

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

26th November 2020

PRESENT:

Conservative Group

Councillor Watson (Chairman), Angliss (Vice-Chairman) and Councillors Mrs. Brown, Fitzpatrick, Ford, MacPherson, Pegg and Roberts.

Labour Group

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

In Attendance

Councillor Mrs. Wheelton.

FM/81 **APOLOGIES**

The Committee were informed that no apologies had been received.

FM/82 **TO RECEIVE THE OPEN MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETING**

The minutes of the meetings held on 2nd July 2020 and 9th July 2020 were read and approved as a true record.

FM/83 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Committee was informed that Councillor Ford declared an interest in Item FM/94 by virtue of being a County Councillor.

FM/84 **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/85 **QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO 11**

The Committee was informed a question had been received from Councillor Richards regarding IT performance and support during virtual Committees.

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) confirmed that the IT service had now been reviewed and was working at its optimum and that all Members should have connectivity to the Council's network and any problems need to be reported to directly IT.

FM/86 **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/87 **CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) FINANCIAL IMPACT – UPDATE**

The Strategic Director presented the report outlining the summary of funding received from several grant schemes and the distribution to support local businesses, households on low incomes and individuals forced into self-isolation and that a clean audit of the administration of the funding and payments had been received from the Auditor.

Members acknowledged the scope of the report and thanked the team for their efforts in processing applications and issuing the monies. Members enquired about access to eligibility criteria for grants, discretionary payments and if any borderline applications had been reconsidered prior to the closing of the scheme on 31st August 2020.

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) responded to Members that the Council's web site had been updated to include details of the schemes although reports in the media had not provided clear information regarding eligibility. Discretionary payments had been awarded in two cases and any borderline cases had been revisited prior to all payments being issued before 30th September 2020 in accordance with the policy set up to support the process.

RESOLVED:

The Committee considered and noted the financial impact of Covid-19 and deployment of Government Funding as detailed in the report.

FM/88 **CORPORATE PLAN 2020-24: PERFORMANCE REPORT (2020-2021 QUARTER 2 – 1 JULY – 30 SEPTEMBER)**

The Head of Organisational Development and Performance delivered the Report advising Members that overall, the Corporate Plan Measures were 80% on track for Our Environment, 76% on track for People and 88% on track for Our Future. Three measures not on track were highlighted and no changes to the Risk Register were reported.

Members requested further information about the number and type of calls into customer services during Covid-19, if an alternative communication route had been identified to those residents that were digitally excluded and if there were figures available to show staff absences and turnover by service area.

Officers confirmed that call volumes had increased massively in particular regard to Track and Trace and Business Grants. An increase of activity on Facebook and Twitter had been noted with digital exclusion being reviewed in another report from the Head of Organisational Development and Performance and that absence figures would be available to Heads of Service.

RESOLVED:

1.1 The Committee considered 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/89 **REVENUE FINANCIAL MONITORING 2020/21**

The Head of Finance presented the Report to the Committee which covered the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account and gave a summary of the variances.

Members enquired if the savings for Christmas lighting in Swadlincote had been incorporated in the report and if staff had been advised of the income tax relief available for working from home. The Head of Finance confirmed that saving was not reflected in the report and communication had shared with staff regarding the availability of homeworking income tax relief. .

RESOLVED:

The Committee considered and approved the latest revenue financial position for 2020/21 as detailed in the report.

FM/90 **CAPITAL FINANCIAL MONITORING 2020/21**

The Head of Finance presented the Report to the Committee highlighting the main projects of the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account and that an additional grant for flooding would be managed by the Environmental Health Officer.

Councillor Brown requested further details about the additional grant for flooding and the funds allocated to the Melbourne Assembly Rooms project be provided to all Members. The Head of Finance agreed to send an update by email to all Committee Members.

RESOLVED:

The Committee considered and approved the latest capital financial position for 2020/21 as detailed in the report.

FM/91 **TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE 2020/21**

The Head of Finance presented the Report to the Committee providing the position of the cash accounts of the Council.

Councillor Brown requested further information on the investments in the report. The Head of Finance clarified that the money markets were the safest

area for the investments as returns were good and were monitored on a regular basis.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 ***The Committee considered and approved the latest Treasury Management Update for quarter 2 2020/21 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/92 **COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS, COMPLAINTS & FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS 01 APRIL 2020 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2020**

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) presented the Report to the Committee which provided details of all the requests with comparable information against the previous year.

RESOLVED:

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

FM/93 **MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT**

The Head of Cultural and Community Services presented the Report to the Committee highlighting the main changes to the statement, the referral process and details of training available to staff.

Members requested that the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy be referenced in the statement.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 ***The Committee considered and approved the revised Council Modern Slavery Statement as per Appendix 1 of the report.***
- 1.2 ***The Committee noted that in the future, the Strategic Director – Service Delivery be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, to agree the Annual Statement, subject to there being no significant changes made. This is to be in line with Derbyshire County Council’s Statement which is to be approved annually by its Director of Community Services.***
- 1.3 ***The Committee considered and approved the revised Modern Slavery Referral Procedure and Guidance for Council Employees as per Appendix 2 of the report.***

- 1.4 The Committee noted that the above recommendations were approved by the Housing and Communities Committee at its meeting on 19th November 2020.**

FM/94 **BETTER CARE FUNDING ALLOCATION – FINANCIAL POSITION**

The Strategic Housing Manager presented the Report to the Committee with an updated Action Plan for all schemes and advised Members regarding money allocated to successful projects. Approval was requested for £50,000 to be ringfenced for a newly emerging projects to address energy inefficiency in the District to support residents in poorly insulated homes.

Councillor Brown noted the details in the report regarding the elderly population and questioned the origin of the data and if there were other statistics available. The Strategic Housing Manager confirmed a previous report published earlier in the year contained more detailed statistics.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 Following approval at Housing and Community Services Committee on 19th November 2020, this Committee noted the progress of schemes it has supported through the allocation of Better Care Funding (BCF) and welcomed the wider impact they are having on reducing pressure on front-line Council Services.**
- 1.2 The Committee approved the proposed Better Care Fund (BCF) Action Plan, timescales and revised allocations contained in Appendix 1 of the report.**
- 1.3 The Committee approved the use of £50k from the BCF allocation to be ringfenced for a new project and associated staffing costs to enable better targeting of resources based on recent stock condition data.**
- 1.4 The Committee approved changes highlighted within the Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy as per Appendix 2 of the report.**
- 1.5 The Committee noted that the Housing and Community Services Committee approved that delegated authority be granted to the Strategic Director (Service Delivery) in conjunction with the Chairman of the Committee to make any minor amendments to the Policy necessary to ensure its effective delivery. Any major changes would be brought to Committee for approval.**

FM/95 **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/96 **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 THE EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETING

The Committee approved the exempt minutes.

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

The Committee was informed no questions had been received.

COLLECTION RATES, DEBT RECOVERY AND WRITE OFFS

The Committee approved the recommendation in the report.

The meeting terminated at 20:00 hours.

COUNCILLOR P WATSON

CHAIRMAN