

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

18th February 2016

PRESENT:-

Conservative Group

Councillor Harrison (Chairman), Councillor Mrs Plenderleith (Vice-Chairman) and Councillors Billings, Mrs Coyle, Hewlett, MacPherson, Smith, Watson and Wheeler.

Labour Group

Councillors Rhind, Richards, Southerd and Taylor (substituting for Councillor Wilkins).

In attendance

Councillors Atkin and Swann (Conservative Group)

FM/99 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received on behalf of Councillor Wilkins (Labour Group).

FM/100 **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 3rd December 2015 were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

FM/101 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Richards declared a personal interest in relation to Item 14 on the Agenda by way of being acquainted with the boxing academy organiser.

FM/102 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO 10**

The Committee was informed that no questions from members of the public had been received.

FM/103 **QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO 11**

The Committee was informed that no questions from Members of the Council had been received.

FM/104 **REPORTS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Councillor Swann, as Vice-Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee delivered a verbal update to the Committee, noting its review of the budgetary matters presented by the Director of Finance and Corporate Services on a number of occasions and acknowledging the financial challenges the Council

faces, but concluding that no matters of significance from an overview and scrutiny perspective were recorded. A review of the Council Tax arrears situation had also been conducted, leading to some initiatives aimed at greater direct debit take-up being instigated.

MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE

FM/105 CHESTNUT AVENUE COMMUNITY FACILITY

The Cultural Services Manager presented the report to Committee, outlining the application on which approval was sought. The Chairman welcomed this development and the aims of the project.

RESOLVED:-

That approval was given to a start-up revenue budget of £28,889 in 2016/17, £16,875 in 2017/18 and £13,572 in 2018/19 to manage the Council's new community facility at Chestnut Avenue.

FM/106 CORPORATE SERVICES PERFORMANCE MONITORING 2015/16: QUARTER 3 TO DECEMBER 2015

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services delivered the report to Committee. The Chairman expressed his pleasure at the improved figures, in particular the benefit new claims and change of circumstances processing times.

Councillor Richards, making reference to the earlier than anticipated introduction of Universal Credit to the area, queried the Council's preparations. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services confirmed that the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and Community Volunteer Service (CVS) had both made contact and the Council was looking to address these matters collectively. The implementation of Community Points around the district, to assist with the on-line applications, is also being investigated. It was acknowledged that staff involved in this area would see a change in their role and would receive budget skills training as required. The Chairman also acknowledged the need for effective communication for those who will be affected by the changes. The use of customer PC's in libraries and health centres were also suggested, in addition to those the Council can provide.

Councillor Richards also referred to the health and safety issues in the report, highlighting apparent breaches within the Civic Offices, a matter that was noted for further investigation.

Councillor Wheeler voiced his thanks to the work previously undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that had contributed to the introduction of the cash receipting machines near reception, greatly reducing the queuing times now faced by customers.

RESOLVED:

That progress against performance targets was considered and noted.

FM/107 **TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2016/17**

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services presented the report to the Committee.

It was also suggested that Treasury training be undertaken at the Meeting scheduled for 28th April 2016, a proposal that was agreed by the Committee.

RESOLVED:

1.1 That the Treasury Management Strategy for 2016/17 was approved.

1.2 That the Prudential Indicators and Limits for 2016/17 to 2020/21, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, were approved.

1.3 That the Investment Policy for 2016/17, including the associated counterparty (lending) list, was approved.

FM/108 **FINAL BUDGET PROPOSALS 2016/17 AND FINANCIAL PLAN TO 2021**

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services delivered the report to the Committee, highlighting that due to increased flexibility around Council Tax setting introduced by the Government, councils could now increase levels by up to £5.00 (Band D equivalent). It was also pointed out that in relation to supported housing, which covers the Council's sheltered accommodation stock, an exemption from the rent decrease rule now applied, allowing the Committee to determine a rate in the range -1% to +1%.

With regard to the latter, Councillor Hewlett, as Chairman of the Housing and Community Services Committee, recommended a rent freeze for the sheltered accommodation tenants for 2016/17.

RESOLVED:

1.1 That a Council Tax increase of 1.95% for 2016/17 be recommended to Full Council on 29th February 2016.

1.2 That estimated net General Fund Revenue Expenditure totalling £10,985,851 for 2015/16 (revised) and £11,137,566 for 2016/17 be recommended to Full Council on 29th February 2016.

1.3 That the Medium-term Financial Plan to 2021 on the Council's General Fund Revenue Account, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, was approved.

- 1.4 That a strategy and action plan is drawn up to generate budget savings of £1.5m on the General Fund over the spending review period to enable a minimum level of General Reserves of £1m by 2020**
- 1.5 That the Financial Plan for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to 2027, as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report, was approved.**
- 1.6 That the rents of Council House Tenants, excluding Tenants in Sheltered Accommodation, are set in accordance with provisions contained in the Welfare Reform and Work Bill 2015/16 and are reduced by 1% in 2016/17.**
- 1.7 That the current rents be frozen for 2016/17 for tenants in Sheltered Accommodation was approved.**
- 1.8 That the 5-year capital investment and financing plan to 2021, as detailed in Appendix 3 to the report, was approved.**
- 1.9 That the Council's National Non-Domestic Rate Return (NNDR 1) for 2016/17, showing retained business rates (before the Tariff) of £8,791,969 for 2015/16 and £9,413,679 for 2016/17, was noted.**
- 1.10 That the report of the Council's Section 151 (Chief Finance) Officer under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 was noted.**

FM/109 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT [ACCESS TO INFORMATION] ACT 1985)**

RESOLVED:-

That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that there would be disclosed exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Act indicated in brackets after each item.

MINUTES

The Exempt Minutes of the Meeting held on 3rd December 2015 were received.

TO RECEIVE QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 11

The Committee was informed that no questions had been received.

LEASE OF WINDING HOUSE AT WOODHOUSE RECREATION GROUND TO SWADLINCOTE BOXING ACADEMY (Paragraph 3)

The Committee approved the recommendations made in the Report.

**HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT – REVIEW OF UNIT MANAGER
STRUCTURE (Paragraph 1)**

The Committee approved the recommendations made in the Report.

RESTRUCTURING THE DIRECT SERVICES OPERATION (Paragraph 1)

The Committee approved the recommendations made in the Report.

The meeting terminated at 6.35pm.

COUNCILLOR J HARRISON

CHAIRMAN