

MEETING OF MEMBERS OF THE CORPORATE, RESOURCE MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting: 7 September 2021
At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Councillor John McGahan (Chair) in the chair; Councillor Lisa Smart (Vice-Chair); Councillors Lou Ankers, Philip Harding, Jilly Julian, Carole McCann, Iain Roberts, Charlie Stewart and John Taylor.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 15 June 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the third paragraph of Minute 10 'Outline Business Case for the Review of the Town Centre Office Portfolio' being amended to read:-

Members welcomed the refurbishment work which was planned for Stopford House and the Town Hall, but requested that income generation be considered as part of that work.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors and Officers were invited to declare any interests which they had in any of the items on the agenda for the meeting.

The following interest was declared:-

Personal Interest

Councillor

Interest

John Taylor

Agenda Item 4 '2021/22 Quarter 1+ Budget Monitoring Update' as a Governor at the Heaton School, Stockport.

3. CALL-IN

No declarations of interest were made.

4. 2021/22 QUARTER 1+ BUDGET MONITORING UPDATE

The Corporate Director (Corporate and Support Services) and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on the revenue budget forecast outturn for the period to the end of July 2021 (Quarter 1+). The report also provided an update on the Dedicated Schools Grant, Housing Revenue Account and the Capital Programme.

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Commissioning and Governance (Councillor Tom McGee) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

- With regard to the virements presented for approval by Cabinet, it was confirmed that there was a contingency set aside for inflation.
- With regard to the Resources, Commissioning and Governance Portfolio, there was currently a balanced position against a budget of £25.151m in 2021/22. This had been achieved through the indicative utilisation of the Covid-19 financial scarring contingency of £5.005m and further information was requested on the expected income losses from the Council's strategic commercial investments in the Investment and Development Account.
- With regard to the Economy and Regeneration portfolio, it was hoped that the forecast income losses from the services at Stockport Business and Innovation Centre and Merchants House (£0.056m) were temporary problems which would be alleviated when economic activity picked up in Stockport.
- With regard to the Children, Family Services and Education portfolio, it was clarified that the deficit in the Children with Disabilities area related to an increase in both respite care provision and direct payments as a result of group provision for short breaks for Children with Disabilities not being able to take place due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- A surplus of £0.118m at Quarter 1+ in the Education Service area was highlighted as being largely due to a national shortage of staff and ability to recruit within the Education Psychology service.
- Concern was expressed about the high cost of placements outside the borough for young people with severe learning difficulties.
- The overall non-cash limit was highlighted, forecasting a surplus of £3.336m of which £2.666m was the balance from the Covid-19 Financial Scarring Impact contingency and a surplus in relation to waste collection costs due to this being funded temporarily by non-recurrent Covid-19 grants and a surplus budget due to changes in the waste disposal levy.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

5. 2021/22 RESERVES POLICY

The Corporate Director (Corporate and Support Services) and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing the outcome of the annual review of the Council's Reserves Policy following the reporting of the Council's 2020/21 outturn position.

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Commissioning and Governance (Councillor Tom McGee) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

- It was clarified how the earmarked reserves were arrived at.

- More information was requested on the Airport Reserve and in particular the £7.386m of resources which had been realigned to mitigate the financial scarring of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- A Member highlighted that the Capital Investment Reserve – Merseyway had been reduced by £3.820m and realigned to the Airport Reserve due to the project being awarded grant funding matching 100% of the funding bid from the Future High Street Fund.
- A Member enquired as to the reasons behind the comparative high level of redundancy costs.
- The new Climate Action Now Reserve would be reviewed as to whether the right level of resources had been aligned to this reserve.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

6. INTEGRATED CARE SYSTEM

The Corporate Director (Corporate and Support Services) and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out a proposal for establishing a shadow locality board to oversee the development of the locality arrangements in Stockport that would be fit for purpose to operate from 1 April 2022 within the Constitution of the Greater Manchester Integrated Care Board, and as part of the Greater Manchester Integrated Care System.

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Commissioning and Governance (Councillor Tom McGee) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

- A Member enquired when the five sub-groups would meet, each led by a locality Executive Director to deliver an agreed programme of work, given the relatively short period of time before NHS Stockport's CCG functions and accountabilities would transfer to a newly Integrated Care Board in Greater Manchester from 1 April 2022.
- Since the pooled budget started about seven or eight years ago, it had grown significantly and the aim was that Section 75 budgets would be protected.
- The new system would have an even greater emphasis on preventative health care and a premise that hospitals were for people who were extremely ill.
- It was clarified that there was no funding from the Government for the transition work to the new Integrated Care System.
- With regard to the delegation from the Greater Manchester Integrated Care Board to the localities, a Member enquired what would happen if there was a disagreement. It was clarified that there was a line of accountability for NHS resources as they were transferred through national, regional and local levels.
- It was envisaged that the appropriate Scrutiny Committee(s) of the Council would have a key role in offering checks and balances to the Locality Board post April 2022, as would be the case in the other boroughs of Greater Manchester.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

7. SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPIC SELECTION

A representative of the Strategic Head of Service & Monitoring Officer (Legal & Democratic Governance) invited the Scrutiny Committee to choose a topic for its next review and nominate Members to serve on the Review Panel.

RESOLVED – (1) That the Council Meeting be recommended to include ‘The Council’s Property Portfolio – The next 5/10 years’ within the 2021/22 Scrutiny Work Programme.

(2) That Councillors Lisa Smart (Lead Councillor); Carole McCann, John McGahan, Iain Roberts and Charlie Stewart be nominated to sit on the proposed Scrutiny Review Panel.

8. WORK PROGRAMME AND AGENDA PLANNING

A representative of the Strategic Head of Service & Monitoring Officer (Legal & Democratic Governance) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out the planned agenda items for the Scrutiny Committee’s next meeting and any Forward Plan items.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Corporate Director (Corporate and Support Services) and Deputy Chief Executive be requested to submit reports to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on the following issues:-

- Social Value – work with STAR procurement
- Shared Services
- Partnership Working and Neighbourhood Working
- Recruitment and Remuneration/Workforce Planning and Wellbeing
- Governance and Scrutiny of TLC, Life Leisure and Stockport Homes

The meeting closed at 7.33 pm