

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 3rd February 2020

Present: Cllr Johnson (Chair)
Cllrs L. Barnes, Brennan, Janet Eaton, Kempson, Kenyon,
Marriott, Morris and Procter.

In attendance: Clare Law, HR Manager
Ken Masser, Interim Chief Financial Officer
Adil Ahmed, Acting Finance Manager
Jenni Cook, Committee and Member Services Officer
Mia Starkie, Corporate Officer

Also Present: Cllr Lythgoe
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2 public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE & SUBSTITUTIONS

1.1 Apologies for absence had been received from:-

- Councillor Gill - Councillor Marriott substituting.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 20th January 2020 be approved as a correct record.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

4.1 The Chair confirmed that there were no urgent items of business.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

5.1 The Chair noted that she would allow questions to be asked on each item as it was discussed.

6. CHAIR'S UPDATE

6.1 The Chair noted the following as part of her update:-

- Following the Task and Finish Group update at the January meeting regarding suicide in Rossendale, officers were planning an update at the June meeting.

7. 2020/21 CORPORATE PRIORITIES, BUDGET, COUNCIL TAX AND THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

7.1 Officers provided members with an overview of the report which sought the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to this report being considered by Cabinet and Full Council. The report outlined the proposed revenue budget, level of council tax for 2020/21 and the implications for the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. The following was highlighted:-

- Key assumptions were outlined including a proposed 1.99% rise in council tax and confirmation had been received of Whitworth Town Council's precept being set at 3.99%. Other precepting authorities' rises were still awaited.
- Projected staff pay award of 2% in line with most East Lancashire Councils.
- The NNDR/retention scheme and arrangements for 2020/21 were outlined.
- Key challenges were noted including the provisional settlement, digital transformation and decreased annual capital contribution.
- Changes in the base budget costs were noted including savings on pension contributions, the impact of Plot 5 and the revised Revenues and Benefits contract.
- Fees and charges were outlined, along with the Section 25 and risk report.
- It was noted that there was work to be undertaken to transform council operations with limited reserves.

7.2 Members and members of the public commented as follows:-

- The Finance Team were thanked for their work in producing the report.
- Comments regarding charges for replacement door stickers and new plates would be passed to the PPU Manager.
- It was noted that there were zero changes proposed to partner grant funding.
- Queries regarding AAW would be answered directly to the member of the public, once legal advice had been sought.
- Digital transformation was clarified and it was noted that no redundancies were anticipated as a direct result of digital transformation.
- Clarification would be given on the 'Miscellaneous' key changes in the table on page 6 of the report.
- The Revenues and Benefits contract had resulted in some ICT savings.
- Standardisation of the Risk Register format was suggested.
- Staff turnover and Parks/Open Spaces resources were noted.

Resolved:

That the 2020/21 Corporate Priorities, Budget, Council Tax and the Medium Term Financial Strategy is recommended to Cabinet.

8. CAPITAL STRATEGY AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2020/21 TO 2022/23

8.1 Officers outlined the report which sought the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the proposed Capital Strategy and Capital Programme prior to the

report being considered by Cabinet and Full Council. The following points were highlighted:-

- New capital expenditure projects would total £1,526k and included the vehicle replacement programme, playgrounds and pathways, disabled facilities grant and other small projects.
- KKP had been engaged to complete a playing pitch strategy, open spaces audit and leisure facilities audit.
- Whitaker Park Phase 2 was ongoing with building works funded through a £2m Heritage Lottery grant.
- A business case for Spinning Point Phase 2 was being developed by officers for member assessment.

8.2 Members and members of the public commented as follows:-

- Work had been undertaken to ensure that slippage did not re-occur with disabled facilities grants.
- Funding for parks maintenance was within the Operations budget.
- Investment in assets would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Resolved:

The Capital Strategy and Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2022/23 was recommended to Full Council.

9. QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT (OCTOBER- DECEMBER 2019)

9.1 The HR Manager outlined the report which detailed progress against performance targets for quarter 3. The following points were highlighted:-

- 100% of the corporate project targets were green, with 70% of the performance indicators on or above target.
- Compliments had decreased from 26 in quarter 2, to 23 in quarter 3. Complaints had risen from 32 in quarter 2 to 38 in quarter 3. Local Government Ombudsman complaints were clarified.
- Establishment of the 'Friends of Haslingden Cemetery' Group would benefit the local community.
- Remodelling of street cleansing routes and sharing of schedules was taking place, along with implementation of in-cab technology.
- Support had been given to LCC for recycling pots, tubs and trays, and work regarding contamination of recycling bins continued.
- Work was ongoing on the draft Clean Air Strategy and a multi-agency Merlin Roadshow had taken place.
- Work had commenced on ICT works within the Leisure Trust and an improved Wi-Fi experience for customers.
- The Revenues and Benefits systems transitioned to a new system in December 2019 and data was successfully migrated. Work had commenced on digital integration with the DWP and the Housing Benefits service.
- In terms of economic development, the new bus station had opened; work was ongoing on the Bacup 2040 Vision and Masterplan, along with formal consultation on the Haslingden 2040 Vision and Masterplan.

- Community Awards were held in November 2019, support was given to Christmas events, work is ongoing on suicide prevention and the new CCTV project had completed in the main town centres.
- Work was ongoing by the Strategic Housing Team with regards to homelessness prevention and DFG completions.
- Corporate risks were outlined and clarified.

9.2 Members and members of the public commented as follows:-

- Comments regarding Together Housing's £70 fee for keys would be passed to the Strategic Housing Team.
- Street cleansing schedules were noted and it was confirmed that these would be shared with members.
- The criteria for assessing risk was clarified in relation to Spinning Point in relation to the potential for a £1.9m clawback if delivery targets were not met. Delivery targets and timeframes were also requested. The query would be passed to the Director of Economic Development and be answered directly to the member of the public.
- The challenges for street cleansing machines with regards to cigarette ends near pubs and clubs were noted and it was suggested this could be taken up by the Enforcement Team.

Resolved:

The report was noted.

10. THE FORWARD PLAN

10.1 The Forward Plan had been published with the agenda and tabled upcoming Cabinet decisions that the committee could consider for the O&S Committee.

10.2 In terms of February's meeting, it was note that Transdev had not yet confirmed if they could attend the next meeting. The following items were expected:-

- Citizens Advice Annual Update
- In-Cab Technology Update
- Community Safety Update

Resolved:

The update was noted.

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 7.45pm

Signed: _____

Date: _____