

**BUDGET AND
PERFORMANCE PANEL**

6.10 P.M.

8TH NOVEMBER 2016

PRESENT:- Councillors Dave Brookes (Chairman), Phillippa Williamson (Vice-Chairman), Sam Armstrong, Andrew Gardiner, Janet Hall, John Reynolds, Roger Sherlock and Susan Sykes and Andrew Warriner (substitute for Oscar Thynne)

Apologies for Absence:-

Councillors Oscar Thynne

Officers in attendance:-

Nadine Muschamp	Chief Officer (Resources) and Section 151 Officer
Andrew Clarke	Financial Services Manager
Gary Watson	Senior Property Officer
Stephen Metcalfe	Principal Democratic Support Officer
Sarah Moorghen	Democratic Support Officer

15 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 13th September 2016 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 CORPORATE FINANCIAL MONITORING QTR2 2016/17

The Financial Services Manager provided a presentation and introduced a report to present the Corporate Financial Monitoring 2016/17 Quarter 2. A summary of the Corporate Financial Monitoring for Quarter 2 of the performance monitoring cycle was attached for Members' consideration.

Members were advised that the overall financial position for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account had changed little from that reported at Quarter 1.

It was reported that at previous meetings the Panel had requested updates on certain aspects relating to Property, covering the capital investment programme, commercial properties and energy monitoring. These updates had been incorporated into the Property Group update and were attached for Members' consideration.

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

- A current General Fund net underspending of £463K, projected to reduce to £17K by the year end. These figures had barely changed from those reported at Quarter 1.
- A current Housing Revenue Account net underspending of £33K, expected to increase to £73K by the year end. The forecast full-year underspending had increased by £50K since Quarter 1.

Members asked a number of questions on financial monitoring regarding Council Tax, sundry debts in Environmental Services, retained business rates and interest rates, the Repairs and Maintenance Service (RMS) review and council house voids, procurement and tendering for external contractors and energy efficiency savings.

The Senior Property Officer then presented the Property Group update for the quarter ended 30th September 2016.

Members asked a number of questions on the Property Group update regarding occupancy levels and revenue per square metre comparable to the private sector. With regard to occupancy levels of council owned buildings Members requested that broader information be provided to the Panel to incorporate a comparison with the private sector on the average revenue income per square metre and that the next monitoring report include more detail on rental income, capital costs of buildings and what the Council property portfolio means in terms of cost.

Members asked questions regarding occupancy levels in particular commercial properties, specifically Cheapside and King Street, Lancaster properties, the Co-op building in Morecambe and St Leonards House, Lancaster.

The Panel also asked a number of questions regarding Capital Receipts, the Corporate Property Strategy, as well as asset management, shared services with Lancashire County Council and the Capital Investment Programme.

Resolved:-

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That historical information be incorporated into the next Corporate Property Report on the Capital Investment Programme.
- (3) That the Panel be provided with a briefing note on procurement and tendering.
- (4) That with regard to occupancy levels of council owned buildings broader information be provided to the Panel to incorporate a comparison with the private sector on the average revenue income per square metre and that the next monitoring report include more detail on rental income, capital costs of buildings and what the Council property portfolio means in terms of cost.

19 WORK PROGRAMME REPORT

The Principal Democratic Support 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 on the Work Programme.

It was reported that, at its meeting on the 21st September 2016, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had considered adding an item to its Work Programme on the evaluation of Council Housing. Members were advised that this had also been discussed by the Panel under its Work Programme item on the Repairs and Maintenance Service (RMS). The Committee had agreed that, to avoid duplication of work, this should be dealt with under the Panel's Work Programme and that Members of Overview and Scrutiny be invited to the meeting of the Panel to ask questions when this would be discussed.

At the same meeting the Overview and Scrutiny Committee discussed an item on its Work Programme regarding 'Savings Options to be Explored', which was circulated at Council on the 2nd March 2016 and included Service Reviews. It was agreed by the Committee that this issue was within the Terms of Reference of the Panel and therefore, to avoid duplication, it should be considered within the Panel's Work Programme.

The Panel agreed that both these items would be added to its Work Programme.

Members had previously requested that an item on pensions be added to the Work Programme. It was noted that officers were still waiting to be notified by the County Council on the results of the latest Pensions Fund triennial review. Members were advised that, when this information was received, officers would produce a briefing note for the Panel.

Members then considered the Panel's Work Programme item on the Customer Services Strategy. The Panel felt that it would be more appropriate if this and any future complaints policy issues be considered and referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Members discussed ICT issues and the feasibility of an out of hours ICT Service Desk for Members who were unable to utilise the service during normal office hours due to work commitments. The Panel also discussed the implementation of Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) and requested that training be provided to all Members prior to its implementation.

With regard to litter enforcement it was noted that an update would be provided through the budget process.

Members considered the timescales for scrutiny of the budget and whether there would be an opportunity for the Panel to scrutinise the budget other than at the annual stakeholder meeting of the Panel in January 2017. Officers advised that it would be fed back to Cabinet Members to explore and consider.

Resolved:-

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members be invited to the Panel's meeting to ask questions when considering the Repairs and Maintenance Service.
- (3) That an item regarding Savings Options to be Explored, referred from Overview and Scrutiny Committee be added to the Panel's Work Programme. Updates on these options to be included in the usual reporting arrangements on the budget process, with the Panel's January meeting focusing on scrutiny of the budget.

- (4) That an update on the CorVu system be provided to the Panel as soon as practicable.
- (5) That a briefing note on the feasibility of an out of hours ICT Support Service be circulated to the Panel.
- (6) That training be provided to all Members on the implementation of Bring your Own Device (BYOD).
- (7) That an update, by way of a briefing note, on the Procurement Strategy be circulated to the Panel. The briefing note to include reference to Council resolutions and what has been undertaken to action these.
- (8) That the Customer Services Strategy and any future complaints policy issues be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider.
- (9) That it be noted that the Community Resilience evening would be held on Thursday, 10th November 2016 at Lancaster Town Hall commencing at 7.00 pm with all Members of Council invited to attend.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 7.45 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
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