

RESOURCES & DELIVERING VALUE SCRUTINY BOARD - 11 January 2021

MINUTES

Present: Councillors: K Wild (Chairman), T Diccico (Vice Chairman), M Parker, M Gough, W Qais, M Allen, B Groom and M Brain

Officers: Paul Johnson, Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive
Sam Gilbert, Assistant Director (Finance and Property Services)
Paul Rogers, Democratic Services

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J Fairburn.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY OR CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

3. QUESTIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

No questions or deputations were received.

4. MINUTES

Councillor Diccico noted that page 2, fourth paragraph, first sentence should be amended to read:

'Members were informed that, in summary, the Draft Building Safety Bill entailed the introduction of a more ~~regulatory~~ **regulated** regime, involving the establishment of Duty Holders.....'

The Resources and Delivering Value Scrutiny Board:

RESOLVED:

- (i) Subject to the above amendment, to agree the Minutes arising from the Resources and Delivering Value Scrutiny Board meeting held on 2nd December 2020 as an accurate record.

5. MTFS UPDATE – BUDGET STRATEGY 2021/22 – 2023/24

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive introduced the report to the Scrutiny Board. The report sought comments on the budget proposals identified for 2021/22 to 2023/24 within the Resources Cabinet Portfolio to go forward to the Resources and Delivering Value Scrutiny Board and the Full Cabinet in February 2021.

Members were informed that the report provided detail for the following areas:

- Budget strategy in respect of the reset and recovery in the light of the wide-ranging impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

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- The Budget Strategy Group's consideration of some specific pressures and agreed to recommend the permanent realignment of budgets within the Children's Services and Skills and Economy and Infrastructure Portfolios.
- The government's confirmation that regional pilots of 100% business rates retention will continue into 2021/22.
- As the actual amounts receivable in respect of each year will not be confirmed until after the outturn position is reported, no commitment can be made in respect of the proposals for the 2020/21 business rates windfall resources until June 2021.
- Updates to the MTFS considered by the Budget Strategy Group included the estimated impact of relevant Spending Review announcements, resulting in an ongoing funding gap for 2023/24 of £2.738 million.
- A fourth meeting of the Budget Strategy Group was scheduled for 11 January 2021 to recommend a strategy for addressing the funding gap. The outcome of this meeting will be reported to the Resources and Delivering Value Scrutiny Board meeting on 8 February 2021 and then Full Cabinet for consideration on 11 February.
- The statutory requirements for the setting of Fees and Charges for 2021/22, detailed in Appendix A.
- Pressures and Mitigating Actions 2021/22 to 2023/24, detailed in Appendix B.
- Indicative Service Budgets 2021/22, detailed in Appendix C.

Having received the presentation from the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive, Members of the Scrutiny Board raised the following questions, which in summary included:

Councillor Qais noted that the report detailed that the Budget Strategy Group had agreed that consultation with the public would take place on key specific savings proposals and queried whether timescales for any such consultation were in place. Members were advised that this would be on a case by case basis depending on the service/budget change being proposed and that at Full Council, the Leader usually confirms that no significant budget decisions will be implemented without prior referral to the relevant Scrutiny Board/s for the service area/s concerned, or without undertaking the appropriate public consultation.

In response to Councillor Dicicco, the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that in respect of Appendix B (Proposed Fees and Charges 2021/22) when raising Fees and Charges, the Council applied the Retail Price Index (RPI), rather than the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive further advised that as a public sector organisation, the Council was not permitted to operate to make a profit on its service provision, but to recover its operating costs only. Therefore, the Council did ensure that all of its operating costs were covered by the charges included within the Fees and Charges schedule.

Members of the Scrutiny Board unanimously commended Officers for their on-going budget and fiscal management of the Resources Portfolio during the challenging Covid-19 pandemic period.

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Having considered the report, the Resources and Delivering Value Scrutiny Board:

RESOLVED:

- (i) To note the pressures and mitigating actions set out in Appendix A to the report;
- (ii) To note the budget proposals outlined in the report; and,
- (iii) To note the Schedule of Fees and Charges proposed for 2021/22, as attached at Appendix B to the report.

The Resources and Delivering Value Scrutiny Board meeting
closed at 6:19 p.m.