



CORPORATE SELECT COMMITTEE

Meeting: Monday, 5 December 2022 at 6.30 pm in a Virtual Meeting

Present: Councillor T Ashton (Chair)

Councillors J Collins, L Grooby, P Hardy, E Kelly, D Lomax, R McKeown, G Oakley, E Siddall and E Thrane

Councillors Barrow. Greenhalgh, A, McKeown, Sizeland and Young were also in attendance.

23/40 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chair announced 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.

23/41 ANY MATTERS REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE UNDER THE CALL-IN PROCEDURE (Agenda Item 3)

None

23/42 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 4)

With reference to minute 23/25 "East Midlands Devolution Deal", members requested sight of the correspondence submitted by the Council referred to in resolution (2).

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2022 be approved as a correct record.

23/43 SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda Item 5)

The following comments were made:

- Trust arrangements for Victoria Hall and Town Hall – add to March meeting of Corporate
- Hadfield Hall Lease arrangements – add to a future meeting of Economy & Growth Committee
- Derbyshire Police – specifically around how they plan to respond in High Peak to the outcome of the inspection report, PCSOs (numbers and retraining plans), Community hub in Chapel and stations in Glossop, number of police in the area – add to a future meeting of Community Select Committee
- FHSF – future issues around finance will be reported to Corporate Select Committee and development issues will be reported to Economy & Growth Select Committee
- Waste and Recycling – further information is awaited from Government

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the above comments, the Select Committee Work Programmes' be noted.

23/44 2ND QUARTER FINANCIAL, PROCUREMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW
(Agenda Item 7)

The Committee considered a report which informed members of the Council's overall performance and financial position for the period ended 30 September 2022 ("Second Quarter 2022/23"). Detailed analysis was provided in the appendices to the report and the Executive Councillor presented a summary of the position to the committee.

Regarding salary costs, which are budgeted for as part of the Corporate Finance Service, members were advised that a 2.5% increase had been budgeted for, but the national pay bargaining outcome had led to an uplift to over 6%.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Second Quarter 2022/23 financial, procurement and performance position detailed in Appendices A, B and C and summarised at 3.3 of the covering report be noted; and
2. The Executive be recommended to approve the write offs as set out in Appendix D of the report.

23/45 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN
(Agenda Item 8)

The Committee considered the Council's updated draft Medium term Financial Plan (MTFP). The MTFP presents the Council's priorities in the context of the likely resources available, providing a financial context to future decision making. It is reflective of the current financial position of the Council part way through the 2022-23 year and contains a large number of assumptions that will be refined and quantified to inform a final version of the MTFP for approval in February 2023, and to this extent, this report and its contents should be considered as indicative.

The Executive Councillor presented the report and provided a summary of the main points. The Executive Director added that it was anticipated that the settlement figures would be received this month, and the assumptions used are benchmarked against other similar authorities.

It was requested that following receipt of the Government settlement, that a detailed briefing be held for all councillors on the financial future of the authority, in advance of the budget council meeting in February. A shorter version of this report, with full explanations, was also being prepared which would be circulated.

Reference was made to the principle risks to the plan, and it was suggested that changes in legislation and extreme weather should be included as risks, together with a contingency for climate change actions. Members were assured that the reserve for climate change actions does remain, and that the impact of actions on the environment is built into the planning and delivery of the financial plan.

RESOLVED:

That the updated draft Medium Term Financial Plan (Appendix A) be noted, and that it should proceed to the Executive for approval prior to it being refined in advance of full approval in February 2023.

23/46

REVISED LOCAL COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

(Agenda Item 9)

The Committee considered the proposed implementation of a revised Council Tax Reduction Scheme with effect from 1 April 2023. The proposals would introduce a new income banded / grid scheme for working age applicants, which would make it easier for customers, increase the overall level of support for the lowest income families and reduce the significant administrative burden placed on the Council by the introduction of Universal Credit.

