



Finance and Performance Sub-Committee

Minutes of a meeting held on Monday 25 March 2019 at 7.00pm, at East Northamptonshire House, Thrapston

Present: Councillors: Steven North - Chairman
John Farrar
Roger Glithero JP
Glenvil Greenwood-Smith
David Jenney
Richard Lewis

Officers: David Oliver Chief Executive
Glenn Hammons Executive Director (Resources and Commercial)
Michelle Drewery Head of Resources
Lucy Hogston Revenue & Benefits Manager
Amy Eyles Finance Manager
Stacey Parker Corporate Support Manager
Samantha Jeffrey Performance Officer
Lewis Gabb Business Transformation Manager
Kerri Watson Project Manager

1.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor David Brackenbury.

2.0 MINUTES

2.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Performance Sub-Committee held on 11 February 2019 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

3.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 No declarations of interest were made.

4.0 QUESTIONS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 10.3

4.1 There were no questions submitted under Procedure Rule 10.3.

5.0 BUDGET MONITORING SUMMARY REPORT TO 31 JANUARY 2019 – PERIOD 10

- 5.1 The Finance Manager provided a high level summary of the forecast Revenue and Capital positions against the approved budgets for the period ended 31st January 2019 in financial year 2018/19.

It was noted that there had been a positive movement of £91k in relation to the previously forecast revenue overspend of £28k in period 9 to that of an underspend of £63k in period 10. This was made up of various factors across all service areas, with no individual variance greater than £10k.

RESOLVED: that

The summary revenue, capital and reserve positions for 2018/19 be noted

(Reason – for information/monitoring purposes)

6.0 TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT TO 31 JANUARY 2019

- 6.1 The Finance Manager provided the current position for Treasury Management for the period to 31 January in financial year 2018/19.

It was noted that in respect of the council's current portfolio of investments at section 4.1 of the report, the figure against other of £1,852 was incorrect and should read £1,501,852.

In respect of cash balances, there had been a drop in December 2018 due to the purchase of land for the Enterprise Centre. For 2019/20 this was expected to fall further as other projects were developed, but remain very healthy at between £20m and £30m.

RESOLVED: that

The treasury management performance for the period up to 31 January 2019 in financial year 2018/19 be noted.

7.0 QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORTING – QUARTER 3 2018/19

- 7.1 The Performance Manager provided high level information about performance across the council in relation to agreed performance indicators and other statistics that supported the monitoring of performance, with areas of achievement also identified.

It was noted that of the performance measures, whilst continuing to over-perform across the 12 month period, there had been a dip in performance linked to bin collections missed but this was temporary and prior to the changeover in contract providers, from which point performance had continued to improve.

In response to queries regarding performance levels for:-

- acceptable levels of detritus;
- household waste sent for reuse, recycling

It was noted that a written response would be sought from the Head of Environmental Services.

The Corporate Support Manager also undertook to ascertain whether for future reporting the performance indicators could be adjusted to take into account detritus under the responsibility of East Northants Council's only, rather than that of Northamptonshire County Council too.

RESOLVED that:

- a) The performance reported for Quarter 3 2018/19 be noted.
- b) That thanks and congratulations be recorded for the External Funding Manager, for another successful year of bringing significant sums of external funding sources into the council, for the benefit of the wider community.

(Reason: To improve service provision against performance measures.)

8.0 LOCAL DISCRETIONARY AND RETAIL RELIEF SCHEMES FOR 2019/20 AND 2020/21

- 8.1 The Revenue & Benefits Manager presented the draft Local Discretionary and Retail Relief Schemes for 2019/20 and 2020/21 to members for consideration.

It was noted that the total allocation to the council for the Local Discretionary Relief scheme was £161k for 2017/18 – 2020/21. Total relief granted to 107 businesses meeting the necessary criteria for 2017/18 had been £88,595. In 2018/19, 106 businesses had met the criteria, receiving total relief of £37,767.

In light of the expected move to unitary status, members noted that it was proposed that of the discretionary rates relief policy elements, the local discretionary rates relief scheme for 2020/21 be reviewed during 2019/20.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the LDR schemes for 2019/20 and 2020/21 as outlined in sections 2.4 and 3.2 be noted;
- b) the Retail Relief scheme for 2019/20 and 2020/21 as outlined in sections 4.2 and 4.3 be noted;

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE:

- c) (i) to approve the amendments to the council's Discretionary Rate Relief policy to incorporate the LDR scheme for 2019/20 and Retail Relief scheme for 2019/20 and 2020/21.

