

ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 4 November 2021

PRESENT – Councillors Renton (Chair), Bartch, Boddy, Harker, L Hughes, Mrs D Jones and McEwan

APOLOGIES – Councillors Crudass, Paley and Wright

ABSENT – Councillors

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillors Curry, Durham and Marshall

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Mark Ladyman (Assistant Director Economic Growth), Brett Nielsen (Assistant Director Resources), Anthony Sandys (Assistant Director - Housing and Revenues), Brian Robson (Head of Capital Projects) and Shirley Wright (Democratic Manager)

ER20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

ER21 MINUTES

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of a meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 2nd September, 2021.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes be approved as a correct record.

ER22 CLIMATE CHANGE CROSS PARTY WORKING GROUP - UPDATE

The Chief Executive submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting this Scrutiny Committee to note the Climate Change Action Plan (also previously circulated) which had been approved by Cabinet at its meeting held on 5 October, 2021.

The submitted report outlined the background to the production of the Climate Change Strategy in July 2020, and it was reported that the action plan had been produced as the supporting document to that Strategy to help achieve its commitments and the approach being taken by the Council to achieve a carbon budget.

Following questions by Members, it was reported that each action within the plan, which was designed to be a rolling, organic plan which would be continually reviewed to allow the Council to respond to new technologies, new understanding and government initiatives as they arose, had an indication of its current status, whether funding was available and under which Cabinet Portfolio each action sat. It was also confirmed that milestones would be developed year by year to enable robust reporting to Full Council every six months and that an annual report would be produced.

Discussion ensued on the need for the Plan to be supported with milestones and costings to enable better understanding of what residents were being asked to support and how this

Scrutiny Committee could scrutinise the Action Plan going forward and hold Directors and Cabinet Members accountable for the actions within their own areas.

RESOLVED – (a) That a further briefing be given to Members of this Scrutiny Committee on the Climate Change Action Plan

(b) That consideration be given to Climate Change being included as a standing item on future agendas for this Scrutiny Committee.

ER23 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT - SCHEME APPROVAL 2022/23

The Group Director of Operations submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting this Scrutiny Committee's views on the draft Council Tax Support Scheme for 2022-23 (also previously circulated) which was due to be considered by Cabinet at its meeting scheduled to be held on 9 November 2021.

The submitted report outlined the background to the approval of the last local Council Tax Scheme which had become operational with effect from 1 April 2021 and reminded Members that the Council was required to set a Council Tax scheme each year and that, as part of that scheme, was also required to consider whether any changes should be made to the existing scheme and, where any changes were made, consider what transitional protection, if any, should apply to anyone affected by those changes.

The submitted report set out the details of the proposed Scheme for 2022-23 and it was reported that there were no significant changes proposed to the existing scheme, however, Members were requested to forward views to Cabinet in relation to continuing to provide up to 100 per cent Council Tax Support for care leavers up to the age of 25 and to continue to provide up to 80 per cent support for all other working age people.

RESOLVED – That Cabinet be advised that, having considered the report, it has no further comments to make on the recommendation that up to 100 per cent Council Tax support should continue to be provided for care leavers up to the age of 25 and that up to 80 per cent support for all other working age people should continue.

ER24 PROJECT POSITION STATEMENT AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING - QUARTER 2

The Group Director of Operations submitted a report (previously circulated) together with a report (also previously circulated) scheduled to be considered by Cabinet at its meeting to be held on 9th November 2021 giving a summary of the latest capital resources and commitment position to inform monitoring of the affordability and funding of the Council's capital programme, together with an update on the current status of all construction projects which were currently being managed by the Council.

It was reported that the Council had a substantial annual construction programme of work which was delivering a wide range of improvements to the Council's assets and more critically to Council services and that there were currently 46 live projects being managed with an overall projected outturn value of £138.692 million and that the majority of the Council's projects were running to time, cost and quality expectations, however, they were

being monitored in view of the current pressures on resources in the construction sector nationally.

Particular reference was made to the background to the drainage works at Ingenium Park, which were planned to be undertaken in phases, to be constructed at the same time and the recommendation to Cabinet for it to approve the transfer of £652,000 which had originally been set aside as contingency for the early phases of Central Park, to cover the delivery of a larger drainage system for future phases of Ingenium Park.

RESOLVED – That Cabinet be advised that, in understanding the reasons for the need to complete the drainage works in one phase, this Scrutiny Committee supports the recommendations and has no further comments to make.

ER25 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING - QUARTER 2

The Group Director of Operations submitted a report (previously circulated) together with a report (also previously circulated) which was being considered by Cabinet at its meeting scheduled to be held on 9th November 2021.

It was reported that the Council's projected reserves at the end of 2021-21 were £29.536 million, a £4.610 million improvement on the initial 2021-25 MTFP position and Members were advised that this improvement in reserves, included a brought forward amount of £2.317 million from 2020/21, £0.185 million of projected departmental overspend, the rebasing exercise of £0.993 million, a £0.570 million increase in corporate resources and £0.915 million which was required from the CV19 reserve (a total drawn down from the reserve of £1.385m to fund the departmental CV19 costs and £0.470m to refund the shortfall in government grant for Sales, Fees and Charges in corporate resources).

The Assistant Director Resources reported that of the £29.536 million projected reserves, there was a risk reserve balance of £5.350million and a commitment to use £15.838 million to support years two to four of the current MTFP, leaving a surplus of £8.348 of unallocated reserves.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

ER26 WORK PROGRAMME

The Group Director of Operations submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that further consideration be given to the work programme of this Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2021/22.

It was reported that a number of Councillors had expressed an interest in participating in the Strengthening Families Programme Task and Finish review Group which was to be established.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted and the following Members be appointed to serve on the Strengthening Families Task and Finish Review Group :-

Councillors Boddy, Crudass, Harker, McEwan and Renton.