The proposed new scheme had been subject to full consultation with the major precepting authorities and the public in line with legislative requirements, the results of which were set out in the appendices to the report. Several comments received during the consultation from members of the public concerned the capital limit of £6,000. In response to these comments, it was requested that the potential for increasing this limit to £10,000 be explored, which would bring it in line with the limit for pensioners and increase the numbers of claimants who would continue to receive support (subsequent to the meeting, this was quantified to represent 27 cases). Discussion ensued around this issue, and it was suggested that the impact of an increase in the limit to £10,000 be considered and whether a stepped approach from £10,000 to £16,000 may be feasible in an effort to establish the fairest way of delivering the scheme. It was further requested that the policy be further reviewed prior to the implementation of the 2024/25 scheme.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Executive be recommended to recommend that Council approve the introduction of a new banded / grid scheme for working age applicants with effect from 1 April 2023, subject to a proposed increase in capital limit to £10,000, and if feasible, with a stepped approach to £16,000;
2. That the new scheme be reviewed by Corporate Select Committee late 2023 prior to the introduction of the 2024/25 scheme.

23/47 EAST MIDLANDS DEVOLUTION DEAL - PROPOSAL FOR CONSULTATION

(Agenda Item 6)

The Committee considered a summary of the East Midlands County Combined Authority (EMCCA) Proposal and the associated consultation process following the devolution deal offered from government that was announced on 30 August 2022. Responses to the consultation were invited by 9 January 2023, and a number of suggested issues that should be included in the response were set out at paragraph 13.3 of the report.

The Leader introduced the report and key issues, drawing attention to various issues around public health which had been a late addition to the consultation document and presented challenges with the shift in health arrangements to Integrated Commission Boards. Further clarification had also not been received around the role of the PCC.

Members commented that sight of the original response sent after the last meeting of Corporate Select in September would have been helpful.

Whilst it was acknowledged that the majority of the points set out at paragraph 13 of the report could apply to most districts and boroughs, there were concerns expressed that High Peak was just seen as a very rural area, and the importance of High Peak should be stressed in terms of jobs and livelihoods and to use examples of the many successful small and medium size businesses in the area. Due to the location and geography of High Peak, there were concerns that many of the issues set out within the proposal, such as the M1 and East Coast Main Line, have no impact on High Peak, and that delivery of services in the area, including policing, could be affected negatively. Reference was also made to experiences with the LEP and the concentration of spend in areas other than High Peak, together with the need to examine school, roads and the difficulties in accessing court services for example.

Concern was also expressed regarding the proposed Governance arrangements, whereby there will be 2 non-constituent members to be nominated by Derbyshire and 2 by Nottingham, with the view expressed that districts are being marginalised. It was further queried how the districts will co-ordinate to ensure that each area's needs are represented adequately by the two that are chosen, and whether the two representatives chosen will be do so on a politically balanced basis.

RESOLVED:

1. That the proposal for the creation of the East Midlands County Combined Authority (EMCAA) as set out at Appendix A and summarised in Sections 9 and 10 of the report be noted;
2. That the consultation process as detailed in Section 11 of the report be noted;
3. That the comments set out above be included in the Council's formal response to the consultation, together with any others to be fed in direct, a copy of which is to be circulated to Group Leaders prior to submission.

23/48 CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY
(Agenda Item 10)

The Committee considered a revised approach to conducting consultation and engagement across the Council following feedback from the Local Government Association's Corporate Peer Challenge. The Policy will apply to the majority of the Council's activities except for those within Planning and Development where the process for consultation and engagement is covered within the Statement of Community Involvement.

In response to a query around the methodology to be used, members were advised that the views of a representative sample of the community would be captured, and that the LGA have a number of suggested questions that can be used in order to benchmark with other authorities. It was suggested that a small reward may be offered to increase participation in the survey, and it was noted that focus groups may be used for targeted consultations.

RESOLVED:

That the approval of the Consultation and Engagement Strategy and the proposals made at section 8 of the report with regards to the conduct of a Residents' Survey, be noted.

23/49 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 11)

None

23/50 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC
(Agenda Item 12)

RESOLVED:

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

23/51 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING
(Agenda Item 13)

RESOLVED:

That the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2022 be approved as a correct record.

23/52 APPLICATION FOR WRITE OFF OF NON- RECOVERABLE DEBTS
(Agenda Item 14)

The Committee considered the application for the write off of non-recoverable debts.

The meeting concluded at 8.22 pm

CHAIRMAN