(ii) to review the LDR scheme for 2020/21 during 2019/20 following the decision being made by the Secretary of State on the proposal for two unitary authorities in Northamptonshire.

(Reason: To assist businesses by supporting them financially.)

9.0 PAPERLESS PROGRAMME

9.1 The Business Transformation Manager presented recommendations to the Sub-Committee arising from the Transformation Committee meeting held on 6 March 2019, seeking approval to approve the budget for the next phase of the Paperless Programme.

Members noted a number of benefits that would arise from successfully completing phases 2 and 3 of the project, which included:-

- i) Bringing the council in line with North Northamptonshire council counterparts which already worked with digitised data and documentation;
- ii) Enabling future mobile working across the council and possible satellite offices/remote working as the council headed towards unitary status;
- iii) Complying with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), with all document files assessed and categorised allowing for the application of an automated retention schedule;
- iv) A reduction in the time taken to respond to Freedom of Information or subject access requests.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the recommendation from the Transformation Committee for a budget of £157,000 be approved, to be funded from the Local Government Re-organisation reserve to deliver the remaining phases of the Paperless Programme.
- b) Approval be given for any underspend from Phase 1 to be added to the requested £157,000 as contingency to deliver Phases 2 and 3.

(Reason – to ensure GDPR compliance and to ensure our workforce is suitably skilled)

10.0 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED:

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, because exempt information may be disclosed:

- Asset Management Update; and
- Enterprise Centre: East Northants - Update
- Minutes of the meeting of the East Northamptonshire Enterprise Centre Working Party held on 26 February and 11 March 2019.

11.0 ASSET MANAGEMENT UPDATE

- 11.1 The Executive Director (Resources and Commercial) presented a report providing an update on the council's asset management and which sought approval for various actions to be taken in relation to specific sites.

The report was not for publication under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 A of the Local Government Act 1972.

It was noted that the Executive Director would write to members following the meeting with further details of negotiations and timescales in relation to paragraph 2.1 of the report.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the updates in the report be noted;

(Reason: To deliver the Asset Management Strategy)

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE:

- b) that the Wet Flush plot (as per Appendix 1 Addendum) is sold as it is surplus to requirements.

(Reason: To support commercial and economic development objectives)

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL:

- c) the disposal of the Wet Flush plot (as per Appendix 1 Addendum) through a route other than auction or competitive tender.

(Reason: To support commercial and economic development objectives)

RESOLVED:

- d) That it be approved, subject to resolutions b) and c) above and confirmation on value for money from a qualified valuer, to dispose of one plot of land at Rushden Lakes and the buyout of an agreement in relation to another plot of land, as indicated in Appendix 1, for a total of £350,000, and provide delegated authority to the Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer, following consultation with the Chair of the Finance & Performance Sub Committee, to exchange and complete the contract for disposal.

(Reason: To support commercial and economic development objectives)

12.0 ENTERPRISE CENTRE: EAST NORTHANTS - UPDATE

- 12.1 The Executive Director (Resources and Commercial) presented an update on progress with a particular focus on the award of the construction contract and details of branding and naming proposals for the Enterprise Centre.

The report was not for publication under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 A of the Local Government Act 1972.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the project update, approach for awarding and signing the construction contract and the position of capital and revenue budgets be noted;
- b) That it be noted that the process for creating a letter of intent for award of the contract has been concluded, due to be signed by the Chief Executive on 27 March 2019;
- c) That the branding (including naming) as detailed in Appendix 4 for the Enterprise Centre be approved, and that delegated authority be given to the Head of Economic and Commercial Development, following consultation with the Chair of Finance and Performance Sub-Committee and Chair of the ECEN Working Party, to develop and publish promotional and marketing material.

(Reason – To ensure effective promotion and marketing of the ECEN to potential users)

13.0 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EAST NORTHANTS ENTERPRISE CENTRE WORKING PARTY HELD ON 26 FEBRUARY AND 2019

- 13.1 The minutes of the meetings of the East Northants Enterprise Centre Working Party held on 15 January and 11 March 2019 were noted.

The minutes were not for publication under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Chairman