

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

17th March 2022

PRESENT:

Labour Group

Councillor Pearson (Chair), Councillor Rhind (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Richards, Southerd and Taylor.

Conservative Group

Councillors, Bridgen, Brown, Muller, Redfern, and Watson.

Independent Group

Councillor Fitzpatrick

Non-Grouped

Councillor Wheelton

In Attendance

Councillor Heath,
Councillor Mulgrew

FM/147 **APOLOGIES**

The Committee was informed that apologies had been received from Councillor Ackroyd and Councillor Lemmon (Conservative Group) and Councillor Roberts (Independent Group)

FM/148 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Committee was informed that no declarations of interest had been received.

FM/149 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO 10**

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

FM/150 **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/151 **REPORTS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Committee was informed that no reports of Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been received.

MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE

FM/152 **CADLEY PARK (URBAN COUNTRY PARK) FUNDING**

The Strategic Director (Service Delivery) presented the report to the Committee summarising the benefits of the proposed park for Swadlincote and sought approval of the recommendations within the report.

Members discussed various suggestions for an alternative name for the park and agreed that on merit the suggestion of Cadley Park was appropriate.

Councillor Taylor addressed the Committee in support of the Park and in recognition of the significant benefits it would bring to the area.

Councillor Fitzpatrick raised a query regarding maintenance costs.

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) confirmed that there would be a commuted sum to cover the ongoing maintenance.

RESOLVED:

- 1.0 The Committee approved the updated funding package for Cadley Park (Urban Country Park) project adjacent to William Nadin Way.***
- 1.1 The Committee approved the acceptance of the Sport England Grant that supports the finances to deliver Cadley Park (Urban Country Park) project***
- 1.2 The Committee approved a permanent name for Cadley Park (Urban Country Park) as 'Cadley Park'.***

FM/153 **TREE, WOODLANDS, AND HEDGEROW MANAGEMENT POLICY**

The Strategic Director (Service Delivery) presented the report the Committee regarding the revised policy. It was noted that the resource implications agreed related to a backlog of works. The Committee was advised that the reviewed Policy incorporated best practice, regionally and considered local needs. The Strategic Director (Service Delivery) informed Members that the recommendation to move to a time bound red, amber, green ratings enabled better management of the workload and that when existing work had moved to the new ratings it had highlighted a number of trees that required urgent works.

Members welcomed the reviewed policy and highlighted the importance of trees to the District.

Councillor Fitzpatrick raised a query regarding the public interest in trees and who carried out tree works.

The Strategic Director (Service Delivery) informed the Committee that visibility of tree works and the need to inform residents of any such works had been discussed and would be included in the Heads of Terms.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 The Committee adopted the Tree, Woodland and Hedgerow Policy as per Appendix 1 of the report including appendices as per Appendix 2 of the report.***
- 1.2 The Committee approved the resource implications outlined in the report to undertake the necessary identified tree works.***

FM/154 CORPORATE PLAN 2020-24: PERFORMANCE REPORT (2021-2022 QUARTER 3– APRIL TO 31 DECEMBER)

The Head of Organisational Development and Performance presented the report to the Committee and highlighted the performance measures on target and those that were red, one of which related to commercialisation which had been impacted by work carried out during Covid. However, it was noted that renewed focus would be given to this to bring improvement in the longer-term.

The Head of Customer Services addressed the Committee regarding the increased number of telephone calls received and explained that it was expected to be managed better with the use of alternative digital solutions and telephone call technology that can give information about the position in the queue, the expected call wait time and the offer of a call back to assist which was hoped to improve the customer experience and satisfaction. It was further noted that the length for call wait times had lengthened due to the increase in vulnerable customers contacting the Council regarding a number of grant schemes. The Head of Customer Services requested that Members inform her regarding customer complaints so that they can be addressed.

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) reiterated to the Committee that the Customer Services team was still dealing with Covid related issues and that following the increased number of calls resources would be reviewed. It was also noted that the short term increased incoming calls was not expected to improve due to the £150 energy rebate with a potential 14,000 people who may need to apply for the grant as they do not pay Council Tax via Direct Debit. The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) asked for patience as it would take time to get the rebate paid out to residents.

Councillor Richards commended the report and enquired whether the replacement of the 01283 number with 0800 could be considered as it would be free to residents and help reduce costs. The Head of Customer Services noted the request and would bring a report back to the Committee regarding the suggestion if this was possible.

Councillor Southerd sought clarity regarding how the £150 was disseminated if there was an alternative solution. The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) confirmed that the question had been raised nationally but the government had insisted that the Direct Debit and grant applicant method had to be used.

Councillor Brown raised a query regarding the average time to relet council homes 5 months and the loss housing of income.

The Strategic Director (Service Delivery) informed the Committee that a report had been presented the Housing and Community Services Committee regarding voids and the process of end to end checks and that the refurbishment of kitchens and bathrooms had been brought forward on vacated properties which had impacted on the reletting times. In addition, the Committee was advised that the report also included a number of difficult to let properties which was to be looked into to find a solution to letting those properties.

