

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 24 JANUARY 2023 AT KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, BYTHESEA ROAD, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Graham Wright (Chairman), Cllr Christopher Williams (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Ruth Hopkinson, Cllr Jon Hubbard, Cllr Tony Jackson, Cllr Johnny Kidney, Cllr Gordon King, Cllr Jerry Kunkler, Cllr Bill Parks, Cllr Tony Pickernell and Cllr Tony Trotman

Also Present:

Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling, Cllr Gavin Grant, Cllr Nick Botterill, Cllr Pip Ridout, Cllr Ian Thorn, Cllr Ernie Clark, Cllr Richard Clewer, Cllr Caroline Thomas, Cllr Helen Belcher and Cllr Jacqui Lay.

1 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Tony Jackson and Helen Jones.

2 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2022 were presented for consideration, and it was;

Resolved:

To approve and sign as a true and correct record of the minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2022.

3 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

4 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman announced that on the evening of 25 January 2023 a webinar would take place to discuss the budget, in which Councillors and members of the public would be welcome to join.

5 **Public Participation**

There were no questions or statements submitted by members of the public.

6 **Wiltshire Council's Budget 2023/24 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24-2025/26**

The Chairman introduced a report and appendices within the Agenda Pack which presented the administration's Budget for 2023/24 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2023/24 to 2025-26. The Chairman noted that on Page 15 of the Agenda Pack there was a short report setting out a suggested process for the Committee's consideration of the budget.

The Chairman also noted that the debate that would take place during the meeting was in the context of the following meetings that were held last week:

- An open invitation to all members to attend the budget briefing provided for the Financial Planning Task Group on 19th January;
- The special budget meeting of the Financial Planning Task Group on 20th January; and
- Informal meetings of the other three select committees, where questions on the budget were submitted to their chairmen to be addressed to the Executive.

The draft Wiltshire Council Budget 2023/2034 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2023/24-2025/26 was presented by Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Nick Botterill, supported by the Deputy Chief Executive Corporate Director for Resources and Section 151 Officer, Andy Brown. In addition, Leader of the Council, Councillor Richard Clewer and the Chief Executive, Terence Herbert and other members of the Corporate Leadership Team were present to provide clarification and answers to issues and queries raised by the Committee.

The published budget papers proposed the net general fund budget for 2023/2024 to be £465.372m. as well as a 2.99% general increase to Council Tax and a levy of 2% to be spent solely on Adult Social Care. In addition, the papers included that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2023/2024 be £26.401m, as well as a 7% increase for social dwelling rents and a 5% increase in all service charges related to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to cover costs and garage rents.

Topics were raised included, but were not limited to, discussion on Latent Demand Reserve and how it would be allocated, the High Needs Block, Local Youth Network Funding, The Capital Budget and whether any savings would cause reductions in services, the impact of the budget on Shared Lives, Technology Enabled Care, staffing levels, Street Scene Contracts, Bus Services and the annual pay award, along with other topics as detailed in the appended report.

The Chairman noted that the key points of the debate that took place would form a report which would be taken to the Cabinet meeting set to take place on 31 January 2023 as well as the Full Council meeting scheduled for 21 February, along with the budget report of the Financial Planning Task Group. In addition, it was noted that an additional meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny

Management Committee to scrutinise any opposition amendments to the budget before Full Council had been arranged for Tuesday 7th February at 10.30am. The deadline for submitting budget amendments would be 5.00pm on Thursday 2nd February.

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee thanked Cllr Pip Ridout, Chairman of the Financial Planning Task Group along with its members for the opportunity to attend the briefing which was hosted as well as for the opportunity to have an earlier involvement in questioning the budget.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee agreed:

- 1. To note the Draft Wiltshire Council budget for 2023-24 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2023-24 to 2025-26 and to refer the comments of the Committee and the report of the Financial Planning Task Group to Cabinet and Full Council for consideration on 31st January and 21st February respectively.**
- 2. To support the Financial Planning Task Group's ongoing monitoring of the delivery of the budget and the development of the budget for 2024-25.**

7 Financial Year 2022/23 - Quarter Three Revenue Budget Monitoring

The Chairman introduced a report within Agenda Supplement 2, which presented the latest revenue budget update for the current financial year. The Chairman noted that there had not been the standard report produced by the Financial Planning Task Group on this financial update as the Task Group would meet on Friday 27 January 2023 to bring their comments directly to the Cabinet meeting scheduled for Tuesday 31 January.

The following comments were received from Cllr Nick Botterill, Cabinet Member for Finance including that the Quarter 3 report would forecast an underlying overspend for the year of £15.697m however, with one off mitigations in place this would result in a net overspend for the year of £5.037m. This would be met from the £8.8m inflation reserves that were prudently set aside to cover the anticipated cost of inflation during 2022/23.

The following comments were received from Andy Brown, Deputy Chief Executive Corporate Director for Resources and Section 151 Officer including that the Quarter 3 position had been important as it had provided a building block for the budget and that the overspend of £5.037m had been included within the building of the base budget for 2023/2024. A notable area within the report was identified as placement costs for Families and Children as well as

Children in Care, which has risen by £1.9m since Quarter 2 due to driver demands and cost complexities. Additionally, it was noted that income had continued to improve from Quarter 2 to Quarter 3, which had been a driver for why a stretch income target had been set.

The following comments were received by Members of the Committee, with clarity provided on how inflation had impacted on net underspend and underlying underspend and how the latter was an impact of inflation and would likely remain. Additionally, clarity was provided on the Dedicated School Grant (DSG).

