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CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

Tuesday, 23 July 2019

PRESENT: Councillor Michael Holly (Chair); Councillors Mir, O'Neill, Rana, Robinson and Wraighte

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor Brett – Leader of the Council,
Councillor D. Ali – Portfolio Holder for Resources.

OFFICERS: Mark Widdup (Director of Neighbourhoods), Julie Murphy – Chief Finance Officer, David Wilcock – Assistant Director (Legal, Governance and Workforce), Donna Bowler (Assistant Director – Neighbourhoods), Jill McGregor (Assistant Director), Rosemary Barker (Head of Workforce and Organisational Development), Caroline Wolfenden (Head of Corporate Policy and Performance) and Valery White (Neighbourhoods).

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor Bamford, Councillor Boriss, Councillor Joinson, Councillor Nolan and Councillor O'Rourke

10 APOLOGIES

Members considered the issue of quorum and what could be done to try and help the issue. Members felt that the Committee should revert to its previous start time of 6pm as some Members had difficulty making 5:30pm.

RESOLVED

- 1) That Apologies from Councillors Bamford, Boriss, Joinson, Nolan and O'Rourke be noted.
- 2) That future meetings of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee start at 6pm.

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12 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declaration of interests.

13 **ITEMS FOR EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

There were on items of business under this item.

14 **MINUTES**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on the 18th June 2019 be signed as a correct record.

15 **CORPORATE PLAN (2019 - 2022)**

The Chair welcomed the Leader of the Council to the Meeting. The Leader had been invited to the meeting to present to Members the Corporate Plan for 2019-2022.

The Leader of the Council and the Head of Corporate Policy and Performance presented to Members a draft of the Council's Corporate Plan 2019 – 2022 for Members consideration and comments. It was noted that the current plan covered the period 2016 – 2019 and a new plan was required to outline the Council's future direction of travel.

The Council's new vision had been agreed by the Council's Leadership Team as part of development sessions with the Local Government Association. The aim being 'To make our Borough a great place to grow up, get on and live well'

It was reported that the Council had recently reviewed its values and behaviours which have been incorporated into the Chief Executives foreword of the Corporate Plan for 2019-2022. These include Passion, Pioneering and Open and Pride.

It was noted that the Council had previously worked to the themes of People, Place and Prosperity. It was reported that it was now considered that the value Prosperity was a condition of people and place and as such the Council had reworked its priorities to Prosperous People and Places.

Members held a discussion with the Leader and Officers around the 10 outcomes for the new Corporate Plan and the role they will play in helping the Council achieve its outcomes. Members further held discussions on the money being spent to improve the skills of young people in the Borough.

RESOLVED

That the Leader of the Council be thanked for his attendance and that the Committee note the draft Corporate Plan 2019-2022.

109 DIRECTORATE PLANS 2019-2020

The Chair then welcomed the Leader of the Council (and portfolio holder responsible for Finance) and the Portfolio Holder for Resources to the meeting. Both Members had been invited to the meeting to update the Committee on their Directorate Plans for 2019-2020.

The Directorate Plans for 2019-2020 were broken down into the Resources Directorate Plan 2019/2020 and the Neighbourhoods Directorate Plan 2019/2020. The Directorate Plans outlined the action the directorates will be taking over the coming year, to support the Council's long-term vision and strategic priorities.

In considering the Resources Directorate element of the report, Members were updated on the actions that would be undertaken during 2019-2020. In respect of the item relating to the 'To explore the potential for Artificial Intelligence in business processes (R19020)' it was noted that as this topic was still in progress. Members requested a report on this issue be brought to a future meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

In regards to the Neighbourhoods Directorate, Members were informed that the directorate was now responsible for public protection, alongside responsibility for crime and disorder.

Two areas Members held discussions around were firstly in relation to plans to tackle homelessness in the Borough and secondly to try and continue to increase recycling rates. It was noted that the Council over the last few years had increased recycling figures from 20% to 55%.

Members also held a discussion around the Greater Manchester Green Air Plan and the Aglysis contract, the latter of which would be presented to a future meeting of the Council.

The Chair took the opportunity to congratulate the Council's former Deputy Chief Finance Officer on her promotion to the Chief Finance Officer for the Council.

RESOLVED

- 1) That the Resources and Neighbourhoods Directorate Plans 2019-20 be noted.
- 2) That a report on Artificial Intelligence in business processes (R19020) be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

10 **FINANCE UPDATE REPORT 2019/20**

The Chief Finance Officer presented to the Committee a report which outlined details of the Council's financial position as at the end of May 2019. The Committee was advised that the report would be presented to Cabinet at its meeting on 30th July 2019.

Members were informed that the Capital spend was forecast to be in line with budget after approved re-phasing in Economy of £3.500m, the forecast Revenue position was a pressure of £4.805m. It was further reported that savings of £0.135m were forecast to be achieved, as part of the Revenue budget and a forecast 2019/20 Collection Fund surplus position of £1.345m.

The Assistant Director for Children's Social Care was invited to the Committee again to provide Members with an update on how the service was planning to reduce its predicted overspend. It was noted that there were monthly meetings chaired by the Chief Executive with a number of Directors to monitor and review Children's Social Care overspend.

RESOLVED:

That the financial update be noted.

