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Finance, Assets & Performance Scrutiny Committee - 16/01/20

FINANCE, ASSETS & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 16th January, 2020
Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor Helena Maxfield (Chair)

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

Officers:	Jayne Briscoe	Democratic Services Officer
	Roger Tait	Head of Operations
	Daniel Dickinson	Head of Legal /Monitoring Officer
	Craig Turner	Finance Manager

Also in attendance:		Portfolio Holder for Leisure Culture and Heritage
	Councillor S Sweeney	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Proctor (represented by Councillor Owen) and Councillor Rout.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING - 16 DECEMBER 2019

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2019 be approved as a correct record subject to the inclusion of Councillor Mrs G Burnett in the list of Members present.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. REVENUE/CAPITAL BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director (Resources and Support Services) on Revenue and Capital Budgets and Strategies 2020/21.

The purpose of the report was to review progress on the completion of revenue and capital budgets for 2020/21 to 2024/25. The report also included drafts of the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy (updated for 2020/21), the Capital Strategy for 2020/30, the Treasury Management Strategy for 2020/21 and the Investment Strategy for 2020/21. The reports gave an opportunity for the Scrutiny Committee to consider and make any recommendations prior to submission to Full Council for final approval.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency, Councillor Stephen Sweeney, commended the work undertaken by the officers in the Finance Department.

In discussing the report, Members raised the following issues or queries:

- Was there a risk arising from the restructure of the Revenues and Benefits/Customer Services team and would there be increased pressure on front line staff? In response, Members were advised that the changes would mean a bigger pool of staff from which to draw upon; there would be training provided and some regrading of posts to reflect changed roles. Members suggested the service should be monitored to ensure a consistently good service was provided to residents.
- Congratulations were offered on the Empty Homes Strategy although there were some concerns around the ability to continue to offer that level of service.
- Members felt that Local Government should be allowed greater responsibility for raising its own funds; the Council was delivering all statutory services along with additional services. If there was greater freedom to raise funding there would be more accountability at Local Government level.
- Members asked about the Waste Service and staff being taken off their roles on Streetscene to carry out recycling and waste disposal duties. Members were advised that this was a temporary measure and staff would be returned to street cleansing roles in due course.

Agreed: that the report be noted with thanks and congratulations to the officers involved.

5. SCALE OF FEES AND CHARGES

Councillor Sweeney, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency, presented the list of proposed fees and charges for introduction from 1 April 2020. The proposals followed the Council's Charging Policy which had been approved on 10 September 2014.

Agreed: that the report be noted.

6. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chief Executive submitted the Work Programme 2019/20.

Agreed: that the report be noted.

7. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

8. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - THURSDAY 19 MARCH 2020

19 March 2020.

10. DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

Agreed: That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

11. SCALE OF FEES AND CHARGES - CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX

The Committee considered the confidential report on the scale of fees and charges for 2020/21.

Agreed: that the report be noted.

Chair

Meeting concluded at 7.45 pm

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