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee agreed:

- 1. To note the third quarterly revenue budget monitoring forecast position for 2022/23 based on the position at the end of November 2022, updated for any known significant changes in December 2022;**
- 2. To note that the report will also be considered by the Financial Planning Task Group on 27th January before Cabinet on 31st January.**

The Chairman called the Committee to a break at 12:40pm and resumed at 12:46pm.

8 Financial Year 2022/23 - Quarter Three Capital Budget Monitoring

The Chairman introduced a report within Agenda Supplement 2, which presented the latest capital budget update for the current financial year. The Chairman noted that there had not been the standard report produced by the Financial Planning Task Group on this financial update as the Task Group would meet on Friday 27 January 2023 to bring their comments directly to the Cabinet meeting scheduled for Tuesday 31 January.

The following comments were received from Cllr Nick Botterill, Cabinet Member for Finance including that the Capital Budget had now decreased from the initial budget set for 2022/2023 as £307.115m to £172.227m. It was stated that the total expenditure as of Quarter 3 was £87.998m, which was 51% of the revised total budget and that the Programme had been likely to experience slippage and reprogramming, however processes had been put in place to improve this in the future.

The following comments were received from Brown, Deputy Chief Executive Corporate Director for Resources and Section 151 Officer including that the

Council was aiming to improve on reprofiling and that the current budget papers suggested a more realistic level of spend going forward. It was noted that the report had more of a focus on reprofiling than risks and that this would be addressed within monitoring reports.

The following comments were received by Members of the Committee including whether there would be anticipated movement for numbers which had been identified as being small relating to Early Years. It was agreed that a response would be provided in writing and 66% of actual spend to the revised budget had taken place with School Maintenance and Modernisation. Furthermore, that where possible the Council would be able to bring forward projects by spending money available.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee agreed:

- 1. To note the Capital Programme for 2022/23 as of 31 December 2022.**
- 2. To note that the report will be considered in more detail by the Financial Planning Task Group on 27th January before Cabinet on 31st January.**

9 Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2023-24

It was agreed by the Committee that Agenda Item 9 would be pushed back with Item 10 taken beforehand.

The Chairman introduced a report within Agenda Supplement 2, which presented the Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2023-24, which would also be reviewed in more detail by Financial Planning Task Group on Friday 27 January 2023.

The following comments were received from Brown, Deputy Chief Executive Corporate Director for Resources and Section 151 Officer with weight given to the importance of the report in how the Council would conduct its Treasury activity for the year ahead. The report included the current indebtedness of the Council as well as identifying potential future debts likely to occur, whilst setting limits and boundaries.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee agreed:

- 1. To note the Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24, which will be considered in more detail by the Financial Planning Task Group on 27th January before Cabinet on 31st January.**

10 **Council Performance and Risk - Quarter Three Monitoring**

The Chairman introduced a report within Agenda Supplement 2, which provided an update on performance against the stated missions in the Council's Business Plan 2022-32, its strategic risks and proposed future developments. In addition, the Chairman noted that though the report presented the key high-level performance indicators, both the Children's and Health Select Committees were currently exploring how to conduct greater detailed scrutiny oversight of performance within their areas.

The following opening remarks were made by Cllr Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council including that Cabinet Members had attended meetings to discuss the addition of metrics as well as to identify ones which should be removed. Metrics relating to engagement were discussed. It was expected that the next version of the report would be more settled and would be closer to a fully functioning version, with vast amounts of data having been collated by each directorate and seen by the Performance and Outcomes Board.

The following comments were received from Andy Brown, Deputy Chief Executive Corporate Director for Resources and Section 151 Officer including that the report had progressed, and that Cabinet had been reviewing how to track the performance of the Council's Business Plan.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee agreed:

- 1. To note the updates and outturns against the measures and activities ascribed against the Council's priorities and the Strategic Risk Summary.**

11 **Management Committee Task Groups**

A report was received on the Task Groups and Panels established by the Management Committee.

Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP) Joint Scrutiny Panel

It was noted that the Panel is in abeyance until the national picture regarding LEPs is clarified. Additionally, The LEP is currently considering the future type

of scrutiny it wishes to commission, given the dramatic reduction in LEP funding being provided by Central Government.

Evolve Programme Task Group

It was noted that the task group meets quarterly and last met on 19 December 2022, with a written update provided in the report.

In addition, Cllr Jon Hubbard provided a further verbal update that the meeting in December had been productive and that a positive outcome had had been agreed that a monthly meeting with Associate Director for Transformation and Business Change, Stuart Honeyball would take place to keep the Task Group up to date. Emphasis was placed on the importance of getting the programme right to avoid a potentially significant financial impact in the future.

Financial Planning Task Group

The Chairman noted that the Task Group had met twice in the previous week and would meet again on Friday 27 January 2023 to further consider financial reports to be taken to the Cabinet meeting on Tuesday 31 January 2023.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee agreed:

- 1. To note the update on activity provided.**

12 **Forward Work Programme**

The Committee considered the forward work programmes for each select Committee, as well as updates from the Chairman for each Select Committee.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee agreed:

- 1. To note the updates on select committee activity and approve the Overview and Scrutiny Forward Work Programme.**

13 **Date of Next Meeting**

The dates of the next meetings were confirmed as Tuesday 7th February 2023 (opposition budget amendments) and Tuesday 21st March 2023.

14 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 1.15 pm)

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