11 **BUDGET 2020/21 TO 2022/23 GUIDELINES, TIMETABLE AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

The Committee received a report from the Council's Chief Finance Officer that would recommended to the Cabinet, at its meeting on 30th June 2019, approval of the budget guidelines, timetable and methods of public engagement to be used in preparing the detailed 2020/21 to 2022/23 budget.

Members were reminded that the Council is legally obliged to set a balanced budget and the report set out a planning process for the budget including details of the assumptions used in the preparation of the budget to ensure they were agreed, reasonable and consistently applied by all services.

The report also provided Members with the latest budget position for the Council and Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale Clinical Commissioning Group.

The Committee had a discussion with Officers around budget assumptions that included the Councils precept, Adult Social Care precept, assumed staff pay award and discretionary fee's and Charges.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee note the proposed Budget 2020/21 to 2022/23 Guidelines, Timetable and Public Engagement.

12 **EMPLOYMENT EQUALITY REPORT 2018/19**

The Head of Workforce and Organisation Development presented Members with the Employment Equality Report for 2018/2019. The report informed Members that the Council was seeking to ensure the composition of its workforce reflects the diverse local community, and to offer equality of opportunity in employment. It was reported that the Council was compliant with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty to publish equality information of its workforce.

This report provided information for the financial year ending on 31st March 2019 and aimed to demonstrate the progress and achievements in increasing the composition over time to show how the workforce diversity had changed, and how this compared to the demographic of Rochdale Borough (based on the 2011 census data).

It was noted that the Council had established an Equality and Diversity Steering Group to support its commitment to integrate equality, diversity and inclusion throughout its services. A key component of the strategy would be equality, diversity and inclusion in employment which would look to address those areas where the Council was under-represented when compared to the local population.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

13 **HEALTH RELATED ABSENCE REPORTING**

The Head of Workforce and Organisation Development provided the Committee with a report on the health related absence figures for the fourth quarter and year end (2018/19). The report also contained an assessment against Directorate and Corporate targets.

It was reported that the number of days lost per FTE was 9.86 for 2018/19, with the main reason for absence being stress/depression and operative/post-operative. It was noted that the directorates with the highest number of days lost per FTE were Adult Care, Children's Services and Neighbourhoods.

Members attention was brought to the latter part of 2018/19, the third quarter for health related absence figures (October - December 2018), which indicated that 2.26 days per FTE were lost, with an increase in the fourth quarter (January – March 2019) of 2.47 days per FTE lost.

In response to Members questions it was reported that when compared to the same period in 2017/18 the trend was roughly the same for days lost. However, it was noted that the percentage increase for 2018/19 between the quarters was higher than that for 2017/18.

The Committee noted again that Tameside's figures were significantly the best in Greater Manchester and the Chair, noting that this had been done previously asked if the Council could look again to see if there were any lessons that the Council could learn from Tameside Council in respect of their sickness absence management performance.

RESOLVED

That the note the report.

14 WORKFORCE WELLBEING

It was agreed that this item be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the item be deferred.

15 TOWNSHIP FUNDS REVIEW

The Townships & Communities Manager present to the Committee a report that provided a review of the work of the Townships over the last municipal year, outlined the Townships revenue and capital expenditure during 2018/19 and requested that the Committee note the information relating to the allocation, spend and carry forward of Township Funds during 2018/19

Members were reminded that the Management of the Township Funds was delegated to the Township Devolved Sub-Committees and that Township Funds are allocated to projects that benefit the Borough's communities and environment, and help realise the Township priorities.

It was reported that an annual review of Township revenue and capital funds had been undertaken by the Township Committees in June 2019. The findings had influenced funding streams, the terms and conditions of the funds and the administration procedures for grant applications for 2019/20.

The report contained a number of appendices that outlined revenue and capital funds for all the townships, reviews of what the Townships had undertaken in the previous 12 months and the terms and conditions for Township revenue and capital funds for 2019/20.

Members held a discussion with the Townships & Communities Manager around reported underspends and how these were monitored and scrutinised. It was further brought to Members attention that the Rochdale North Township Committee had agreed a limit of £3,000 for delegated decisions, whilst all other Townships had agreed to delegate decisions up to £5,000. Members were informed that legal advice had been sought and that £3000 limit could be open to challenge if it was found that Rochdale North has, without justification,

departed from the consistency of decision making which may be deemed as lacking in fairness.

The Chair and several Members on the Committee were also representatives on the Rochdale North Township Committee and were concerned that the Township may be open to challenge. It was felt the Townships & Communities Manager should seek further clarification on the matter and if confirmed Rochdale North Township Committee should be informed at its next meeting.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Committee note the expenditure, commitments and carry forward of Township revenue and capital funds at financial year end 2018/19.
- 2) That the evaluations received to date for some of the projects funded as outlined in the report be noted.
- 3) That Committee note the terms and conditions for Township revenue and capital funds for 2019/20.
- 4) That the delegation arrangements for Township Funds 2019/20 as outlined in the report be noted.
- 5) That clarification be sought on the Rochdale North Township Committee delegated decision budget limit and presented back to the Township.

16 WORK PROGRAMME REPORT

Members considered the Committee's Work Programme for the remainder of the municipal year 2019/2020.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.