Councillor Fitzpatrick sought clarity regarding face to face interaction with residents.

The Head of Customer Services confirmed that a trial period regarding face to face interaction would be extended as it appeared that customers appeared to use telephone calls as the preferred method of contact.

The Head of Organisational Development and Performance informed the Committee that the use of other forms of interaction such as Facebook and Twitter were increasingly be used by residents.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 The Committee approved progress against performance targets set out in the Corporate Plan 2020 - 2024.***
- 1.2 The Committee reviewed the Risk Register for the Committee's services.***

FM/155 **GENERAL FUND REVENUE MONITORING 2021-22**

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) presented the report to the Committee summarising the main points within the reported and that the General Fund surplus was expected to be above £400k. A potential risk in relation to the new recycling contract was highlighted.

Members welcomed the report and Councillor Richards raised concern regarding vacant posts and the use of temporary workers but informed the Committee that the East Midlands Regional Employers Forum acknowledged that it was the same for other local authorities as funding did not allow for councils to offer competitive rates of pay compared to the private section.

RESOLVED:

The Committee considered and approved the latest revenue financial position for 2021/22 as detailed in the report.

FM/156 **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT REVENUE FINANCIAL MONITORING 2021-22**

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) presented the report to the Committee outlining the key points. It was noted that the £300k overspend previously reported, would not move the Housing Revenue Account into deficit and that an Internal Audit would investigate and report to Audit Sub-Committee.

Members raised concern regarding the overspend and the need for it to be looked at.

Councillor Dunn welcomed the attendance of Finance and Management Members to the Audit Sub-Committee regarding the Internal Audit overspend report.

RESOLVED:

The Committee considered and approved the latest revenue financial position on the Housing Revenue Account for 2021/22 as detailed in the report.

FM/157 **COLLECTION FUND 2021-22**

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) addressed the Committee and reported the good position of the collection fund highlighting the Council Tax surplus and Business Rates figures which had been helped by the government funding.

RESOLVED:

The Committee considered and approved the latest Collection Fund position for 2021/22 as detailed in the report.

FM/158 **CAPITAL FINANCIAL MONITORING 2021-22**

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) presented the report and outlined the position of the capital project expenditure, the Right To Buy figures and the Section 106 Agreement funding for the maintenance of parks.

Members raised queries regarding the use and promotion of the Disability Facility Grant.

The Strategic Director (Service Delivery) clarified that the Disability Facility Grant could not be used on council housing stock and agreed to recirculate the grant promotional material to Members.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 The Committee considered and approved the latest capital financial position for 2021/22 as detailed in the report.***
- 1.2 The Committee noted the balance of Section 106 Funding available for use by the Council for capital projects as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report.***

FM/159 **TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE 2021-22**

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) delivered the report to the Committee and outlined the key areas and sought approval of the recommendations within the report.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 The Committee considered and approved the latest Treasury Management Update for Quarter 3 for 2021/22 as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.***
- 1.2 The Committee approved the updated Counterparty List for investments and bank deposits as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report.***

FM/160 **LAND IN SWADLINCOTE**

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) introduced the report outlining the funding stream for the proposed Town Centre improvements and informed the Committee that the Chief Executive has offered to take Members to show them the proposed plans.

The Head of Corporate Property informed the Committee that a site visit would take place and that Planning permission was being sought for the proposed works. It was noted that the proposals to improve the indoor market area by removing the roof to create a multipurpose area was intended to be a back drop for evening and weekend outdoor events. The Head of Corporate Property summarised other works to be undertaken as part of the Town Centre regeneration

Members commended the report and the proposed works to improve the Town Centre and were keen that the free parking facilities in the area were maintained.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 The Committee granted approval to transfer the remaining £375,204 from the Economic Regeneration Reserve into the Midland Road/Belmont Street capital budget to fund additional works.***

1.2 The Committee approved that any underspend in the Town Centre Public Realm capital budget be transferred to the Midland Road/Belmont Street project.

1.3 The Committee approved the plans as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report, subject to planning permission and the project being phased and revised to meet budget constraints.

FM/161 **COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

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

RESOLVED:

The Committee considered and approved the updated work programme

FM/162 **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.

REGRADING OF POST – BUILDING SERVICES MANAGER

The Committee approved the recommendations in the report.

ORGANIC WASTE CONTRACT

The Committee approved the recommendations in the report.

TRANSPORT OPERATOR LICENCE, PROPOSED CHANGES TO DEPOT AND STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS

The Committee approved the recommendations in the report

FUTURE SERVICE DELIVERY AND EMPLOYMENT MODELS UPDATE

The Committee approved the recommendations in the report

The meeting terminated at 20:30 hours.

COUNCILLOR PEARSON

CHAIR