

FINANCE, ASSETS & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 16th December, 2019
Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor Helena Maxfield (Chair)

Councillors: A. Fear K. Owen G. Hutton
M. Stubbs K. Robinson S. Pickup
P Waring A. Rout

Officers: Jayne Briscoe Democratic Services Officer
Jan Willis Interim Executive Director -
Resources and Support
Services and Section 151
Officer
Caroline Elwood Interim Head of Legal /
Monitoring Officer
Roger Tait Head of Operations
David Elkington ICT Operations and
Development Manager
Craig Turner Principal Accountant
Sarah Wilkes Head of Finance

Also in attendance: Councillor Stephen Sweeney Deputy Leader of the Council
and Portfolio Holder - Finance
and Efficiency
Councillor Simon Tagg Leader of the Council and
Portfolio Holder - Corporate and
Service Improvement, People
and Partnerships

1. APOLOGIES

An apology was received from Councillor Proctor who was represented by Councillor Owen.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS - 19 SEPTEMBER 2019 - MINUTES OF THE CALL IN MEETING FOLLOWED BY THE MINUTES OF MAIN MEETING

Resolved: That the minutes of the call in meeting followed by the minutes of the main meeting, both held on 19 September 2019 be agreed as a correct record of the proceedings.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. UPDATE FROM CABINET - NO ACTIONS TO UPDATE

The Cabinet had no actions arising to report.

5. STATUTORY GUIDANCE ON OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES - PRESENTATION

The Chief Executive submitted a report and made a presentation which updated members on the recent statutory guidance, issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, to help Councils carry out their Overview and Scrutiny functions effectively. This was supported by the launch of the recent Good Scrutiny Guide by the CfPS. Both papers were intended to ensure councils are aware of the purpose of Overview and Scrutiny, recognise effective Scrutiny and understand how to conduct it together with the benefits it can offer. A link to the report and guidance is attached:-

[Z:\OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY\Health and Wellbeing and Partnership Scrutiny Committee\02122019\StatutoryGuidanceOverviewAndScrutinyCommittees \(3\) \(002\).doc](Z:\OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY\Health and Wellbeing and Partnership Scrutiny Committee\02122019\StatutoryGuidanceOverviewAndScrutinyCommittees (3) (002).doc)

Members considered the nature of training and felt that a sequence of topic focussed sessions delivered in house and designed to foster a deeper knowledge of scrutiny subject areas within the finance arena would be a useful addition.

- Agreed:**
1. That the requirements within the Statutory Guidance and the recommendations within the CfPS Good Scrutiny Guide be noted.
 2. That current practice be benchmarked against the Statutory Guidance.
 3. That an Action Plan be developed based on the recommendations within the Statutory Guidance and the Good Scrutiny Guide.
 4. That an "Executive-Scrutiny Protocol" be developed in accordance with the guidelines at Appendix A.
 5. That focussed and concise training relevant to the specific needs of the Scrutiny Committee be programmed throughout the year to enable members to build on their current skills in undertaking effective scrutiny reviews.
 6. That the Chief Executive convene a meeting of the Group Leaders together with the Chairs of the Scrutiny Committee.

6. DRAFT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency, Councillor Stephen Sweeney introduced a report, for consultation, which set out the Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020/21 – 2024/25 approved by Cabinet (17/10/2018).

The Interim Director explained that the MTFFS framework set out the Councils four-year spending and funding plans and provided the financial framework for the development of the detailed 2020/21 budget. A detailed draft budget for 2020/21 would be prepared for consideration by Cabinet and Council in February 2020.

The strategy assumed income from commercial investments of 0.250m in 2021/22 rising to £1.000m in 2024/25, subject to approval of a commercial strategy and investment programme funded from capital receipts and prudential borrowing. In addition the MTFs assumed efficiency savings of £0.15m in 2021 rising to £0.600m in 2024/25 from the digital delivery programme.

In respect to Kidsgrove Leisure Centre the Leader confirmed that the 10 year capital strategy assumed a new sports centre would be built and cautioned that there may be future revenue implications which had to be built into the budget.

Agreed: That the report be noted

7. 2020/2021 DRAFT BUDGET SAVINGS PROPOSALS

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency reported on the current proposals being considered to balance the 2020/21 revenue budget and the proposed capital programme for 2020/21 to 2022/23.

Agreed: That the report be noted.

8. COMMERCIAL STRATEGY

The Interim Director of Resources and Support Services submitted a report for consultation which presented the Commercial Strategy, a framework for identifying and managing commercial and income generation opportunities. A copy of the strategy was appended to the report.

In response to concern that the strategy did not give enough information to allow for meaningful scrutiny it was explained that the report to the January meeting of this Committee would provide more detail.

The Strategy was generally welcomed.

Agreed: That the report be noted

9. UPDATE CUSTOMER AND DIGITAL RESTRUCTURE

The Leader, Councillor S Tagg updated the Committee on the progress made towards the Customer and Digital Services Restructure. The Interim Director of Resources and Support Services went on to outline how the changes would rebalance this section of the organisation.

In response to questions from members regarding the MARS scheme it was agreed that the policy would be recirculated, members would be invited to a presentation of the scheme and that the 16 January meeting of this Committee would receive details of the number of employees taking MARS.

Agreed: That the report be noted.

10. QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE REPORT - REVIEW PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The second quarter 2019-20 Financial and Performance Review report was presented for scrutiny.

Agreed: That the report be noted.

11. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chief Executive submitted the Work Programme 2019/20.

Agreed: That the report be noted

12. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

13. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business.

14. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

16 January 2020.

Chair

Meeting concluded at 8.35 pm