



SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 8th July, 2021 at 6.30 pm

PRESENT

MEMBERS

Councillors H Baker (Chair), A Royle (Vice-Chair), G Birtwistle, S Chaudhary, T Commis, S Cunliffe, A Hosker, M Hurt, M Ishtiaq, A Khan, S Khan, G Lishman, S Lone and C Towneley

OFFICERS

Howard Hamilton-Smith	–	Head of Finance and Property
Paul Gatrell	–	Head of Housing & Development Control
Pete Milward	–	Principal Planner
Elizabeth Murphy	–	Planning Policy Manager
Jonathan Jackson	–	Streetscene Solicitor
Imelda Grady	–	Democracy Officer

IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor A Anwar, Leader

Councillor S Graham, Deputy Leader and executive Member for Resources and Performance Management

Councillor J Harbour, Executive Member for Housing

Councillor B Foster, Executive Member for Community and Environmental Services

Councillor M Lishman, Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing.

10. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Charlie Briggs.

11. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd June 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

12. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

13. Additional Items of Business

There were no additional items of business.

14. Exclusion of the Public

There were no items requiring the public to be excluded from the meeting.

15. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

16. Notice of Key Decisions and Private Meetings

Members considered the Executive`s Notice of Key Decisions and Private Meetings for July.

The Head of Finance and Property informed the meeting that the private item regarding the sale of land at Holme Road had been deferred to the August Executive. Members requested a special meeting of Scrutiny be held on 10th August to consider this item.

IT WAS AGREED

1. That an extra meeting of Scrutiny be held on the 10th August to consider the report on the sale of land at Holme Road; and
2. That the notice of key decisions and private meetings be noted.

17. Annual Treasury Management Report Review of Activity

The Head of Finance and Property presented a report which outlined the treasury management activity for 2020/21 in compliance with the regulations under the Local Government Act 2003 and the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.

He responded to questions regarding possible increases in inflation and interest rates on the Council`s borrowing strategy and that advice Indicated that there was no change expected in the next two years but that this would be monitored closely. He also explained the how the Council`s borrowing strategy was regulated and monitored.

IT WAS AGREED

That the report be noted.

18. 2020/21 Final Capital Outturn Report

The Head of Finance and Property reported on the performance of the 2020/21 capital investment programme and presented the financing of capital expenditure incurred during 2020/21.

The report advised that the Executive would be requested to approve a revised 2021/22 capital budget totalling £20.527m after incorporating net carry forward commitments (slippage) of £1.735m from 2020/21.

IT WAS AGREED

That the report be noted.

19. 2020/21 Final Revenue Outturn Position

The Head of Finance and Property reported the provisional position on the Council's revenue accounts for 2020/21 prior to its consideration by the Executive and Full Council.

The report advised that the Executive and Full Council would be requested to approve a net underspend of £31k which had been transferred to the Revenue Support Reserve. The projected overspend from the outturn position estimated in quarter 3 was £49k. The transfer to/from earmarked reserves totalled a net £5.058m increase to reserves. The report would also be seeking additional revenue budget carry forward requests from Heads of Service totalling £2.198m.

The Head of Finance and Property then responded to questions from members in respect of Council Tax and Business Rates collections, and also on how the debt repayment was managed.

IT WAS AGREED

That the report be noted.

20. Anti Social Behaviour Policy

The Streetscene Solicitor presented the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Policy 2021-24 for members comments prior to its submission to the Executive.

The policy outlined the Council's approach to how it would deal with and support communities and partner agencies in dealing with anti-social behaviour.

It was noted that the Council has no statutory obligation to publish an ASB policy and procedures document, but that in doing so it formalised the Home Office Minimum Standards and reflected best practice adopted by other Local Authorities.

Members asked how the Council would assess the effectiveness on following the procedures set out in the document. The Streetscene Solicitor said that one of the reasons for the policy was to collect statistics for performance monitoring and that it was proposed for members to receive monthly reports on ASB issues on a ward basis. Members felt a monthly report might be too onerous on staff resources but recognised that some wards had more issues than others. The Streetscene Solicitor said that the ASB team intended to develop better communication pathways with councillors. Following questions from

members on parental responsibilities he explained the how the national legislation and Courts responded to this and that whilst parents were responsible for their childrens` welfare and education they could not be held responsible for their behaviours.

I T WAS AGREED

That the Policy be recommended to the Executive for adoption.

21. Homelessness Paper

This paper was brought to Committee at the request of members following concerns raised at the last meeting that Local Authorities might begin to see a greater number of evictions now that the Government`s emergency measures on a ban on evictions during the COVID pandemic had been lifted.

The Head of Housing and Development Control gave members the comparative statistical figures on homelessness for 2019/20 and for the period from 1st June 2021 and concluded that there had been no increase. He said that this would be kept under review and Members asked that an update be brought to the November meeting, or earlier if there was any significant increases reported.

The Executive Member for Housing, Councillor John Harbour, also spoke on this issue and reassured members that this was constantly being monitored and included in his reports to Council.

IT WAS AGREED

1. That the report be noted; and
2. That an update be brought to the November meeting.

22. Authority Monitoring Report 2019/20 (February 2021)

As requested by the Chair, the Planning Policy Manager presented a report which detailed the role and purpose of the planning Authority Monitoring Report and she and the Principal Planner responded to members questions and observations which mainly focused on housing need and development, whether windfall sites were included in the completion statistics, the need to protect green spaces for future generations and the carbon footprint of new build houses.

The Principal Planner said that all elements of housing supply were included and that the housing target in the Local Plan was the minimum requirement. The Planning Policy Manager explained the role of the AMR in assessing the need for a local plan update if this showed that things were progressing significantly differently than anticipated.

In response to a question regarding the effect on the Local Plan of healthcare and educational facilities, the Planning Policy Manager said that the report was heavily reliant on third party information and that there was also an infrastructure delivery plan where liaison with the Clinical Commissioning Group and the County Council was key to assessing whether there was any significant change in circumstance since the local plan was adopted. She also pointed out that housing monitoring information collected by the

team and particularly the annual housing trajectory was important for infrastructure providers in planning their services..

The Chair thanked both officers for attending.

IT WAS AGREED

That the report be noted.

23. Review Groups Update

Members were advised that the Housing Review Group had requested a meeting with the Managing Director of Calico to monitor progress with communication issues.

The Market Review Group would be meeting in the next few weeks to scope the review and this would be brought to Committee for agreement to proceed.

24. Work Programme 2021/22

That with the inclusion of a meeting on 12th July to consider a report on Charter Walk and a meeting on the 10th August to consider a report on the sale of land at Holme Road, the work programme was noted.