



Minutes

Finance & Resources Committee

Date: 16 October 2020

Time: 10:30

Venue: Microsoft Teams

Present: Councillors A Tait (in the chair), C Anderson, R Downes, R Grahame, P Harrand, N Mohammed, D O'Donovan, F Shaheen and S Tulley

In Attendance: None

Apologies: Cllr D Hall

13 Minutes of meeting held on 17 July 2020

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 17 July 2020 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

14 Urgent items

None.

15 Admission of the public

There were no items which required the exclusion of the public and press.

16 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest made in any matter under consideration at the meeting.

17 Environmental Working Group annual update

The Corporate Services Manager presented a report to provide members with an update on the activities of the Environmental Working Group including:

- Environmental Initiatives 2019/20:
 - Monitoring of Energy and Water Consumption
 - Annual Travel to Work Survey and Car Sharing Scheme
 - Cycle to Work Scheme
 - Fairtrade Scheme
 - Bike recycling
 - Transport - Tracking Technology, Electric Vehicles and Reduction of Emissions
 - Property Refurbishments and Initiatives
 - Heating Efficiency Initiatives
 - New Build
- Utilities Report
- Textile and Book Recycling
- Trade Waste Recycling
- Carbon Emissions
- Environmental Incidents of Note.

Members acknowledged the excellent work done.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

18 Information Governance Annual Update

The Corporate Services Manager presented a report to provide members with an annual update on the implementation of Information Governance and Security Arrangements throughout the Authority. It was noted that there has been significant work and achievements gained, including:

- The development of a data security e-learning training package which has been completed by 94% of staff.
- The introduction of three new policies – Information Sharing Policy, Records Management Policy and Information Governance Policy.
- Providing data security guidance to staff working from home due to COVID19.
- Maintaining the Compliance Plus standard in the Customer Service Excellence audit for the way ‘we protect customer privacy both in face to face discussions and in the transfer and storage of customer information’.
- Maintaining and improving standards against the information governance and security frameworks.
- Dealing with Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, Subject Access Requests (SAR), Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) requests, Access to Images Requests, Incident/Fire Investigation Reports and providing data sets with the Data Transparency section of the authority’s website.

Members requested a summary of the categories of information requested under the FOIs and expressed their thanks for the excellent work done.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

19 Quarterly Financial Review

The Chief Finance and Procurement Officer presented a report with the quarterly review of the financial position of the Authority. The report summarised the financial impact of COVID19, for which the costs incurred are expected to be covered by the grant received of £2.1m and concludes that the Authority is currently forecast to underspend its revenue budget. Also reported a summary of the spending review submission which supports an increase in fire funding from 2021-2024.

Members requested further information on the underspend due to the suspension of the Youth Intervention Programme owing to COVID19 and requested clarification of the payment of business rates. Members were pleased to note that the slippage of capital schemes from 2019/20 detailed in Appendix A had not caused any risk and that a full risk assessment had been carried out on each item before slippage was approved.

RESOLVED

- a) That the report be noted; and
- b) That Members approve the revised capital plan and transfer of budget to contingencies.

20 Reserves strategy

The Chief Finance and Procurement Officer presented a report seeking endorsement of the Authority's Reserve Strategy 2020/21 to 2024/25. It was noted that the use and management of reserves will be key to financial long-term budget stability especially at a time when the Authority is facing funding uncertainty due to year on year reductions in grant funding over the medium term. The plan to use £26.4m of earmarked reserves by the end of 2024/25, primarily to support the revenue budget if the results of the Comprehensive Spending Review due in April 2021 are unfavourable, was noted and approved by members.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and the Authority's Reserve Strategy be approved.

Chair