



## Finance and Performance Sub Committee

Minutes of a meeting held on Monday 28 October 2019 at 7.00pm, at East Northamptonshire House, Thrapston

**Present:** Councillors: Steven North, in the chair  
David Brackenbury  
Roger Glithero JP  
Glenvil Greenwood-Smith  
David Jenney  
Richard Lewis

Officers:	Glenn Hammons	Executive Director (Resources and Commercial)
	Michelle Drewery	Head of Resources
	Greg Macdonald	Head of Economic and Commercial Development
	Katherine Hayward	Finance Manager
	Lucy Hogston	Revenue and Benefits Manager
	Jeremy Rawling	Business Transformation Manager
	Lewis Gabb	Business Transformation Manager

### **1.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

1.1 There were no apologies for absence.

### **2.0 Minutes**

2.1 The minutes of the meetings held on 8 July, 15 July and 7 October 2019 were approved as a correct record.

### **3.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

3.1 No declarations of interest were made.

### **4.0 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS**

4.1 There were no questions received from members.

### **5.0 CHANGE TO THE ORDER OF BUSINESS**

With the agreement of the Committee, the Chairman confirmed that the order of business to be discussed at the meeting would vary from that on the agenda.

## **6.0 QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORTING**

- 6.1 The Corporate Support Manager presented a report providing members with high level information about performance across the council in relation to agreed performance indicators and other statistics that supported the monitoring of performance.

It was reported that workforce statistics were not available for quarter 1 due to a review being undertaken of Human Resources data reporting. This review was however, now complete and regular reporting would resume at the next meeting of the Subcommittee.

Members noted significant the areas of achievement referenced across the Council in the report and wished to thank officers for their continued hard work.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the contents of the report be noted.

## **7.0 BUDGET MONITORING TO 31 AUGUST 2019**

- 7.1 The Finance Manager provided an update on the forecast Revenue and Capital positions against the approved budgets for the period ended 31 August 2019 in financial year 2019/20.

It was noted that the Council was currently part of a 75% Business Rates Retention pilot scheme for 2019/20 with the rest of the councils within Northamptonshire. However, the pilot would soon be ending after 31 March 2020. Following enquiry, it was confirmed that the revenue position would not be affected as the revenue had been treated as one off source of funding.

In respect of queries relating to waste collection and recycling, it was confirmed that members would receive an updated position at the next meeting.

### **RESOLVED:-**

- a) That the latest revenue, capital and reserves positions for 2019/20 be noted.

*(Reason – This is for information / monitoring purposes)*

- b) That the supplementary estimates drawn down to period 5 be noted.

*(Reason – This is for information / monitoring purposes)*

- c) That the collection and write off performance for sundry debtors, local taxation and benefit overpayments as set out in Appendix 3 be noted.

*(Reason – This is for information / monitoring purposes)*

- d) That the supplementary request in relation to Office 16 licences for £67.9k to be drawn down in line with Part 4.3 Section 4.31 of the Constitution be noted.

*(Reason – This is for information / monitoring purposes)*

- e) That the movement of ICT items totalling £125,412 from the Development Pool into the Capital Programme, as identified in section 2.34, be approved.

*(Reason: - to bring the ICT capital spend into a balanced position)*

- f) That approval be given to the council's inclusion in the reinstatement of the Northamptonshire Pooling arrangement for Business Rates Retention in 2020/21 as identified in Section 7, subject to approval by MHCLG in the Local Government Finance Settlement 202/21.

*(Reason – To ensure the council continues to obtain the maximum financial benefit from business rates growth in the area)*

## **8.0 TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT TO 31 AUGUST 2019**

- 8.1 The Finance Manager provided an update on the current position for Treasury Management for the period to 31 August 2019 in financial year 2019/20.

It was noted that the Public Works Loans Board had increased its rate of interest from 1.8% to 2.8%. This was likely to have an impact on local authorities which were in the process of developing capital projects, meaning that cost assumptions would need to be revisited.

