

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 13 January 2020

PRESENT – Councillors Bartch (Chair), Mrs Culley, Ali, C L B Hughes, Lister, Renton and Snedker

STATUTORY CO-OPTEES – None

NON-STATUTORY CO-OPTEES – None

APOLOGIES – Councillors Bell, L Hughes, Lucas and Preston

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor Crudass

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Paul Wildsmith (Managing Director), Elizabeth Davison (Assistant Director Resources), Jane Kochanowski (Assistant Director of Children's Services) and Allison Hill (Democratic Officer)

CYP66 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor C Hughes declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 3 in relation to Home to School Transport.

CYP67 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

Submitted – A report (previously circulated) of the Chief Officers Executive which had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting held on 7 January 2020, in relation to the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2020-21 to 2023-24 including setting a budget and council tax increase for 2020/21.

It was reported that the Council had faced significant challenges over the last decade following the economic downturn and reduction in private sector spending and to date, the Council had been successful in responding to these challenges.

The submitted report highlighted projected expenditure of £89.609m and projected income of £90.116m providing a balanced MTFP for 2020/21 and the Council's financial position is robust with a four-year balanced MTFP; outlined areas of efficiencies and saving within the plan; and highlighted areas of further financial pressures, in particular in respect of pressure on the children's social care sector and the increase in children coming into the local authorities care.

It was reported that the delivery of the core offer budget which was agreed following a consultation exercise in 2016 remained extremely challenging with some significant pressures arising in children's social care, however, through innovative financial investments and increased income from economic growth successes and a positive pension triennial review, the Council could still deliver the agreed balanced plan, finance the MTFP a further year to 2023/24 and allocate an additional £1.8 million from unallocated balances to bolster the Futures Fund five themes whilst retaining usable balances of £4.3 million.

The submitted report also highlighted core grant funding to Local Government and a

number of additional funding streams following the 2019 spending review for social care and winter pressures funding; the ongoing increase to the Council Tax; and other grants which are specific areas of expenditure as dictated by the government and cannot be used for other areas.

It was also reported that significant work which had been undertaken to achieve economic growth within the Borough, particularly in relation to Symmetry Park, Feethams House and the Horizon Centre which had been all contributing to the growth in the projected National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) collected over the coming MTFP.

Following a question raised, Members discussed the potential impact of regulation (PSVAR) changes to home to school travel and transport on vulnerable families and the MTFP. The Managing Director advised the Scrutiny Members that he was confident the MTFP could accommodate any changes to the regulations and would present an update to Members at the next ordinary meeting of this Scrutiny Committee on 3 February 2020.

RESOLVED – (a) That this Scrutiny Committee has no comment to make on the proposed schedule of fees and charges for those services within its remit and supports Cabinet’s proposal in relation to those fees and charges and the proposed Council Tax increase of 2 per cent plus the 2 per cent adult social care precept for the next financial year and Futures Fund investment of £1.8 million.

(c) That Members concerns regarding the proposed changes to Home to School Transport and the impact on the MTFP be noted.

CYP68 COUNCIL PLAN 2020/23

Submitted – A report (previously circulated) of the Chief Officers Executive which had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting held on 7 January 2020, in relation to the Council Plan 2020-2023.

The Council Plan sets out a proposed vision for the Council and the key actions it will take to achieve that vision and was subject to consultation prior to its approval by Council in March 2020.

It was reported that all Scrutiny Committees are to consider the Council Plan and a public consultation exercise was being carried out between 8 January and 7 February 2020.

Scrutiny Members will also receive six monthly reporting on progress against the plan and wider performance indicators relating to priority outcomes and Council service delivery.

Members discussed the key actions that the Children and Young People Portfolio focuses on and in particular approved the action to review in-house residential care and consider the Council’s place in providing services; improving employment opportunities for looked after children and care leavers; and work with the schools and the Regional Schools Commissioner to increase educational achievement across the borough and in particular for young people from deprived backgrounds.

RESOLVED-That this Scrutiny Committee has no comment to make on the Council Plan 2020-2023.