

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

13th June 2019

PRESENT:-

Conservative Group

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

Labour Group

Councillors Dr. Pearson, Rhind, Richards, Taylor and Tilley (substituting for Councillor Southerd).

In Attendance

Councillor Mrs. Wheelton

FM/1 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors MacPherson and Roberts (Conservative Group) and Councillor Southerd (Labour Group).

FM/2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

FM/3 **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/4 **QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO 11**

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

FM/5 **REPORTS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Committee was informed that no reports had been received.

MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE

FM/6 **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 the largest risk that remained for the Council was Britain's exit from the European Union as the implications remain unknown.

The Chief Executive addressed the Committee, remarking on the Council's record as a caring employer and the Council's ability to extend benefits for staff members with long term sickness, including terminal illness. He noted that whilst the Council would continue to respond to the needs of staff who face a long-term absence due to illness, the trend of long-term absences continued upward. In order to bring about further changes, a Joint Consultative Committee has been arranged for 25th July 2019 to take place with officers, Unions and Members.

Councillor Ford noted as a basis of support, he reminded Members the Council had proudly signed up for the Dying to Work Charter, whose founder had recently been nominated for a MBE.

Councillor Richards queried if the level of absences were spread throughout the departments or if there were pockets of departments with higher levels of long-term absences. The Chief Executive noted that whilst there were higher levels amongst departments with manual work, it is evenly spread throughout the organisation.

The Vice-Chairman noted the Council's staff is the Council's best asset and long-term absences put others under stress; he extended support to what the Chief Executive was undertaking.

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/7

CORPORATE EQUALITIES ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19 AND ACTION PLAN 2019-20

The Strategic Director (Corporate Services) presented the report to Committee, noting the report demonstrates how the Council carries out its equality responsibilities.

Councillor Taylor requested equality and diversity training is made available for Members. The Strategic Director (Corporate Services) noted the request and would look into arranging training.

RESOLVED:

The Committee approved the Corporate Equalities Annual Report for 2018/19 for publication attached in Appendix A.

The Committee approved the Corporate Equalities and Safeguarding Action Plan for 2019/20, attached in Appendix B.

FM/8 **ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT 2018-19 AND ACTION PLAN 2019-20**

The Strategic Director (Corporate Services) presented the report to Committee, noting the annual report sets out the work undertaken to safeguard the workforce by ensuring safe working conditions. The Strategic Director (Corporate Services) further noted the Council achieved the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents Gold Award for the ninth year.

The Chairman queried how frequently the SoloProtect devices were activated. The Strategic Director (Corporate Services) responded to the query, highlighted there had been a few false alarms but no emergencies.

The Chairman thanked officers for their efforts in achieving the Gold Award yet again.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the key health and safety achievements and performance for the year ending 31 March 2019.

The Committee approved the Health and Safety Action Plan for 2019/20 as detailed in Appendix 2.

FM/9 **COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS, COMPLAINTS & FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS**

The Strategic Director (Corporate Services) presented the report to Committee, highlighting Freedom of Information requests continued to increase and, dependent on the nature of the request, could take up significant resources within departments.

Councillor Richards queried how information could be obtained relating to data protection breaches. The Strategic Director (Corporate Services) responded to the query, noting any data protection breach would be dealt with separately as an investigation would need to be carried out. The Chief Executive informed Members that if there were a major breach, it would be reported to Committee.

Councillor Dr. Pearson requested Members were informed of the outcome of complaints as standard practice. The Chief Executive noted the request, remarking there were varying levels of appropriate responses depending on the nature of the complaint, but Members should be regularly kept updated.

RESOLVED:

The Committee considered and noted the comments, compliments, complaints and FOI requests, as detailed in the report.

FM/10 **THE FAIR FUNDING REVIEW**

The Strategic Director (Corporate Services) presented the report to Committee, highlighting the proposed changes to the funding allocation system would have the Council benefit financially, but may potentially take funds away from County Councils.

Councillor Taylor commented the report rang alarm bells for overall funding as there had already been a significant reduction in funding available for social services, schools, highways and police services. By looking at services beyond this authority, he was alarmed at the future financial implications.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the response to the Technical Consultation on the Relative Needs and Resources of Local Authorities.

That a further report is submitted to the Committee to provide an update on the implications for the Council following approval by the Government of the final funding formula.

FM/11 **COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Strategic Director (Corporate Services) informed Committee the Statement of Accounts report would not be available for the next Committee as the external auditors would not be able to audit the accounts by the end of July and instead would come to a later Committee.

Members raised queries relating to the payment of the external auditors and if the delay would prevent the Council from applying for grants or submitting bids. The Strategic Director (Corporate Services) responded to the queries, explaining the fee would not be reduced as the work would still be undertaken and he was not aware if the delay in the audit would impact on any application of grants or bids.

RESOLVED:

Members considered and approved the updated work programme.

FM/12 **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 that no questions had been received.

LAND IN MELBOURNE

The Committee approved the recommendations in the report.

PREMISES AT WOODVILLE ROAD, OVERSEAL

The Committee approved the recommendations in the report.

DIRECT ACQUISITION OF FOUR BUNGALOWS IN REPTON

The Committee approved the recommendations in the report.

LAND DEAL TO DELIVER AFFORDABLE HOUSING AT ORCHARD STREET, NEWHALL

The Committee approved the recommendations in the report.

HUMAN RESOURCES SERVICE-FIXED TERM APPOINTMENT

The Committee approved the recommendations in the report.

BAD AND DOUBTFUL DEBTS

The Committee approved the recommendations in the report.

The meeting terminated at 7.10pm.

COUNCILLOR P WATSON

CHAIRMAN