

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Date and Time:** Tuesday 18 January 2022 at 7.00 pm

**Place:** Council Chamber

**Present:**

Axam, Crookes, Davies, Dorn, Farmer, Smith and Worlock (Chairman)

**In attendance, virtual:**

Cllr Collins

Cllr Drage

Cllr Radley

**Officers:**

Daryl Phillips, Joint Chief Executive

Emma Foy, Head of Corporate Services & S151 Officer

Kirsty Jenkins, Head of Community

Nicola Harpham, Strategy & Development Manager

Kelly Watts, Housing Solutions Manager

Jenny Humphreys, Committee Services Officer

### **89 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting of 14 December 2021 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

A member wanted noted that they had expected more detailed recommendations to be given to Cabinet on the Project Integra Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy, that was discussed at last month's Overview and Scrutiny meeting.

The Joint Chief Executive and Chairman to look at this going forward to ensure that any recommendations made by Overview and Scrutiny Committee are clearly and accurately reflected in any subsequent report to Cabinet.

### **90 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor Harward.

Councillors Collins and Drage attended virtually via Teams.

### **91 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

## **92 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman announced that Virginia Barrett, Principal CEO of Farnborough College of Technology was going to give a presentation that would be after item five on the agenda.

## **93 PRESENTATION BY PRINCIPAL CEO OF FARNBOROUGH COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY**

The Chairman introduced Virginia Barrett, Principal CEO of Farnborough College of Technology and explained she had been in her role since 2016.

Virginia reported that the team were writing the College's 2022-2032 strategy and were looking at growing the College and the desire to have a campus primarily for adult education somewhere in Hart.

Members discussions and questions included:

- How the college could work with Hampshire County Council to make the journey to the Farnborough campus and any new campuses more accessible for students.
- What topics could be provided at a new Hart campus for the College.
- How to include broader skills in teaching like project management, alongside the core technical ones.
- How the College has spent £5 million in growing apprenticeships for 16–18-year olds and higher educational needs.
- The demand for adult education and how this is determined.
- The possibility of opening a new College campus in - subject to planning permission in September 2022 or by January 2023.

Members thanked Virginia for her very informative presentation.

Commendation was also given to the catering students as some members had had a tour of the College before Christmas.

*The presentation slides are available on request.*

## **94 HOUSING CAPITAL SPEND UPDATE**

The Strategy and Development Manager summarised that the group had met twice since November 2021, reviewed the list of projects and identified why they had been chosen. They had also listed a top three, devised a matrix and prioritised projects. At the March meeting there would be a guest speaker and the group plan to continue meeting every six weeks.

Councillors Axam, Farmer and Worlock, who are members of the Task and Finish group, summarised that the meetings were very useful and they were impressed with the matrix compilation.

Members also discussed:

- The desire for more detail and scope of who will benefit from the projects.
- The short time scales these projects have and that increasing this may be needed.
- The possibilities of capital purchasing and investing the money.
- Links to the commercialisation agenda.

## **95 HOUSING CAPITAL FUNDING FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY MEASURES IN NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

The Strategy and Development Manager highlighted that the item had previously come to November's Overview and Scrutiny meeting and members comments had been incorporated into this new report.

The Strategy and Development Manager reintroduced the proposal to provide top-up funding to housing associations to provide energy efficiency measures in some new affordable homes. This project had been identified as one of the Housing Capital Spends top three.

Members questioned the report and its details, and the explanation of how energy efficiency benefits will be monitored, measured and the targets it is trying to achieve (section 5.2 of the report).

Members also discussed:

- Why the explanation on the type of data collection could not be more detailed (section 5.3).
- The absence of listing specific schemes and the types of improvements and the costs of these for existing housing schemes (section 5.4).
- The absence of detail on the cost and benefit criteria to award funding (section 5.5).
- The risks of *not* doing the scheme were included, however the risks of doing the scheme were not – for example, possible fraud, delays, technical problems etc. (section 8).
- Why £550,000 was the chosen figure for this project and how much money was available altogether.
- The current standards that new housing needs to abide by and thoughts on what the new housing industry may do in the future.
- Heat pumps and how expensive and effective they are.
- How cost effective this will be for the council and who primarily will benefit.
- The ownership of the proposed site.

Members also expressed interest in seeing more definitions for energy efficiency homes.

The Joint Chief Executive suggested inviting developers or an industry expert to a future committee meeting to provide more detail on how they plan to future proof their new homes.

The Head of Corporate explained that this project would be a deferred charge not a council asset.

## **DECISION**

Members decided that the scheme fundamentally is a good idea however the report needed more detail and explanation. The Committee had concerns about how the benefits of the scheme could be measured and evaluated. The Committee was also concerned about the level of funding that was being committed to the scheme and also expressed concern about the intended use of Officer delegation powers. The Committee, therefore, did not recommend the paper proceed to Cabinet.

The Chairman and Joint Chief Executive to discuss the next course of action to take, along with the Portfolio Holder and Head of Services for Community and update Committee before the next Cabinet meeting.

## **96 HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2022-27**

The Head of Community gave a brief introduction on the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-27, which is a legal requirement for the Council every five years.

The Head of Community also highlighted that homelessness prevention was the Council's focus in this document, and the team had undertaken online surveys and engaged with service users and partners to prepare it.

Members congratulated the team on their continued good work at preventing homelessness in Hart and in drafting the Strategy.

Members questioned why Hart does not currently have its own housing stock and the Head of Community explained that this is an area the team are always looking at going forward.

## **DECISION**

Members recommended that the Strategy be adopted by Cabinet with the following recommendations:

- page, version and section numbers to be included.
- further statistics, for example the number of households/people affected by homelessness and rough sleeping to be added.

## **97 DRAFT BUDGET 2022/2023 AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY**

The Head of Corporate summarised the report that contained the revenue and capital budget proposals for 2022/2023 and highlighted that a balanced budget was able to be met.

Members were updated on:

- New Homes Bonus – the council to receive £1.6 million.
- An option to implement a £5 increase in Council Tax per band D.
- The New Burdens grant and when to apply.
- The decrease in car parking revenue due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- There are no proposed increases to off street parking charges for 2022/23
- The Council's Capital Reserves are sufficient to provide spend cover for 2022/23 but not beyond this.

Members questioned:

- Why tier three savings were not included in the report and were updated that they need to be included in next year's draft budget.
- The amount being spent/used on Climate Change and Hart's Climate Change Emergency declaration.
- The financial support given to Hart Leisure Centre.

## **DECISION**

The Committee agreed to forward to Cabinet its comments.

*Additional appendices and Five-year medium term financial strategy are available on request.*

## **98 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY**

The Head of Corporate explained the draft Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2022/23 which incorporates the Annual Investment Strategy and Prudential and Treasury Indicators.

The Head of Corporate also reported that presently no borrowing is being considered or planned for the rest of this financial year or for 2022/23.

## **DECISION**

Members recommended the report to Cabinet.

## **99 CABINET WORK PROGRAMME**

Members questioned the Annual Car Parking item that is due to come to March's Cabinet.

The Joint Chief Executive confirmed that it is the first time the Council has prepared this report which is a requirement from Hampshire County Council.

## **100 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

Members questioned how much member input is required for the Annual Car

Parking item, and the Joint Chief Executive confirmed that this is still being determined.

The meeting closed at 9.21 pm