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Resources and Services Overview and
Scrutiny Committee

16 December 2019

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RESOURCES AND SERVICES OVERVIEW
AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE,
HELD ON MONDAY, 16TH DECEMBER, 2019 AT 7.30 PM
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES, THORPE ROAD, WEELEY,
CO16 9AJ**

Present:	Councillors M Stephenson (Chairman), Scott (Vice-Chairman), Barry, Bray, Griffiths and Turner
In Attendance:	Richard Barrett (Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits Services & Section 151 Officer), Anastasia Simpson (Head of People, Performance and Projects), Ian Ford (Committee Services Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer), Katie Wilkins (Human Resources and Business Manager) and Debbie Bunce (Legal and Governance Administration Officer)

31. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Morrison. There was no substitute appointed for Councillor Morrison. .

32. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on Monday 14 October 2019 were approved as a correct record and were then signed by the Chairman.

33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none on this occasion.

34. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 38

On this occasion no Councillor had submitted notice of a question.

35. REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE - A.2 - CORPORATE BUDGET AND FINANCIAL FORECAST MONITORING 2019/20 SECOND QUARTER

The Committee had before it a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (A.2) which provided it with an overview of the Council's financial position against the budget as at the end of September 2019 and which also presented it with an updated forecast on an on-going basis as part of developing the budget for 2020/2021 and beyond.

The report invited Members to consider the in-year financial position as at the end of September 2019 and determine whether it had any comments or recommendations it wished to make or put forward to the relevant Portfolio Holder or Cabinet and also to consider the updated long term financial forecast update and determine whether it had any comments or recommendations it wished to make to Cabinet as part of the financial strategy consultation process.

The Committee was made aware that, on 8 November 2019 Cabinet had considered a Financial Performance Report and Appendices which were attached as Appendices A and B to the report to this Committee. It was reported that Cabinet had resolved:

- (a) *in respect of the financial performance against the budget at the end of September 2019:*
- (1) *the current position be noted;*
 - (2) *the proposed in-year adjustments to the budget, as set out in Appendix H to item A.7 of the Report of the Corporate Finance and Governance Portfolio Holder, be agreed;*
 - (3) *in respect of the Council's Treasury Management Practices, the aggregate amount of money that can be placed overnight with the Council's bankers be increased temporarily from £1.000million to £1.500million for each day the Council's offices are closed over the Christmas break; and*
 - (4) *the Council continues to be a member of the Essex Business Rates Pool in 2020/21 if it remains financially advantageous to do so.*
- (b) *in respect of the Updated Long Term Forecast, the updated forecast be agreed and the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee be consulted on the latest position.*

In addition to the above and as requested by the Committee at its last meeting, the Council's current reserves position was attached as Appendix C to the report now before the Committee.

The Council's Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefit gave a response to the following questions asked by Members:-

- Essex Business Rates Pool: what does TDC keep?
- Impact of Universal Credit on rent arrears.
- Impact of 1% increase in BWLB rates on TDC
- Potential level of borrowing available in the financial markets following General Election
- Drop in expenditure regarding Waste Transfer Station
- Expiry of commuted sums
- DFG Co-ordinator post: has it been filled?
- Likelihood of increase in recycling credit income
- Litter from Waste Transfer vehicles on A120 – use savings to clear up.
- Insurance premiums increased expenditure
- NHB 2019/20 – is it unallocated?
- New Beach Huts – no activity?
- Jaywick Sands – New Build starter homes – plans to spend receipts.
- Use of Residents Free Parking Revenue: when?
- Election Revenue: still contribute to it annually?
- Empty Homes Funding: what is the review about?
- Marine Parade West, Clacton-on-Sea: movement of the cliffs.

After some deliberation it was **RESOLVED** that the contents of the report be noted and that:-

(a) the Chief Executive be requested to arrange, as soon as practicable, an All Member Briefing at which Members can be informed of the financial implications for this Council of the Government's intention to move, in 2021/22, to a 75% Business Rates Retention Model for local authorities together with other recent big changes to the Council's long-term financial forecast.

(b) this Committee recommends to Cabinet that Officers be instructed to conduct, by the end of the current financial year, a viability review of all long outstanding projects for which monies are currently ring-fenced.

36. RECOMMENDATIONS MONITORING REPORT

The Committee had before it the current Recommendations Monitoring Report. The Committee was aware that this report outlined any recommendations it had made to the Cabinet, the Cabinet's response(s) thereto and any relevant updates.

The report outlined updates to two items considered previously by the Committee. Those items were:-

29 July 2019 (Minute 16 referred) – Improvement works in the Public Realm; and

14 October 2019 (Minute 30 referred) – Refurbishment Works at Clacton Leisure Centre.

The Chairman also updated the Committee in relation to the refurbishment works at Clacton Leisure Centre.

After some deliberation it was **RESOLVED** that the Committee notes the contents of the report. The issues were now marked as completed within the Recommendations Monitoring Report.

37. REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE - A.1 - PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 2 2019/20

The Committee had before it a report of the Deputy Chief Executive which presented the Performance Report for Quarter Two (July to September 2019) including the emerging Corporate Plan 2020/2024 and Priorities and Projects 2019/2020.

