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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time: Tuesday 15 February 2022 at 7.00 pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present:

Councillors Axam, Dorn, Drage, Farmer, Kennett, Smith, Wildsmith and Worlock (Chairman)

In attendance, virtual:

Cllr Collins

Cllr Davies

Patricia Hughes, Joint Chief Executive

John Elson, Head of Environment & Technical Services

Steven Bennett, Change & Digital Manager

Daniel Hawes, Planning Policy & Economic Development Manager

Philip Sheppard, Infrastructure Team Manager

Jenny Wood, Principal Planner

In attendance:

Cllr Radley (left 20:10)

Cllr Forster

Officers:

Emma Foy, Head of Corporate Services & S151 Officer

Mark Jaggard, Head of Place

Stephanie Baker, Development Management & Building Control Manager

Lee Rome, Committee Services Officer

101 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

A member wanted noted that minute 89 did not reflect that none of the comments made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been passed forward to Cabinet.

The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 18 January 2022 were confirmed and signed as a correct record, subject to the change highlighted.

102 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Harward and Crookes. Councillor Kennett attended as a substitute for Councillor Crookes.

Councillors Collins and Davies were in attendance virtually via TEAMS.

103 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Farmer announced a non-pecuniary interest in item 8 of the agenda, as the Chairman of Hart Swimming Club. Councillor Dorn declared an interest in the same item as a member of Hart Leisure Centre.

Councillor Forster declared a non-pecuniary interest in any item that addressed Electric Vehicle (EV) charging, due to a business interest in an EV company that operates locally.

104 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman made no announcements.

105 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (ITEMS PERTAINING TO THE AGENDA)

The following questions were asked by Mr David Turver:

The outturn report refers to the original budget of £10,794K approved in February 2021. However, the budget approval included a contingency of £610K for "pressures". To what extent has this contingency been utilised and how will the use of the contingency impact the forecast full year deficit of £488K?

The August O&S was told there was £6.8m of reserves in the General Fund at the end of FY20/21. The same paper recommended a minimum level of reserves of £5.3m, leaving a headroom of ~£1.5m.

With the current forecast deficit and the reserve transfer to cover the Leisure Centre shortfall, what is the current expectation of the reserve level, the minimum reserve and therefore the anticipated headroom at year end?

Moreover, with the current level of forecast deficits into the future, can officers explain when they anticipate reserves falling below the recommended minimum level?

What would be the consequences if that should occur and what further actions might be required to avoid reserves falling below the minimum level?

The Chairman and Overview and Scrutiny Committee members had not been sent the questions in advance of the meeting.

It was noted that the questions were better suited to be asked of the relevant Portfolio Holder at Full Council and would be referred to the Joint Chief Executive accordingly.

It was also noted that sufficient time should be given for the questions to be asked and answered. The Portfolio Holder for Finance confirmed that he would answer the questions at Full Council on 24 February 2022.

106 CORPORATE SERVICE PANEL UPDATE

Councillors Axam and Smith, members of the Service Panel gave feedback on the recent panel meeting for Corporate Services.

Members summarised that the meeting was very constructive and informative, and they were confident that officers are working hard to address any minor issues.

The Head of Corporate Services highlighted that the group had had an extra meeting to discuss the service's budget, line by line, a suggestion proposed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at a previous meeting.

A member questioned the status of refurbishing and letting the third floor of the Council offices for financial income and the Head of Corporate confirmed this was still being discussed.

Members and officers thanked Liz Glenn, Health and Policy Project Officer for all her hard work, including on the Military Covenant.

107 PROPOSING AMENDMENTS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE COMPLAINT POLICY

The Change and Digital Manager summarised the report, the work of the Task and Finish group and that the internal complaints platform is still being tested.

Councillors Davies, Dorn, Drage and Smith were members of the group and were very positive about the report and the work and discussions that had occurred.

Member's discussions included:

- Confirmation that the work is on schedule.
- The number of complaints, comments, and compliments that the Council received last year.
- In this amended policy, complaints on the same subject can be linked.
- The importance of anonymous complaints and redacting certain personal information.

The Head of Place reported that this amended platform will make categorising comments, complaints and compliments much easier and clearer.

The Joint Chief Executive confirmed that this policy is for complaints about council services, not individual councillors or portfolio holders. She further reiterated that the policy is to help the council continue to improve and to learn from past lessons.

DECISION

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- a) endorsed the new Corporate Complaint Policy and recommended its formal adoption to Cabinet.
- b) Endorsed the anticipated website information that will be available for residents.
- c) Noted the intention, that once the new policy and systems are in place, that high level trend data on complaints will be provided to Overview and Scrutiny as part of the corporate suite of data provided on a quarterly basis.

108 REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN POSITION

The Head of Corporate Services summarised the report and narrative around the key elements provided. She highlighted that an updated table (4.2 in the report) had been circulated after the agenda was published and will also be included with these Minutes.

It was also highlighted that the provisional full year revenue outturn position as of 31 December 2021 was an overspend was £488,000, not £461,000 as previously stated. This is before any agreed drawdowns from earmarked reserves.

Members questions on the revenue outturn position included:

- The increase in sales income from Hartland Park (£27,000) which was from Section 106 contributions.
- The under-recovery of management fees from Hart Leisure Centre, which will now be received over a longer period.
- The agreed drawdowns from earmarked reserves stated in the report, are specifically to be used for the leisure centre contract.

