

CONTRIBUTORS COMMITTEE

Meeting: 26 November 2020

At: 10.00 am

PRESENT

Councillor John Taylor (Chair) in the chair; Councillors Anna Charles-Jones, Christine Corris, Mike Hurleston, John McGahan, John Pantall and Matt Wynne.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 23 July 2020 were approved as a correct record.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors and Officers were invited to declare any interest which they may have had in any of the items on the agenda.

No declarations of interest were made.

3. URGENT DECISIONS

No urgent decisions were reported.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No public questions were submitted.

5. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST TEST

RESOLVED – That in order to prevent the disclosure of information which was not for publication relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority), the disclosure of which would not be in the public interest, would not be fair and would be in breach of Data Protection principles, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of agenda items 6 & 7.

6. ONLINE UPDATE

The Chief Executive and Finance Director, Totally Local Company provided a verbal presentation with updated Members on the following:

- Business Update
- COVID Update
- Financial Recovery & Risks
- The Way Forward

The following comments were made/issues raised:

- In response to a question relating to balance in the workforce, Members were advised that a large percentage were employed in a part time capacity, often in cleaning and catering roles. A large proportion of the workforce. In heavier areas the workforce tended to be male, but this was not exclusively the case.
- Members asked about how the prioritisation of gullies worked. In response, Members were advised that Stockport Council and Totally Local Company had worked collaboratively and had been able to maximise strained resources. Gully priorities had been improved due to better intelligence as to which ones had flooded.
- Members commented that COVID had generated some opportunities as well as created difficulties. Previously, it had been difficult to access gullies during the normal working day. Both the Council and TLC deserve praised for adapting so well.
- There had been a simultaneous reduction in both revenue and capital income from 2021 to 2022. Members considered it vital to find a way of compensating for this at a strategic level.
- A short discussion took place as to what constituted an amber warning and how this could theoretically be responded to.
- Members were advised that if the COVID situation worsened, then things may have to be done differently although some resilience had been developed. For example, having a more skilled workforce provided greater options.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

7. FINANCE REPORT AND UPDATE AS AT 31 OCTOBER 2020

The Chief Executive, Totally Local Company submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) which updated Members on the Finance Report as at 31 October 2020.

The following comments were made/issues raised:

- Following receipt of the email below, from the Borough Treasurer, Members commented that good progress had been made on school meals:

Schools will continue to receive their full core delegated funding allocations for the 2020/2021 financial year (April 2020 to March 2021 for maintained schools and until August 2021 for academies). This will happen regardless of any periods of partial or complete closure and has been done to ensure schools can continue to pay staff and meet other regular financial commitments including school meals. Schools have also received their full UIFSM grant for free school meals (FSM).

The government set out that that workers on public sector contracts should not be furloughed and suppliers would seek payment as outlined within procurement policy notices published earlier this year (PPN 02).

In light of this, TLC have assessed the shortfall in the school meal services for the summer term: £0.640m and distributed that cost across the schools who use their school meals service. This has resulted in a charge for each school which is 73% of the funding they hold for the summer term for free school meals via their delegated formula budget allocation and specific UIFSM grant.

Some schools have asked whether they will receive credits for the invoices they have already received and paid for, for the Summer Term. TLC have taken that income into account when calculating the shortfall, so there will be no credits to offset the original invoices unless the total charge for the summer term exceeds the total FSM funding held by the school. Therefore, I can confirm that no school will be charged a figure greater than their FSM funding for the Summer Term.

I can also confirm that TLC did not furlough staff and they are therefore not claiming for funding which they have already received from government and are operating an 'open book' approach with regard these costs.

Suppliers receiving relief under PPN 02/20 are doing so in order to provide continuity and retention of services. Payments for the summer term are being requested under PPN 02/20 and Schools have an obligation to pay as they have received the relevant funding.

- In response to a question about flooding, Members were advised that an Independent Review had been commissioned to look into this issue.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 11.25 am