

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16<sup>th</sup> January 2019

**PRESENT:-**

**Conservative Group**

Councillor Swann (Chairman), Councillor Mrs Wyatt (Vice-Chairman) and Councillors Atkin, Murray and Mrs Patten

**Labour Group**

Councillors Bambrick and Mrs Stuart

OS/40 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Dr Pearson (Labour Group).

OS/41 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM ITEMS ON AGENDA**

The Committee was informed that no declarations had been received.

OS/42 **QUESTIONS RECEIVED BY 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.

OS/43 **QUESTIONS RECEIVED 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.

OS/44 **VISIT TO NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

The Strategic Director (Service Delivery) presented the report to Committee and outlined the key differences between the two Authorities regarding Street Scene Collection following a visit in December 2017, primarily being the amount of fulltime staff available and the zoned collection regime within South Derbyshire. The Strategic Director (Service Delivery) noted the improvements made in the delivery of the service following the visit, such as an increase in operational staff, equipment and an additional refuse freighter.

Councillor Atkin welcomed the report and queried how the service aimed to continue to make improvements. The Strategic Director (Service Delivery) highlighted the service is taking steps to regularly take stock of current

performance to determine how improvements could be made, which include signing up to the Keep Britain Tidy initiative that would allow access to comparable data figures and allow for the Council to measure the quality of the Street Scene.

The Chairman made reference to a good team ethic and sense of pride in clean areas being a key for sustained improvement within the service. The Strategic Director (Service Delivery) acknowledged the Chairman's comments, noting this was regularly followed up.

Further queries were raised by Members regarding the dedicated line for the Clean Team, noting the previous line was found to be easier to use than currently utilised. The Strategic Director (Service Delivery) noted the queries, remarking a new management structure for Customer Services was being considered to deliver this service to ensure customer care would be dealt with in a professional, consistent way. The Strategic Director (Service Delivery) further highlighted all of the new refuse vehicles were fitted with cameras, which resulted in improved accountability amongst the teams.

The Chairman made reference to the commendable service delivered over the Christmas period, which was agreed by the Committee.

Councillor Atkin enquired as to who picked up the cost of fly-tipping. The Service Director (Service Delivery) confirmed if it were private land, this would be the landowner; otherwise the Council would accept the cost for Council-owned land, which was not an insignificant amount. Councillor Atkin commended the Clean Team, who liaise closely with the Environmental Wardens to efficiently address fly-tipping. The Service Director (Service Delivery) highlighted social media is utilised to deter people from fly-tipping.

**RESOLVED:-**

***The Committee noted the information provided in the report.***

OS/45 **REGULATION OF INVESTGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 (RIPA) – QUARTERLY REPORT ON USAGE**

The Strategic Director (Corporate Services) outlined the report to Committee, noting no authorisations had been sought.

A discussion took place regarding scenarios of when recordings could take place, such as CCTV with signage, without authorisation being sought under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.

**RESOLVED:-**

***The Committee noted the internal report on the Council's use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.***

OS/46 **BUDGET SCRUTINY 2019**

The Strategic Director (Corporate Services) presented the report to Committee advising the detailed budget proposals had been reported and considered by the relevant Committees. It was highlighted the General Fund was performing positively in the short term, mainly due to growth. The Committee was updated that Derbyshire was not selected to participate in the 75% business rates retention pilot scheme again, which meant reverting back to the previous arrangements of a pooling system, which remains beneficial. It was explored how the base budget has increased, which was anticipated due to provision being made for the District Election in May 2019, through other factors such as purchasing replacement wheelie bins and computer licensing to upgrade to a new Microsoft Cloud-based package, which had not been anticipated.

Risks relating to Planning and Licensing income, recycling, growth and funding for community and leisure services were also referenced. It was noted that funding was available for two years regarding community schemes, but if not topped up, project delivery would need to be reviewed.

It was noted the decision relating to a possible Council Tax increase had been deferred until the subsequent Finance and Management Committee in February; if agreed, Council Tax could be increased up to £5 above the current Band D figure. The future projections of the budget were examined, including earmarked reserves, describing a potential worst case scenario of spending exceeding income and reducing the reserves by 2022/2023 and other scenarios beyond the Council's control, such as a change in the New Homes Bonus. Overall, it was reported the budget stands in a relatively good position with a healthy figure in reserves, though there will be an increase in cost following a restructure submission, with the effect due to be shown in February. It was noted all recommendations have been approved at the previous Finance and Management Committee, with the exception of the level of Council Tax.

Councillor Bambrick queried the decision to defer the Council Tax setting, as the current standing of the budget seemed reasonable. The Strategic Director (Corporate Services) noted it was a decision of the Members to make.

In relation to the Housing Revenue Account, the Strategic Director (Corporate Services) noted this was similar to the General Fund in that there was capacity to review spending over a period of time. There is uncertainty around the roll-out of Universal Credit and contracts around supported housing, which may impact funding. Financial reserves have been built up, though there is the potential for these to be exhausted quickly in bids to secure new council houses, although this would increase the amount of council homes available and would replenish reserves through increased rent collection.

Councillor Atkin queried if the Strategic Director (Corporate Services) felt confident the rent reduction would be sustainable with the HRA debt repayments. The Strategic Director (Corporate Services) responded to the query, explaining that the payment gaps would allow the reserves to be built back up in between loan repayments.

Councillor Mrs Patten and Councillor Atkin thanked the Strategic Director (Corporate Services) for the detailed analysis, noting their confidence of the Council's financial standing.

**RESOLVED:-**

- 1.1 The Committee considered the proposed budgets of the Council for 2019/20 and made any recommendations to Finance and Management Committee as part of the consultation process.***
- 1.2 The Committee considered the medium term financial plans of the General Fund and Housing Revenue Accounts and made any recommendations to Finance and Management Committee to support budget and policy development.***

OS/47 **COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

Councillor Mrs Patten requested information pertaining to standards' issues relating to the amount of complaints received regarding Parish Councillors, the amount of officer time and financial cost it takes to investigate such complaints, and the percentage of complaints which are of a vexatious nature to be added to the March 2019 agenda.

**RESOLVED:-**

***Members considered and approved the updated work programme.***

OS/48 **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 would be 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.***

**EXEMPT QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO 11**

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

The Meeting terminated at 7.05PM.

COUNCILLOR S SWANN

CHAIRMAN