretionary Fees and Charges were reviewed on an annual basis. At the Cabinet's meeting, held 28th July 2020, a 2% general increase in Discretionary Fees and Charges for 2021/2022 was agreed for planning purposes, subject to exemptions to be agreed.

Following Consultation with members and stakeholders, the submitted report and its associated appendices, detailed the proposed Discretionary Fees and

Charges for 2021/2022 and also gave details of those charges which were proposed to be exempt from the general 2% increase.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

46 SAVINGS PROGRAMME 2021/2022

The Committee scrutinised a report of the Chief Finance Officer that provided Members with recommendations regarding Savings Proposals for consultation in order to meet the pre Covid-19 budget gap for 2021/2022.

The Committee was reminded that the Council is required to set a balanced 2021/2022 Revenue Budget and provisional budgets for 2022/2023 to 2023/2024 by 11th March 2021.

As part of the process, the various savings proposals were consulted upon. It was the responsibility of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review and comment on these proposals, before consideration by the Cabinet, on 25th February 2021 and the Budget Council meeting on 3rd March 2021.

Consultation on the proposals was underway with stakeholder groups, staff and service users as appropriate for the approved savings proposals. The consultation period had commenced on 4th January 2021 and was to end on 17th February 2021.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

47 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Decision:

That the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business, in accordance with the provisions of Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

Reason for Decision:

Should the press and public remain during debate on this item there may be a disclosure of information that is deemed to be exempt under Parts 1 and 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

48 COUNCIL SAVINGS PROPOSALS 2021/2022

The Committee scrutinised a confidential report of the Chief Finance Officer, which presented the proposed Savings Programme 2021/2022 which were currently subject to consultation.

Decision:

1. The Committee notes the savings proposals that have been approved by the Cabinet, for consultation;
2. That the Committee notes the specific savings proposals as follows:

- a. ASC-21-22-003 (Adult Care): staffing reductions – the Committee expressed its opposition to this savings proposal.
- b. ASC-21-22-005 (Adult Care): Changes to Adult Care Charging policy – that the savings proposal be noted.
- c. CORP-2021022-003: Corporate Leadership and Senior Management Review – that the savings proposal be noted.
- d. EC-2021-22-003 (Economy): Shopmobility – reduction in support – the Committee expressed its opposition to this savings proposal.
- e. EC-2021-22-006: Admin Support review – that the savings proposal be noted.
- f. EC-2021-22-07 (Economy): Increased Planning Income from pre-application charges/Planning Performance Agreements – that the savings proposal be noted.
- g. EC-2021-22-008 (Economy): Project Manager Capitalisation – that the savings proposal be noted.
- h. EC-2021-22-009 (Economy): Re-letting for health and social care – that the savings proposal be noted.
- i. NH-2021-22-002 (Neighbourhoods): Public Protection – that the savings proposal be noted.
- j. NH-2021-22-006 (Neighbourhoods): Cohesion and Community Centre Engagement Officer Post – the Committee expressed its opposition to this savings proposal but requested that the Cabinet investigate costs associated with consultancies as a means of mitigating the impact and costs.
- k. NH-2021-22-007 (Neighbourhood): Town Centre Wardens posts – the Committee expressed its opposition to this savings proposal and requested that the Cabinet investigate the possibility of sourcing funding for the Town Centre Wardens posts from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority.
- l. RS-2021-001 (Resources): Treasury Management Review – that the savings proposal be noted.
- m. RS-2021-22-002 (Resources): Insurance Reserves Review – that the savings proposal be noted.
- n. RS-2021-22-004 (Resources): Revenues and Benefits Review – that the savings proposal be noted.