

**BUDGET AND  
PERFORMANCE PANEL**

**6.10 P.M.**

**10TH NOVEMBER 2015**

**PRESENT:-** Councillors Dave Brookes (Chairman), Phillippa Williamson (Vice-Chairman), Alan Biddulph (substitute for Claire Cozler), Andrew Gardiner, Janet Hall, Tim Hamilton-Cox, Colin Hartley, Roger Sherlock and Anne Whitehead

Apologies for Absence:-

Councillors Claire Cozler and Richard Newman-Thompson

Also in attendance:-

Councillor Eileen Blamire, Leader of the Council (invited for minute 18).

Officers in attendance:-

Mark Cullinan	Chief Executive
Andrew Clarke	Financial Services Manager
Stuart Hampson	HR & OD Manager
Robert Bailey	Corporate Planning and Performance Manager
Stephen Metcalfe	Principal Democratic Support Officer
Sarah Moorghen	Democratic Support Officer

**15 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2015 were signed as a correct record.

**16 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIRMAN**

There were no items of urgent business.

**17 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

**18 DISCUSSIONS WITH COUNCILLOR EILEEN BLAMIRE - LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Eileen Blamire, Leader of the Council, to the meeting.

Members asked Councillor Blamire a number of questions relating to the Council's service provision and statutory minimum service levels, Combined Authorities, loss of recycling credit income and what other District Councils were doing to generate income or save on costs. The Leader of the Council also answered questions on the review of 'back office' functions, licencing regime for taxis and private hire vehicles, publication of the Your District Council Matters Magazine, the Lancaster Residents Survey 2015 Research Report, funding for arts and museums and rental incomes on City Council owned properties.

Members also asked a number of questions on the Performance Management Action Plan. The Panel was advised of the need for clarity with respect to information that could be provided by Officers within existing Council resources regarding Performance Management information and there needed to be a clear understanding of what was being requested of Officers, Members expectations and what information was practically available.

***Resolved:-***

That Councillor Blamire be thanked for her attendance at the meeting.

**19 DISCUSSIONS WITH COUNCILLOR RICHARD NEWMAN-THOMPSON - CABINET MEMBER**

Councillor Richard Newman-Thompson, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Finance and Revenues and Benefits, had sent his apologies prior to the meeting.

***Resolved:***

That the item be deferred and that Councillor Richard Newman-Thompson be invited to attend the next meeting of the Panel on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2015.

**20 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MONITORING 2015/16 - QUARTER 2**

The Financial Services Manager provided a presentation and introduced a report to present the Corporate Financial and Performance Monitoring 2015/16 Quarter 2. A summary of the Corporate Financial Monitoring for Quarter 2 of the performance monitoring cycle was attached for Members consideration.

The report also gave an update on improvements being made in corporate performance management, monitoring and reporting arrangements and actions being planned to make more effective use of business intelligence to inform decision-making.

The Financial Services Manager advised Members that the headline variances and projections were as follows:-

- General Fund revenue budget underspend of £769K, projected to become £842K by the year end.
- Housing Revenue Account overspend of £55K, projected to reduce to £41K by the year end.
- Estimated Council Tax surplus of £458K to date.
- Sundry Debt level at £3.4M of which £1.9M related to Housing Benefit Overpayment recoveries.
- Council Housing Rent Arrears circa £325K.

Members asked a number of questions on financial monitoring regarding voids, the Central Control funding, Council Tax base increases and collection rates, Housing Benefits and the introduction of the Universal Credit system, recruitment and empty posts.

Members noted that it had not been possible to provide a Property Group report for Quarter 2 due to unforeseen work demands and asked that this be reported in Quarter 3.

The Corporate Planning and Performance Manager introduced the Corporate Performance Monitoring section of the report.

Members were advised that, with regard to performance, following the adoption of the Performance Management Framework in September 2015, work had been undertaken to develop a performance management Action Plan. The steps being taken also addressed a number of matters identified in the Peer Review and the subsequent draft Action Plan developed by Management Team. These actions would strengthen the Council's existing performance management arrangements. The Council's business improvement activities would also be enhanced by the use of a new approach to Service modelling (review) that would realise a number of benefits for Members and management.

The Panel had raised concerns regarding voids management and responsive repairs, as detailed in the report. Working with the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) Environmental Services, Repairs and Maintenance (RMS) and other Council staff had reviewed these key areas of work. A final report from APSE, setting out the detailed findings of the review and possible actions for improvement was expected.

Members asked a number of questions regarding corporate performance monitoring regarding pool cars and expenses for travel between the two town halls, the use of Skype and Conference Calling.

***Resolved:-***

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That, at future meetings of the Panel, the Corporate Financial Monitoring be presented to Members by way of a PowerPoint Presentation in addition to the existing reporting process.
- (3) That an 'as live' demonstration of CorVu be presented to the Members at the December 2015 meeting of the Panel.
- (4) That all Members of the Council be invited to the December 2015 Panel meeting.
- (5) That the Property Group report, scheduled to be reported as part of the Quarter 2 Corporate Performance and Financial Monitoring report, be submitted as part of the Quarter 3 report.
- (6) That the APSE report and Action Plan, arising from the review of Environmental Services, Repairs and Maintenance Service, be submitted to the next appropriate Panel meeting.

**21 WORK PROGRAMME REPORT**

The Principal Democratic Services Officer submitted a report to update Members on the Panel's Work Programme. Members were asked to consider whether they would like to include any further items in the Work Programme.

Members were advised that the additional meeting of the Panel in December, agreed upon at the last meeting, would take place on Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> December 2015 commencing at 6.10pm.

Two Briefing Notes, as requested by the Panel, had been circulated since the last meeting. The first was a Briefing Note on the Government Summer Budget relating to Council Housing. The second was a Briefing Note on the Waste Cost Sharing Agreement.

The Lancaster Residents Survey 2015 Research Report, which Members had requested at the last meeting of the Panel, had also been circulated prior to the meeting.

***Resolved:-***

- (1) That the Work Programme, detailed in Appendix A to the report, be noted.
- (2) That Councillor Richard Newman-Thompson, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Finance and Revenues and Benefits, be invited to discuss and answer questions on his portfolio, at the next meeting of the Panel.
- (3) That all Council Members be invited to the next meeting of the Panel to be held on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2015.

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Chairman

(The meeting ended at 8.00 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact  
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smoorghen@lancaster.gov.uk**