



CORPORATE SELECT COMMITTEE

Meeting: Monday, 27 September 2021 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, K Savage and E Thrane

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

22/8 TO RECEIVE DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST ON ANY MATTERS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE
(Agenda Item 2)

There were no disclosures of interest.

22/9 ANY MATTERS REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE UNDER THE CALL-IN PROCEDURE
(Agenda Item 3)

There were no matters referred to the Committee.

22/10 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING
(Agenda Item 4)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2021 be approved as a correct record.

22/11 FIRST QUARTER FINANCIAL, PROCUREMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW 2021/22
(Agenda Item 5)

The report informed members of the Council's overall finance, procurement and performance position at 30 June 2021 (First Quarter 2021/22).

FINANCE

Significant projected variances (>£50,000) were identified as follows:

Underspends

- Waste Collection (£60,550);
- Leisure Services (£243,860).

Overspends

- Revenues (£131,310);
- Corporate Finance (£189,100).

The efficiency target for the year was £101,000, of which £67,000 had already been achieved.

During discussions it was clarified that the overspend on recovery was due to the fact that the Courts were closed, preventing the normal recovery actions being taken. Later in the recovery procedure, the Council's use of external recovery agencies was queried. A previous move to utilise in-house methods of recovery would be researched and a report on recovery processes would be brought back to a subsequent Committee.

It was confirmed that, when the budget was set some Business Rate Reliefs were not known. £1.7 million was received after the budget was set. This would all be allocated to businesses throughout the year.

PROCUREMENT

The procurement process was progressing well post Covid.

PERFORMANCE

Suggestions from previous iterations of the report had been taken on board and were generally received positively.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee note the First Quarter 2021/22 financial, procurement and performance position detailed in Appendices A, B and C and summarised at 3.3 of the covering report.

22/12

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN UPDATE

(Agenda Item 6)

The report represented a refresh of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) prior to a full revamp in February 2022.

Inflationary pressures were now showing with the rate of inflation increasing, partially fuelled by an increase to National Insurance of 1.25% and projected energy price increases.

Financial risks were illustrated by a RAG chart (Red, Amber and Green) with only 1 Red risk (Government Funding Reviews relating to the replacement of the New Homes Bonus, the future or expansion of Business Rates Retention and the Fair Funding Review all remaining unknown. The likelihood was that there would be no fundamental change within a year.)

A correction was made to Paragraph 8.6 of the report, confirming that any reference within it to “Staffordshire” should have read “Derbyshire”.

Members welcomed cross-party member involvement in the Asset Management Strategy and the Housing Revenue Account Financial Improvement Plan. Assurance was given of the Council’s continued strive to make savings wherever possible in order to obtain value for money.

Sustainability did not appear to be sufficiently embedded in the report process, though training in this area was under way for report authors and would be evidenced as things move on.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee noted the updates as proposed to the MTFP set in February 2021, including further proposed actions.

22/13

LOCAL COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME REVIEW & FOCUS ON UC IMPLICATIONS

(Agenda Item 7)

The Council was obliged to annually consider whether to revise its Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS), leave it as was or replace it with a completely new scheme. The report proposed to retain the existing scheme for 2022/23. However, the introduction of Universal Credit (UC) meant that the current scheme was proving increasingly difficult to administer and more difficult for recipients of the discount to understand and manage. The proposal was to explore options to provide greater certainty in the light of UC. Any decisions on design and subsequent implementation would occur by 2023/24 at the earliest, to allow for extensive consultation.

John Betts – Interim Executive Director of Finance, Revenues & Benefits – confirmed that extreme caution was needed when designing the proposed bandings. A number of scenarios would be ‘modelled’ before any specific proposals were brought before the Committee.

Members urged officers to expedite the process with the emphasis on operational considerations rather than the principle of whether to re-design the scheme.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee recommended that the Executive:-

- Approve the proposal to retain the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2022/23;
- Approve the proposal for further research to be undertaken into alternative designs for a Council Tax Reduction Scheme that better deals with the impact of Universal Credit, subject to a further report and consultation.