Members were reminded that the Priorities and Projects for 2019/20 had been approved by Cabinet at its meeting held on 19 July 2019 when it had also been agreed that the next phase of this work would be to develop specific deliverables (for the priorities and projects) in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holders and that those would be incorporated into the Performance Report(s) in line with the Quarter Two timetable and presented to Cabinet, so Cabinet could endorse the deliverables before they were subject to scrutiny by the Council's overview and scrutiny committees. Those Performance Report(s) had subsequently been agreed by the Cabinet at its meeting held on 8 November 2019.

The Committee was aware that the purpose of the report now before it was to submit the relevant performance data so that it could undertake scrutiny of it in so far as:

“(a) Is the performance monitoring system capturing the right level of data to support delivery of the Corporate Plan and its priorities and projects – and to make recommendations thereon?”

“(b) Is there performance as identified in the monitoring data that warrants scrutiny of an activity – and to determine whether and how that scrutiny should take place; including it as appropriate in the work programme?”

It was reported that the Quarter 2 position demonstrated that of the 22 indicators and projects where performance was measured, 19 (86%) were on, or above, their expected target, 1 (5%) was not currently in line with expected performance and for 2 (9%) the Council currently had no data available.

The Committee was also updated on the progress made in relation to the various work strands of the “Transforming Tendring” transformation project.

Members were informed that any feedback from this Committee would be presented to a future meeting of the Cabinet as a separate reference report.

The Council’s Head of People, Performance and Projects (Anastasia Simpson) gave the Committee a verbal update in respect of the indicators and projects with particular focus on the indicator that was currently listed as “Behind Target”, together with those indicators which previously had had no available data and for which some information had now been provided. She also updated the Committee on the progress of the Council’s new Corporate Plan. The consultation period had now closed and Cabinet would be requested, as a result of that consultation, to include within the Plan a link to Essex County Council’s “Essex Ambitions and Visions” document before it was submitted to full Council for formal adoption.

Mrs Simpson also gave verbal updates on several projects including:-

Manningtree Underpass;
Local Plan Section 1 progress;
Westleigh House – demolition and resurfacing of land as an addition to the High Street car park;
IT – security compliance accreditation awarded;
New Homes in Jaywick Sands – evaluation work with private sector company; and
Carbon Neutrality – Consultant appointed.

Members made comments regarding the Corporate Plan 2020-2024 and the Priorities and Projects for 2019/20 in that in respect of Effective Regulation and Enforcement, there was no obvious link to the Priorities and Projects 2019/20. Members requested that reference to Customer Services made it clear that it was Digital Customer Services. The Committee asked what were the milestones in relation to the Cultural and Heritage Strategies and queried why the Holland Haven & Seafront Opportunities had been removed.

Members said that the Plan seemed to be more focused on coasts and towns and there was not enough on the rural economy and towns and villages.

Officers responded to other questions raised by Members on various topics within the report and appendices and where an answer was not immediately available, the Head of People, Performance and Projects and the Human Resources and Business Manager undertook to respond to Members as soon as possible after the meeting.

After some deliberation by the Committee it was **RESOLVED** that:

(a) the Committee notes the contents of the Performance Report Quarter 2 2019/2020; and

(b) the Chief Executive be requested to arrange, an All Member Briefing at which Members can receive an update on both the Local Plan and North Essex Garden Communities.

38. REVIEW OF THE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee had before it the latest Work Programme 2019/20 that outlined the scrutiny to be undertaken by the Committee in the remainder of the municipal year. In presenting this work programme to the Committee, it was invited to determine whether the programme needed to be adjusted, including items covered, the scope of the programmed reviews and whether Portfolio Holders or others were to be invited to present to them. Specific information requirements of Councillors to undertake the programmed reviews should also be identified as should any 'Councillor Development' requirements.

After some deliberation it was **RESOLVED** that the Chairman of the Committee be requested to discuss with the Head of Democratic Services & Elections the workload contained within the Committee's current work programme and especially with regards to the potential need for additional meetings to discuss items such as the scrutiny of the implementation of the new waste and recycling collection service.

39. SCRUTINY OF PROPOSED DECISIONS

Pursuant to the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 13, the Committee reviewed any new and / or amended published forthcoming decisions relevant to its terms of reference with a view to deciding whether it wished to enquire into any such decision before it was taken. The relevant forthcoming decisions were before the Committee.

After some deliberation it was **RESOLVED that -**

(a) the Committee noted the list of forthcoming decisions.

(b) pursuant to the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 13, the Committee will enquire into the forthcoming decision of Cabinet to decide the future use of Spendells House, Walton-on-the-Naze;

(c) the Committee notes that such an enquiry might consist of questioning members of the Cabinet and Officers together with seeking the views of local stakeholders and/or other interested parties; and

(d) the Committee further notes that the Cabinet will take into account any recommendations expressed by this Committee when determining the final decision on this matter.

The meeting was declared closed at 10.34 pm

Chairman