

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

29th August 2019

PRESENT:-

Conservative Group

Councillor Watson (Chairman), Fitzpatrick (Vice-Chairman) and Councillors Angliss, Billings, Mrs. Brown, Corbin (substituting for Councillor Ford), Roberts and Mrs Wheelton (substituting for Councillor Macpherson).

Labour Group

Councillors Dr. Pearson, Rhind, Richards, Southerd and Taylor.

FM/37 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Ford and Macpherson (Conservative Group).

FM/38 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Committee was informed no declarations of interest from Members of the Council had been received.

FM/39 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO 10**

The Committee was informed no questions from members of the public had been received.

FM/40 **QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO 11**

The Committee was informed no questions from Members of the Council had been received.

FM/41 **REPORTS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Committee was informed no reports had been received.

MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE

FM/42 **AUDIT SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Open Minutes of the Audit Sub-Committee Meeting held on 24th July 2019 were submitted.

Councillor Shepherd, whilst referring to Minute No. AS/18, requested that in relation to Infinity Garden Village, the confidential report be made available to all Elected Members.

A further request from Councillor Richards that the report of the Monitoring Officer and a further internal investigation by the Chief Executive regarding the Infinity Garden Village be made available to all Members of the Council.

The Chief Executive responded that both reports were made under the instruction of Council and were confidential and exempt. Therefore, Council would be the only body that could, if they felt it necessary, authorise the request. The Chief Executive undertook to raise this matter, in exempt, under his reports to a future Council.

FM/43 **CORPORATE PLAN 2016-21 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) presented the report to Committee highlighting achievements and areas where targets had not been met. He noted a risk that remained for the Council was Britain's exit from the European Union as the implications remain unknown.

RESOLVED:

The Committee considered progress against performance targets set out in the Corporate Plan. The Committee reviewed the Risk Register and Action Plan for the Committee's services.

FM/44 **REVENUE FINANCIAL MONITORING 2019/20**

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) presented the report to Committee providing an update on performance against budget for 2019/20 and updated Members on the first quarter's income and expenditure. In relation to the General Fund, the Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) highlighted that the Senior Management restructure would make savings due to vacant roles within the new structure, noting that these savings had been offset, in part, by support costs and recruitment costs.

In relation to the Collection Fund, the Committee was informed of an appeal made by NHS Foundation Trusts on the payment of business rates and a recent ruling where they could become exempt. The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) advised although this would not have a direct impact on the Council, it would affect the Derbyshire pool.

Councillor Billings, whilst commenting on the Council's strong financial position, proposed that an investment of £275,000 be made towards a further round of the Community Partnership Scheme, and requested that priority be given to environmental factors in the assessment criteria.

Councillor Southerd sought clarification on whether the proposal would be open across the District. The Chairman requested that the scheme be widely advertised.

The proposal was carried by the Committee.

RESOLVED:

The Committee considered and approved the latest revenue financial position for 2019/20 as detailed in the report.

The Committee noted changes to the Policy Committee Base Budgets detailed in Appendix 4 due to the Senior Management restructure.

The Committee approved a capital allocation of £275,000 towards a further round of the Community Partnership Scheme, and requested that priority be given to environmental factors in the assessment criteria.

FM/45 **CAPITAL FINANCIAL MONITORING 2019-20**

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) presented the report to the Committee.

Councillor Southerd, whilst referring to paragraph 3.3 of the report, sought clarification on the financial difference between the budget allocated for disabled facility grants and the actual spend. The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) responded that often there is a time lag between funding being allocated and the works being procured for this funding to be drawn down. Councillor Brown suggested that in order to address the matter, a further report be submitted to this Committee on disabled facility grants.

This proposal was carried by the Committee.

RESOLVED:

The Committee considered and approved the latest capital financial position for 2019/20 as detailed in the report. The Committee approved that a separate report on the take-up of disabled facility grants be put to a future Committee.

FM/46 **TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE 2019-20**

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) presented the report to the Committee on the management of investments explaining credit ratings, long-term investments and level of interest rates. The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) explained that the issue of Britain's exit from the European Union, would potentially impact some investments made in the money market funds as they are domiciled in Republic of Ireland and Benelux countries. Once further information was available, Committee was informed that funding could be pulled at a day's notice if such action would be required.

RESOLVED:

The Committee considered and approved the latest Treasury Management Update for quarter 1 2019/20 as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

The Committee approved the updated Counterparty List for investments and bank deposits as detailed in Appendix to the report.

FM/47 **DEBT MANAGEMENT POLICY**

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) presented the report to the Committee and addressed a query that had been raised by Councillor Rhind at a previous Committee in relation to the recovery of housing benefit overpayment as a result of an error made by the local authority. The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) confirmed that this is the case where the Claimant could reasonably know that they were being overpaid. For example, notification is sent to a claimant advising the level of income used for the assessment and it is the claimant's responsibility to inform the Council if the information contained is incorrect. In such circumstances, the Council must seek to recover the overpayment.

RESOLVED:

The Committee approved the updated Debt Management Policy for the recovery of Council Tax, Business Rates and Housing Benefit Overpayments.

FM/48 **PICTORIAL WILDFLOWER PLANTING TRIAL**

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) presented the report to the Committee advising that it had been approved, in principle, by the previous Environment and Development Services Committee (EDS). The Committee was advised that if the four pilot schemes are successful, then a further report would be submitted to both EDS and this Committee for approval prior to implementation across the District.

Councillor Wheelton welcomed the report noting the positive visual impact the scheme would bring and thanked the new Head of Cultural and Community Services for looking to pilot the scheme.

Councillor Southerd, whilst in support, sought clarification on whether the growth of wildflowers near verges would have an adverse impact on visibility displays from road junctions. The Chairman responded that he had been assured that planting would not be near sight lines, so there would be no such impact.

RESOLVED:

The Committee approved the financial implications of the Pictorial Wild Flower Planting Trial report as approved by Environment and Development Services Committee on the 15 August 2019.

FM/49 **COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) presented the report to the Committee.

RESOLVED:

Members considered and approved the updated work programme.

FM/50 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT [ACCESS TO INFORMATION] ACT 1985)**

RESOLVED:-

That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that there would be disclosed exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Act indicated in brackets after each item.

TO RECEIVE QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 11

The Committee was informed no questions had been received.

LAND IN SWADLINCOTE

The Committee approved the recommendation in the report.

ONE PUBLIC ESTATE

The Committee approved the recommendation in the report.

SOUTH DERBYSHIRE ACTIVE SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP

The Committee approved the recommendation in the report.

EXTENSION OF CONTRACT-PARKLIFE OFFICER

The Committee approved the recommendation in the report.

STRUCTURE REVIEW BUSINESS CHANGE AND ICT

The Committee approved the recommendation in the report.

PAYROLL SERVICES AND STRUCTURE OF THE FINANCIAL SERVICES UNIT

The Committee approved the recommendation in the report.

BAD AND DOUBTFUL DEBTS

The Committee approved the recommendation in the report.

The meeting terminated at 7.40 pm.

COUNCILLOR P WATSON

CHAIRMAN