

RESOURCES & DELIVERING VALUE SCRUTINY BOARD - 4 January 2022

MINUTES

Present Councillors: M Parker (Chairman), Mrs D Holl-Allen MBE (Vice-Chairman), M Allen, B Groom, M McCarthy, A Rebeiro, and P Thomas

Officers Paul Johnson: Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive
Paul Langham: Assistant Director, Business Systems
Tony Higgins: Senior Accountant, Resources Directorate
Paul Rogers: Democratic Services

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Davis and J Tildesley.

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

The Resources and Delivering Value Scrutiny Board:

RESOLVED:

- (i) To agree the Minutes arising from the Resources and Delivering Value Scrutiny Board meeting held on 2 December 2021 as an accurate record.

5. MTFs UPDATE – BUDGET STRATEGY 2022/23 – 2024/25

The report before the Scrutiny Board sought comments on the budget proposals for 2022/23 to 2024/25 within the Resources Cabinet Portfolio, to go forward to the next meeting of this Scrutiny Board and subsequently to Full Cabinet on 10 February 2022. The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive presented the report.

Members of the Scrutiny Board were advised that the Budget Strategy Group had met three times to date to review and discuss the budget position across all portfolios and emerging corporate pressures. No savings targets had been set for any portfolio. The budget proposals recognised and took account of the on-going funding requirements in Children's Services, the Strategic Environment Contract (SEC) and Woodlands Cemetery.

Members were further informed that inflation stood at a 10 year high and there were significant cost pressures in the energy sector. Any Business Rate Windfall received in 2022/23 would be earmarked for the Budget Strategy Reserve. In respect of the Spending Review, no provisional settlement figures had been received at the time of writing the report but members were updated on recent announcements.

RESOURCES & DELIVERING VALUE SCRUTINY BOARD - 4 January 2022

The Schedule of proposed Fees and Charges was detailed in Appendix B to the report and Appendix C provided an overall summary of the Resources Portfolio Budget proposals.

Having received the presentation of the report, Members of the Scrutiny Board raised the following matters, which in summary included:

- Councillor Groom queried whether the Retail Price Index (RPI) was used as the basis for setting the new fees and charges schedule proposed for 2022/23 and was it a legal requirement to use the RPI. Councillor Groom was advised it was not a statutory requirement to use the RPI, but rather its use was set out in the Council's Fees and Charges policy.
- Councillor Allen sought further detail in relation to paragraph 3.11 of the report, specifically '*Other savings – the remaining £99,000 of required mitigations include £33,000 from a realignment of income targets and £45,000 minor non-pay savings across the Electoral Service, Income & Awards and Procurement. A further balancing saving of £21,000 within the portfolio is considered achievable*'. Members were informed that the non-pay savings related to supplies and services and other office costs.
- Councillor Mrs Holl-Allen questioned whether the ongoing funding of £351,000 in 2022/23, falling to £296,000 per annum from 2023/24, towards the cost of extending Woodlands cemetery also include provision for a new cremator. The Director of Resources & Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that they did.

Having considered the MTFs Update – Budget Strategy 2022/23 – 2024/25 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; and,
- (ii) To note the schedule of fees and charges proposed for 2022/23, as attached at Appendix B to the report.

6. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The meeting was not open to the public during discussion of the following items because the reports contained exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

7. ORACLE CLOUD PROGRAMME UPDATE REPORT

The Resources and Delivering Value Scrutiny Board
meeting closed at 6:46 p.m.