22/14 VISION DERBYSHIRE
(Agenda Item 8)

The report provided an update on work taking place with Derbyshire Councils on Vision Derbyshire and the emergence of the opportunities presented through a County Deal. Approval was sought for the Council's involvement in Phase 4 development and implementation and for the Council's involvement in the establishment of a Joint Committee of local authorities within Derbyshire, the Vision Derbyshire Committee, to progress a collaborative working model which sought to improve outcomes for people and places through closer working between those authorities.

The financial commitment required was £52,350 p.a. There was an expectation that this Council could start to draw on some services including Climate Change, Local Plan reviews and aspects of Covid recovery. There was no intention to create a Scrutiny Panel within Vision Derbyshire as this process was to be done by the various Local Authorities independently. However a Joint Committee was envisaged.

One notable absentee from participation was South Derbyshire District Council. This was due to a change in Leadership of the Council brought about by a By-Election, part of the cause of which was the Vision Derbyshire project.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee recommend to the Executive:

- To note progress on the development of the Vision Derbyshire approach and recent phase 3 developments and achievements;
- To consider and note key actions currently being undertaken during Vision Derbyshire Phase 3a to develop an ambitious programme of work in advance of Phase 4;
- To consider and approve Vision Derbyshire Phase 4 proposals for the forthcoming period as set out in the report;
- To approve the Council's active participation in Vision Derbyshire Phase 4 and the associated costs of taking forward the programme of work, the maximum cost of which currently stood at £52,350 p.a.;
- To approve proposals for the establishment of the Vision Derbyshire Joint Committee and to delegate functions to the Joint Committee as set out in the Functions and Responsibilities document in Appendix B;
- To approve the Terms of Reference, including the Introduction and Context, Functions and Responsibilities, Procedural Rules and Information Procedure Rules for the Vision Derbyshire Joint Committee as set out in Appendix B and the position detailed in those documents regarding Scrutiny and Co-option;
- To appoint the Leader, Cllr. Anthony McKeown, as the Council's representative on the Vision Derbyshire Joint Committee and the Deputy Leader, Cllr. Damien Greenhalgh, as substitute;
- To agree to delegate authority to the Leader to agree by executive member decision which authority will act as the host authority for the Joint Committee;

- To note that as the functions of the Committee are executive functions, HPBC will not have the opportunity to co-opt additional members onto the Committee and the ability to co-opt is restricted within the Terms of Reference;
- To note that, in accordance with Section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000, constituent authorities who operate executive arrangements will need to make formal scrutiny arrangements to review or scrutinise decisions made in connection with the exercise of the functions of the Vision Derbyshire Joint Committee, and the Council's existing scrutiny arrangements through its select committees will apply.

22/15 SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

(Agenda Item 9)

The Chair asked about a previous request around customer contact. The Leader confirmed that this would form part of another report which was currently in production.

RESOLVED:

That the Select Committees' Work Programmes be noted.

22/16 ANY QUESTIONS REFERRED TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER (MEMBER SERVICES TO BE ADVISED OF ANY QUESTIONS AT LEAST 4 DAYS PRIOR TO THE MEETING)

(Agenda Item 10)

There were no questions.

22/17 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

(Agenda Item 11)

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.

22/18 EXEMPT MINUTES

(Agenda Item 12)

RESOLVED:

That the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2021 be approved as a correct record.

**22/19 JOINT VENTURE FOR THE PROVISION OF FACILITIES MANAGEMENT
AND HOUSING REPAIRS**
(Agenda Item 13)

Consideration was given to a report concerned with the establishment of an organisation for the provision of facilities management and housing repairs.

22/20 FUTURE HIGH STREET FUND UPDATE
(Agenda Item 14)

The Committee noted the current position of the Future High Street Fund bid.

The meeting concluded at 7.50 pm

CHAIRMAN