

EFFICIENCY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 20 December 2018

PRESENT – Councillors Haszeldine (Chair), Carson, Cossins, Coultas, Crichlow, Johnson, Marshall, Mrs H Scott and C Taylor

APOLOGIES –

ABSENT –

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE –

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Elizabeth Davison (Assistant Director Resources), Anthony Sandys (Head of Housing and Revenues), Barbara Copson (Performance Manager) and Shirley Burton (Democratic Manager)

ER17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

ER18 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 8 NOVEMBER, 2018

Submitted - The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 8 November, 2018.

RESOLVED – That, with the deletion of ‘Crumbie’ and the insertion of ‘Cossins’ in the list of those Members present at the meeting, the Minutes be approved as a correct record.

ER19 COUNCIL TAX RECOVERY

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report (previously circulated) providing an overview of the Council’s Council Tax recovery process and collection performance.

It was reported that the collection of Council Tax, which was a key priority for the Council, had been particularly challenging over the last few years with the difficult economic climate and the introduction of the Council Tax Support Scheme in 2013, however, overall collection performance was good and the collection of arrears was well managed, with dedicated recovery staff actively pursuing the higher debts and those who deliberately avoided paying.

Discussion ensued on the collection of Council tax for those in receipt of support and it was reported that this was generally successful, with in-year collection for these people being around 80 per cent; the income received from Council Tax; and the continual process to chase historic arrears, taking into account the likelihood of recovery in the most economical way, with the resources available.

RESOLVED – That the report be received.

ER20 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS Q2 - 2018/19

The Managing Director submitted a report (previously circulated) together with information on the Quarter 2 performance against those key performance indicators for 2018/19 which were within the remit of the Scrutiny Committee.

Particular reference was made to the performance information in relation to sickness absence figures within the Authority which were on track at the end of quarter 2 to achieve the year-end target and discussion ensued on the proactive work undertaken by the Human Resources Division in relation to this and the various health and well-being initiatives in place.

RESOLVED – That the report be received.

ER21 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN (MTFP) 2019/20

Submitted – A report (previously circulated) of the Chief Officers Executive which had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting held on 11 December 2018, in relation to the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2019-20 to 2022-23 and proposing a 2019/20 to 2022/23 capital programme for consultation.

It was reported that the delivery of the core offer which was agreed 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, the Council could still deliver the agreed balanced plan and extend the MTFP. A further £0.600 million had also been identified which could be used to bolster the Futures Fund themes or be returned to reserves.

Particular reference was made to a number of risk pressures which had been identified, however, it was reported that it was not clear at this stage whether they would definitely come to fruition. The Assistant Director Resources advised us that, given the potential impact if they did, it had been considered prudent to recognise them in the budget and, following a review of the risks, it had been recommended that a prudent level would be to include 60 per cent of the total value in the risk contingency line.

Discussion ensued on the savings which had been achieved in Adult Social Care; the current position in relation to school transport which was currently overspending and which was subject to a review with the aim of reducing the current projected overspend; the use of reserves to balance the MTFP; and the risk contingency going forward.

RESOLVED – (a) That Members notify Officers of specific areas they would like to look at further within the MTFP and a further special meeting be arranged if necessary.

(b) That a meeting of this Scrutiny Committee be held, prior to Cabinet on 12

February, 2019, to formulate a response on behalf of all Scrutiny Committees to Cabinet on its proposals in relation to the MTFP.

ER22 WORK PROGRAMME

The Managing Director submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the work programme items scheduled to be considered by this Committee and to give consideration to any additional areas Members felt should be added to the previously approved work programme.

RESOLVED – That the report be received.