

**CORPORATE, RESOURCE MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

Meeting: 12 October 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, Mark Roberts,
John Taylor and David Wilson.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 7 September 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the fourth bullet point of Minute 8 'Work Programme and Agenda Planning' being amended to read:-

- Recruitment, Remuneration and Retention/Workforce Planning and Wellbeing.

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.

No declarations of interest were made.

3. CALL-IN

There were no call-in items to consider.

4. ANNUAL INSURANCE REPORT 2020/21

A representative of the Corporate Director (Corporate and Support Services) and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out the Annual Insurance Report which provided a summary of insurance performance for the financial year April 2020 to March 2021.

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:-

- The value of the reserves which had been defended (£0.38m on red claims and £0.13m on amber claims) was commended.
- Despite significant improvements, highway public liability claims (personal injury and damage) still represented the largest current overall risk to the Council in terms of numbers received. However, the overall percentage of highways claims repudiated (where claims were successfully defended) was being maintained at a consistently high level.

- The bespoke training was highlighted such as support regarding the management of tree related claims which were becoming more prevalent due to climate change.
- The consequences of making a fraudulent claim were highlighted.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

5. RESPONDING TO OUR MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

The Corporate Director (Corporate and Support Services) & Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on the Cabinet's proposed approach to responding to the opportunities, challenges and uncertainty outlined within the review of the Medium-Term Financial Plan which had been presented at the Cabinet meeting held on 21 September 2021.

The report included an update on the previous reports to scrutiny and Cabinet providing the latest considerations on how the Council intended to address financial and demand challenges, enable longer term transformation and shared ambitions.

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Commissioning and Governance (Councillor Tom McGee) the meeting to respond to Members' questions.

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

- The impact of the increase in wholesale energy prices on the budget was raised.
- The reduction in AGMA fees were supported.
- The risks in the Care Market were highlighted. There was a need to ensure that the Care Market was financially sustainable and able to continue to provide appropriate and required care provision. It was noted that the Government had announced no new funding for its health and adult social care reforms.
- The deletion of some of the school crossing patrols needed to be assessed against where they were needed most. It was pointed out that the Council was experiencing difficulties in recruiting to some of the posts. Reference was made to the motion which had been approved at the Council Meeting on 15 July 2021 and included agreement to explore and identify where school crossing patrols could be reintroduced outside schools to further address road safety issues around schools.
- With regard to the Radically Digital programme of work, it was queried whether the Council had considered creating an Application Programming Interface (API) platform.
- The removal of newspapers and magazines in libraries would save a considerable amount of money, but access to them digitally was an important issue to be considered.
- With regard to Appendix 3 on 'Robust Corporate Governance', a Member enquired what organisational design work had been carried out as part of the Vacancy Management project and the challenges considered around workforce engagement. It was clarified that the savings from working in a hybrid workplace would be assessed as part of the Corporate Asset Review.
- It was commented that consideration should be given to reconsidering proposals to cut the highways discretionary budgets available to local area committees. Some of the Area Committees had been unable to spend their budgets because a moratorium had been put on new schemes.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

6. 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 – That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.17 pm