

ADULTS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 21 December 2021

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS WAS NOT A FORMALLY CONSTITUTED MEETING, AND THAT THIS IS A 'NOTE' OF THE INFORMAL MEETING THAT TOOK PLACE.

PRESENT – Councillors Donoghue (in the Chair), Mrs. Culley, Curry, Holroyd, Layton, M. Nicholson, Renton and A. J. Scott.

APOLOGIES – Councillors Johnson and B Jones.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Elizabeth Davison (Group Director of Operations), Joss Harbron (Assistant Director - Adult Social Care), Brett Nielsen (Assistant Director Resources) and Sharon Raine (Head of Performance and Transformation) and Paul Dalton (Elections Officer).

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

The Assistant Director Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) inviting Members to give consideration to the draft Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2022/23 to 2025/26.

In introducing the report, the Group Director of Operations referred Members to the previously delivered MTFP Briefing, and advised that this meeting presented an opportunity to ask any general questions on the MTFP, however, more specifically to ask questions relating to the remit of this Scrutiny Committee, and for the Committee to subsequently forward any views or comments specifically relating to the services and finances within the remit of this Committee to the Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee for consideration on 20 January 2022, when that Committee would be formulating an overall response from Scrutiny to Cabinet.

The Group Director of Operations provided an update on the finance settlement received subsequent to the previously delivered MTFP Briefing, and the impact this had on the assumptions made within the draft MTFP.

It was reported that the Council would be receiving £1.579M from the Services Grant announced in the Autumn Statement, and £1.162M from the Social Care Grant, which was slightly higher than initially included within the draft MTFP, however Members were advised that the Services Grant was a one-off payment whilst a further review of Local Government funding was conducted. The Group Director of Operations advised that Officers would need to give further consideration as to how this was reflected within the draft MTFP, and whether any further assumptions could be drawn going forward.

Members were also advised that the New Homes Bonus had been extended for a further year, and that this would net a further £1.4M above anticipated levels. It was reported that there were also a number of deductions from initial draft figures, however overall there

would be an additional £1.073M funding for 2022/23, over that which had been previously presented.

Members entered into discussion on the statutory nature of the majority of Adult Social Care services and funding allocation, and the potential for further work to examine this; sought clarification around the price inflation figure contained within the MTFP for 2025/26; enquired about the rationale behind the increase in the external purchase of care, and the reasoning for the perceived reduction in funding for long-term physical disability and long-term mental disability; encouraged the harnessing of under-utilized Council assets and building a Council managed Care Home and Sheltered Accommodation; scrutinised the margin of error in relation to National Insurance contribution and the Employee pay award; encouraged a greater focus on honing services via the Transformation Agenda to reduce spending and produce greater efficiencies, and encourage care providers to do likewise; and enquired as to whether tackling inequalities could be undertaken at a Council wide level to reduce specific service costs.

(a) That this Committee accept the draft MTFP 2022/23 to 2025/26, as proposed, particularly in relation to those services and finances within the remit of the Committee and undertake work throughout the forthcoming year to inform the MTFP 2023/24 to 2026/27.

(b) That the Chair, in consultation with the Lead Scrutiny Officers supporting this Scrutiny Committee, be given authority to agree the Notes of this Meeting of the Committee, to enable the Notes to be considered at a Special Meeting of the Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee, scheduled to be held on 20 January 2022.