

ADULTS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 10 January 2023

PRESENT – Councillors Donoghue (Chair), Mrs Culley, Curry, Holroyd, Johnson and Layton.

APOLOGIES – Councillors B Jones, M Nicholson, Mrs H Scott and A J Scott.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor Tostevin.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Joss Harbron (Assistant Director - Adult Social Care), Brett Nielsen (Assistant Director Resources) and Paul Dalton (Elections Officer).

AD25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

AD26 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2023/24 - 2026/27

The Assistant Director - Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the draft Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2023/24 to 2026/27, which had been agreed by Cabinet at its meeting held on 13 December 2022, as a basis for consultation.

The submitted report referred Members to a briefing held on 14 December 2022, which had been offered to all Members, on the background and the overall proposals contained within the MTFP 2023/24 to 2026/27, and requested that Members of this Scrutiny Committee now consider those services and finances specifically within the remit of this Scrutiny Committee to enable a response to be formulated to Cabinet as part of the consultation exercise.

The Assistant Director - Resources provided an update on the Local Government financial settlement, which had been received on 19 and 20 December 2022, subsequent to the approval of the draft MTFP by Cabinet, and advised on the impact this settlement had on the assumptions made within that approved draft MTFP.

Members welcomed the additional ring-fenced funding for Adults Social Care announced in the Local Government settlement, however noted that, as most of the funding provided covered statutory requirements, there was little scope for robust scrutiny. Discussion ensued on the Fair Funding Review and the concerns that existed around future funding, in particular the potential deficits in the latter two years of the draft MTFP and the assumptions in terms of the interest rate.

Members entered into discussion on more general themes, including the establishment of charitable foundations to assist local authorities in terms of delivering non-statutory services, the collection of donations to assist with costs, and whether these approaches had been considered by this Council.

Clarification was also sought in terms of the current budget position, and how this fed into the draft MTFP, and Members were reassured that the Quarter 3 position for this financial year would be reported to the Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet in

February 2023. It was noted that there was likely to be an overall overspend due to the recent pay settlement, however it was highlighted that the Adult Social Care budget would likely show an underspend.

Discussion centred on the increased ageing population and the work being undertaken to ensure that elderly residents were able to remain in their homes for longer, reducing the burden on the Care Sector, and the efficiencies that could be achieved from 'spend to save' schemes and the use of sustainable energies.

Members felt that it was important that Adult Social Care should not be seen as a drain on local authority resources, but as an investment, which generated wealth and jobs, and should be discussed in business terms. Clarification was sought in terms of the PFI Funding identified within the MTFP, and the period covered by the New Homes Bonus.

RESOLVED - (a) That this Scrutiny Committee accept the proposals contained within the draft MTFP 2023/24 to 2026/27 for the initial year 2023/24, however retain reservations over future years.

(b) That the Chair, in consultation with the Lead Scrutiny Officers supporting this Scrutiny Committee, be given authority to agree the Minutes of this Ordinary Meeting of the Adults Scrutiny Committee, and that these Minutes be submitted to a Special Meeting of the Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee, scheduled to be held on 19 January 2023.