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JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

MINUTES OF MEETING Thursday, 25th June 2020

PRESENT: Councillor Holly (in the Chair); Councillors Dutton, Kelly, Meredith, O'Rourke, West and Zaheer.

OFFICERS: T. Harrison (Assistant Director – Adult Social Care), S. Smith (Deputy Chief Finance Officer), Dr F. Davies (Children's Services) and P. Thompson (Resources Directorate)

APOLOGIES

21. Apologies for absence were received from Councillors O'Neill, Angela Smith and Sullivan.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

22. There were no declarations of interests.

MINUTES

23. Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Joint Scrutiny Panel, held 21st May 2020 be approved, as a correct record.

NEW SCHOOLS - DISPOSAL OF SCHOOL SITES

24. The Members scrutinised a report of the Director of Children's Services which advised that the Rochdale borough was in the process of getting three new central government delivered Academy Free schools. To facilitate this process the Council had been working towards finding and delivering good sites for the schools that meet local need.

A Department for Education (DfE) Capital Delivery team was now in place for the proposed secondary school in Middleton. The final red line boundary for the site was nearing agreement and negotiations were ongoing with regard to agreeing the Heads of Terms. Cabinet approval was required for the disposal. The disposal of the school site land would be by way of a lease for a Term of 125 years at a peppercorn rent. The DfE's model lease model would be used.

The local authority has a statutory duty to offer every child living in the borough, and who applies, a school place. Birth rates have been increasing for the last 15 years and secondary schools in the Rochdale Borough have reached capacity. The town of Middleton has and is continuing to see increasing new housing, and with outstanding Primary schools locally, has seen large rises in pupil numbers. Numbers of pupils are expected to continue to rise until 2027/28.

With Rochdale Sixth Form College (RSFC), continuing to be outstanding and a national leader in sixth form provision, the local authority is in a privileged position with Altus Education Partnership, the RSFC trust, opening the new secondary school in Middleton.

Delivering the new school site and aiding the process of the new school delivery is important for families looking for outstanding school provision in the area, and will encourage families to settle in the Rochdale Borough and facilitate improvements in education and therefore wider employability skills in residents.

Resolved:

That the Scrutiny Panel recommends that the Cabinet, at its meeting on 30th June 2020, formally approves the recommendations in the submitted report.

FINANCE OUTTURN REPORT 2019/20

25. The Members scrutinised a report of the Chief Finance Officer that advised of the Council's final outturn financial position as at the end of 2019/2020; and sought approval for a contribution to Equalisation Reserve totalling £3.2m; and approval of a capital budget switch request of Better Care Funding which have incurred limited expenditure in 2019/2020 of £0.031m.

The Panel was informed that not reporting on financial performance would put at risk the achievement of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan. Effective budget management was critical to ensuring financial resources were spent in line with the budget and were targeted towards the Council's priorities. Monitoring enabled the early identification of variations against the plan and facilitated timely corrective action.

In considering this matter Members were informed that Cabinet had received the report at its meeting on 26th May 2020. The report was presented to keep Members updated on the financial position of the authority, as effective budget management was critical to ensuring financial resources were spent in line with the budget and are targeted towards the Council's priorities. Monitoring enabled the early identification of variations against the plan and facilitates timely corrective action.

Resolved:

1. The Panel notes the final 2019/2020 outturn positions for Revenue, Capital and Corporate Debt as at the end of 2019/2020.
2. The Panel notes the summary of 2019/2020 Equalisation Reserve movements, as detailed at paragraph 4.1.1 of the submitted report.
3. The Panel notes that the Cabinet, at its meeting on 26th May 2020 approved the contribution to the Equalisation Reserve detailed at paragraph 4.1.2. of the submitted report.
4. The Panel notes the Budget Carry Forward requests and members endorse the exception detailed at paragraph 4.1.3, of the submitted report.
5. The Panel notes the final Health and Social Care Pool Budget position as detailed at paragraph 4.2, of the submitted report.
6. The Panel notes the net Capital budget increase of £6.980m, as shown at paragraph 4.4.1, of the submitted report.
7. The Panel notes the Capital re-phasing of £48.309m, as detailed at paragraph 4.4.2, of the submitted report.

8. The Panel notes that the Cabinet, at its meeting on 26th May 2020, approved the capital budget switch request that was detailed at paragraph 4.4.3 of the submitted report.

9. The Panel notes the return of £3.526m of Capital funding, as detailed at paragraph 4.4.4, of the submitted report.

COLLECTION FUND OUTTURN 2019/20

26. The Members scrutinised a report of the Chief Finance Officer which detailed the Collection Fund outturn position for 2019/2020. The Members were informed there was a surplus of £0.932m, comprising: £1.869m surplus relating to Business Rates; and a £0.937m deficit relating to Council Tax. The Council's share of the 2019/2020 Collection Fund outturn surplus was £1.057m.

The Panel was informed that not reporting on financial performance puts at risk the achievement of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan and that effective budget management was critical to ensuring financial resources are spent in line with the budget and were targeted towards the Council's priorities.

The Panel was informed that the Cabinet had received this report at its meeting on 26th May 2020. The report had been presented to the Cabinet for information as part of the budget monitoring process.

Resolved:

That the 2019/20 Collection Fund outturn position be noted.

DELEGATED APPROVAL REPORT 2019/20

27. The Panel Members scrutinised a report of the Chief Finance Officer which provided details of approvals of spend under delegated powers in relation to Revenue and Capital Schemes funded by additional grants or income during 2019/2020.

The Panel was informed that the Cabinet had received this report, which was for information, at its meeting on 26th May 2020.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK

28. The Panel scrutinised a report of the Chief Finance Officer which updated Members on the forecast financial position relating to the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's General Fund and Collection Fund, and Heywood, Middleton & Rochdale Clinical Commissioning Group. The report also outlined the actions required in order to mitigate the financial impact of Covid-19.

The purpose of the report was to seek Cabinet's approval, at its meeting on 30th June 2020, for the usage of the emergency Government funding to mitigate additional expenditure/loss of income resulting from the Covid-19

outbreak and to also approve further actions required, as and when necessary, in order to mitigate the financial impact of the Covid-19 outbreak.

Resolved:

That the Joint Scrutiny Panel recommends that the Cabinet approve the recommendations, detailed in paragraph 2 of the Chief Finance Officer's report, at its meeting on 30th June 2020, when this matter is due to be considered.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

29. Resolved:

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.

APPROVAL TO AGREE A COMMISSIONING MODEL FOR EXTRA CARE HOUSING

30. The Members scrutinised a report of the Head of Commissioning (Adult care Service) which set out proposals for a commissioning model for extra care housing. The commissioning model put forward in the submitted report sought to align the care and support funding model across all the existing Extra Care Housing schemes and any future schemes that may be supported, particularly any new schemes that are put forward in other areas where the forecasted future demand suggests it will be required.

The Panel was advised that the report is due for submission to the Integrated Commissioning Board at its meeting on 30th June 2020.

Resolved:

The Panel supports the recommendations contained in the report to establish a commissioning model for extra care housing in the Borough and recommends that those recommendations are formally adopted by the Integrated Commissioning Board on 30th June 2020.