



CORPORATE SELECT COMMITTEE

Meeting: Monday, 30 November 2020 at 6.30 pm in Virtual Meeting

Present: Councillor T Ashton (Chair)

Councillors J Collins, O Cross, S Flower, L Grooby, D Lomax, R McKeown, G Oakley, K Savage, E Siddall, M Stone and E Thrane

An apology for absence was received from Councillor D Kerr

Councillors Barrow, Todd and A McKeown were also in attendance.

20/69 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chair confirmed that the meeting was being broadcast live to the internet via the Council's website and was capable of repeated viewing. The images and sound recording may be used for training purposes within the Council. All were asked to keep to the speaking guidelines which were outlined. Any views expressed by any speaker in the meeting are the speaker's own and do not necessarily reflect the views of High Peak Borough Council.

20/70 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 4)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2020 be approved as a correct record.

20/71 VISION DERBYSHIRE (Agenda Item 5)

The Committee considered a report which set out the work that has been taking place with Derbyshire councils on the development of a new collaborative approach to deliver non-structural reform across Derbyshire, and also provided an update on progress with the proposed publication of the Government's Devolution and Recovery White Paper and the potential for local government reorganisation.

The report was welcomed, with the view being expressed that ways in which the proposals could save money needed to be demonstrated and that there needed to be greater engagement with key organisations including the LEP and major employers. The disengagement of Derby City Council was commented on and it was queried whether this could affect the success of the project. It was commented that although High Peak needed to be

involved in the process to avoid the area being isolated, it is important to still be able to work with other authorities, such as the Greater Manchester authorities, in view of services accessed by residents.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Executive be recommended to:
 1. note the progress with the work that has taken place with Derbyshire Councils on the development of Vision Derbyshire – a new collaborative approach to deliver non-structural reform across Derbyshire;
 2. note the intended publication of the Government’s Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper and the potential implications in relation to local government reform;
 3. approve Vision Derbyshire as the Council’s preferred option of local government reform in Derbyshire at the current time subject to further reports on confirmed proposals;
 4. endorse the District Councils’ Network’s call for proposals in the Government white paper to back the success of district councils in delivery and not distract from the local recovery effort or reduce delivery capacity through forcing local government reorganisation
2. That the committee receive further reports on any confirmed proposals from Vision Derbyshire when available.

20/72 COVID RECOVERY - VERBAL UPDATE
(Agenda Item 10)

The Committee were provided with an update around the current restrictions due to Covid, the council’s response and recovery plans.

In addition to ensuring services meet the current government guidelines, additional responsibilities had also been placed on the council in terms of administering the business grants schemes, and there were a number of enforcement and compliance activities and extended regulatory requirements to adhere to. It was noted that some non-statutory services such as internal audit had been suspended in order to assist with the administration of the business rates scheme. Work was now on-going around the re-opening of services under the Tier 3 restriction and arrangements would be reviewed as government guidance is issued.

Regarding the Business Grants, the council is administering 4 schemes which offered both mandatory and discretionary grants to eligible businesses who were encouraged to apply via the council’s website. Other funding had been received which local authorities could use in various ways to support businesses including grants, training and collaborating with other authorities. It was anticipated that further announcements regarding potential other funding opportunities would be announced imminently, information on which would be circulated to members.

The view was expressed that pressure should be put on the government to provide more funding to local authorities to support local businesses, to which members were advised that the Derbyshire authorities had written to the Prime Minister arguing against the Tier 3 classification for Derbyshire, and requesting more local decision making, which had been partly achieved by Tiers being classified on a county rather than regional basis. It was also commented that Tier 2 and Tier 3 areas are receiving the same amount of funding, in spite of the tougher restrictions in Tier 3. Reference was made to travel between different Tier levels in certain areas and the effect of the restrictions on rural businesses,

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

20/73 SECOND QUARTER FINANCIAL, PERFORMANCE AND PROCUREMENT REVIEW
(Agenda Item 6)

The Committee considered a report which provided information around the council's overall performance and financial position for the period ended 30 September ("Second Quarter"). The impact of Covid on the council's finances was given particular consideration.

RESOLVED:

That the Second Quarter 2020/21 financial, procurement and performance position as detailed in Appendices A, B and C and summarised at paragraph 3.3 of the covering report be noted.

20/74 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN UPDATE
(Agenda Item 7)

The Committee considered the Council's updated Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for the period 2021/22 – 2024/25 which presents the council's priorities in the context of the likely resources available and provided a financial context for future decision making.

Reference was made to paragraph 3.10 of the report which set out a projected General Fund deficit over the 4 year period and a required draw down from contingency reserves, which would mean the contingency reserves would be below the £1.3M minimum required balance should no other funding become available. The updated MTFP will be presented in February.

RESOLVED:

That the updated Medium Term Financial Plan be noted.

20/75 ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20
(Agenda Item 8)

The Committee considered the Council's Annual Report for 2019/20 which compared High Peak's performance and costs with councils in the East Midlands region and nationally, and highlights further action where necessary.

It was noted that only minor changes had been made to the Corporate Plan priorities as they had only been in place since October 2019.

Members commented on the excellent performance by the staff, making particular reference to the refuse service.

RESOLVED:

That the findings of the benchmarking exercises and the small refocus of the Corporate Plan suggested for the following 12 months be noted.

20/76 INFORMATION GOVERNANCE UPDATE
(Agenda Item 9)

The committee considered an update around Information Governance which details how the Council continues to embed good information management practices through its ASSURED framework.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

**20/77 JOINT VENTURE PARTNERSHIP TO DELIVERY FACILITIES
MANAGEMENT AND HOUSING REPAIR SERVICES**
(Agenda Item 11)

The committee considered a report which provided information on the engagement that is underway with Norse Group Ltd. To develop a joint venture partnership for delivering the Council's Facilities Management and Housing Repair services. The proposal will provide a vehicle to develop and enhance the service along with the potential for securing commercial opportunities to offer such services to other public and private sector organisations in Derbyshire and Staffordshire.

The potential of developing a joint venture company to deliver these services was welcomed, however, concern was expressed regarding the lack of scrutiny of the proposal so far and a comparison was made to the extensive process undertaken in the lead up to the establishment of AES. Some concern was also expressed around the performance of Norse to date. It was suggested that a sub-committee be convened to examine and scrutinise the proposals in much greater depth, including the proposed make up of the Board.

Members were assured that a full report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Executive setting out the full business case and principles of the partnership prior to the final decision being made by an IED.

RESOLVED:

That a sub-committee be convened to scrutinise the proposals and business plan prior to consideration by the Executive.

20/78 SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME
(Agenda Item 12)

In response to a comment regarding the workload of the committee for the February meeting, members were advised that it was likely that four reports would be brought forward for consideration.

RESOLVED:

That the Select Committee Work Programmes be noted.

20/79 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC
(Agenda Item 14)

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business as there may be disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

20/80 WRITE OFF OF IRRECOVERABLE DEBTS
(Agenda Item 15)

The Committee recommended approval of a number of applications for the write off of non-recoverable debts.

20/81 ASSET MANAGEMENT UPDATE
(Agenda Item 16)

The Committee considered an update around the council's assets and agreed to re-convene the Asset Management Working Group.

The meeting concluded at 8.12 pm

CHAIR