Members questions and discussions on capital outturn position included:

- Clarification of the £135,000 received in highways management due to additional income generated from Traffic Management Orders.
- Fleet Pond Green Grid Engineering and Fleet Pond Green Grid Ecology costs that had been delayed.
- The status of the Edenbrook Skate/Bike Park project.
- The Dog Warden van and that it has not yet been sold.
- The timeline for the Fleet Pond development project and link to Hartland Park is anticipated to be completed early summer 2022.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance highlighted that the Fleet Pond Development project has significant financial contributions from the developer of Hartland Park and the M3 LEP.

The Head of Environment and Technical Services agreed to give an update on projects discussed at the next Service Panel meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

- i. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee provided challenge over the report including the revised projections and significant revenue variations highlighted in paragraph 4.3 and Appendices 1 and 2.
- ii. The Committee noted the provisional full year revenue outturn position as of 31 December 2021 of an overspend of £488K before any agreed drawdowns from earmarked reserves.
- iii. The Committee noted the provisional capital outturn position as of 31 December 2021. The forecast for total capital expenditure for the year ended 31 March is £21.1M.

109 ANNUAL ON-STREET PARKING REPORT 2020/21

The Infrastructure Team Manager introduced the Annual On-Street Parking report 2020-21.

This report is for information prior to submission to Hampshire County Council as required as part of the Civil Parking Enforcement Agency agreement.

Members questions included:

- The approximate income received from On-Street parking in a typical year when not effected by a pandemic.
- The comparison of On-Street Parking income over different years.
- When the two vacant Civil Enforcement Officer positions would be filled and what the Council's budget is for these roles.
- The importance of My Permit transactions, who pays for them and what proportion of transactions these account for.
- What compensation for this type of parking is the council entitled to due to the pandemic?

Member's discussions included:

- An explanation of the Penalty Charge Notices (PCN's) issued in Odiham.
- How long drivers are given before they are issued with a PCN – this is typically 10 minutes.
- The parking spaces in Hook that are council owned but not chargeable.
- The Council's plans for up to 12 more Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points in the district.

The Head of Environment and Technical stated that On-Street Parking income was likely to be two thirds lower than a typical year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Members commended the Civil Enforcement Officers for their remarkable work over the past year, including being deployed to assist with the Covid-19 testing and vaccination efforts.

Members wanted the report to be checked for spelling and inaccuracies and to be finessed to reflect Hart specifically.

The Head of Environment and Technical confirmed that the report will aim to address the committee's comments, before submission to Hampshire County Council and publication on Hart's website.

Recommendations for the report also include:

- Adding references to school parking.
- Highlighting that Hart has higher vehicle ownership than other urban areas due to its rural location.
- Further clarification and explanation in the Financial Transparency section.
- An update on EV charging points in Hart and their usage.
- The addition of complaints, for example blocking blue bays and pavement parking.
- Report version numbers to be added.
- Tables to reflect wards and settlements rather than the names of towns.

110 ENERGY EFFICIENT DEVELOPMENT AND RENEWABLE/LOW CARBON ENERGY GENERATION

The Planning Policy & Economic Development Manager introduced the report and explained it was in two parts: reducing energy use and the provision of renewable and low carbon energy in new developments (including a draft Technical Advice Note), and proposals for large scale renewable energy generation such as solar farms.

Members considered the issues raised in the report and provided their views on the draft Technical Advice Note.

Members questions included:

- How the team would work with developers and how they can guarantee that these developers would be able to deliver all the desired ideas and proposals.
- How the council will measure its energy savings going forward.
- The 20% renewable energy target and could it be raised.

Eunomia the Council's appointed contractor who will assist in delivery of Hart's Climate Change Emergency initiatives and targets. Eunomia is due to deliver a presentation at a future committee meeting.

Member's discussions also included:

- How additional energy saving, and renewable energy measures could affect new house prices.
- Why the main focus is on major developments of 10 or more homes.
- Cumulative effect and impacts of solar farms
- The balance between addressing climate change and protecting the local environment, and whether or not an upper limit on the number of solar farms within the district can be established.
- The extent to which good quality agricultural land is a factor when considering a planning application.
- There are related infrastructure items to consider, for example battery farms and generators.

The Head of Place stated that the Technical Advice Note could be developed into a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in the future which would give it additional weight.

111 RESIDENTIAL CYCLE AND CAR PARKING STANDARDS UPDATE

The Principal Planner gave an update on the progress of the Cycle & Car Parking Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which included a draft Residential Cycle & Car Parking Technical Advice Note.

The Council's current parking standards were adopted in 2008.

Member's discussions included:

- The process and timescale to progress to a Cycle & Car Parking Standards SPD.
- The zonal approach and why the revised standards would not include these.
- Whether a zonal approach might be more relevant to cycle parking given challenges around cycling in more rural locations.
- How cycling provisions have progressed over the past few years in Hart.
- How car clubs could benefit Hart.
- Pressure on parking when properties extend or convert garages.
- The options for removing permitted development rights on schemes.

RECOMMENDATION

Members noted the report and progress with the Cycle and Car Parking Standards SPD and provided feedback in the following areas:

- General support for the revised approach to residential cycle and car parking, including removing the zonal approach.
- The differences between the current and revised car parking standards would be beneficial to see in the report.
- Secure parking for bicycles and E-bikes and sufficient places
- Pavement parking and how the Council can further address this.

112 CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

No comments were made.

113 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

No comments were made.

The meeting closed at 9.56 pm