### **RESOLVED:-**

That Treasury Management performance for the period to 31 August 2019 in financial year 2019/20 be noted.

*(Reason – In accordance with CIPFA guidance and best practice in Treasury Management)*

## **9.0 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2020/21**

The Revenue and Benefits Manager presented a report which considered the options for a local Council Tax Support (CTS) Scheme for 2020/21.

Members noted that there was currently a wide variation in the current percentage reduction rates for the other local authorities in North Northamptonshire when compared against ENC. Each of the local authorities were currently going through the committee process and it was expected that no changes would be made to their current rates.

Members noted that of the favoured option there was expected to be a funding gap in 20/21 of £14k, but with potential reduction in collections and health and safety risks for claimants, it was not considered to appropriate to make any changes in rate.

### **RESOLVED:-**

**That Policy and Resources Committee on 4 November and Council on 9 December 2019 be recommended to:**

- a) Adopt the existing Council Tax Support Scheme for East Northamptonshire for 2020/21, with no amendments (Option 1).

*(Reason – To deliver a Council Tax Support Scheme for 2020/21 that meets all the statutory requirements).*

## **10.0 HISTORIC LAND AND PROPERTY DATA**

- 10.1 The Business Transformation Manager presented a report explaining the current quality and timeliness issues in the council's Local Land Charges service, and which sought to invest £75,203 in additional temporary staff capacity to correct historical data, thereby improving service quality and reducing corporate risk.

Members noted the main project risks at section 6.2 of the report and the proposal to have two additional staff in addition to the current two administrative posts for a period of 18 months, with modest honorarium increase in salary to the Team Leader.

### **RESOLVED:-**

That approval be given to the investment of £75,203 to fund additional staffing resource for 18 months to improve the council's historical land and property data from existing budgets

*(Reason - To bring the Council's land and property data up to an acceptable standard).*

## **11.0 OFFICE TRANSFORMATION PROJECT (OTP) PHASE 2**

- 11.1 The Business Transformation Managers presented a report on the completion of phase 1b of the OTP, seeking endorsement of the remainder of the budget in Phase 2, and to seek endorsement of an approach to enhancing the customer and staff experience in other parts of East Northamptonshire House.

It was noted that positive lessons had been learnt from phase 1A of the OTP, with extensive consultation and amendments to phase 1B introduced as a result, with improved levels of feedback as a result.

Supplementary information was circulated at the meeting setting out indicative plans for how the Customer Experience Enhancement Programme proposals contained in the report could be visualised. This information included views of the atrium space and reception counter, potential layout of different options, together with a future Northamptonshire collaborative space.

There was some discussion regarding the merits and costings of the different outline options. Following this, Members were largely in favour of option 2, which was currently estimated to cost approximately £109k.

### **RESOLVED:-**

- a) That the approach to OTP Phase 2 be endorsed;

*[Reason - To secure the delivery of the OTP]*

- b) That an option be worked up for the reception/atrium area for further consideration by this Sub Committee and the Transformation Committee;

*[Reason - To improve the public-facing areas of ENC House]*

***That Council on 9 December 2019 be recommended to approve that:-***

- c) the budget and funding sources be added to the Development Pool of the Capital Programme.
- d) That the detail of the proposal for the two spaces on the lower floor as described in section 2.8 be worked up.

*[Reason - To improve staff areas of ENC House to improve collaborative working with Future Northants]*

***That Transformation Committee on 6 November 2019 be recommended:-***

- e) To endorse recommendations a) to d) above, at its next meeting.

*[Reason - To align with the wider Transformation Programme]*

## **12.0 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

### **12.1 RESOLVED:**

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

- Asset Management – Update.

## **13.0 ASSET MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

- 13.1 The Head of Economic and Commercial Development provided an update on the council's asset management strategy and to seek approval for various actions to be taken in relation to specific assets.

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

### **RESOLVED:-**

That the updates detailed in the asset tracker be noted.

(Reason – To deliver and monitor the Asset Management Strategy)

**Chairman**