

Policy and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

23rd September 2019

Present- Councillor Harling, in the chair,
Councillors Afzal, Connor, Rigby, C., Floyd, Hussain, Maf, Hussain, S, Liddle, Slater N, and
Whittle

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting and received apologies from Councillor Groves

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 24th June 2019.

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 24th June 2019 were submitted.

RESOLVED- that the minutes of the meeting held on 24th June 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the chair.

3. Work Programme.

The Committee were reminded that Members had agreed to focus on the Corporate Priorities as the work programme for the year with Members seeking to add value to the work of the Executive and work with them on the delivery of these. The work of the Executive Member for Finance and Governance underpinned the work on all of the Councils Key priorities.

RESOLVED- That the work programme be noted

4. The Budget

The Executive Member outlined the key issues relating to the Council's financial position and the budget going forward. The forecast overspend and the level of usable reserves were outlined and the discussions that are ongoing to consider remedial actions. The Committee was reminded that the Council could not present an unbalanced budget and the implications of the use of reserves for this year and on later years was outlined.

The Committee considered the work that was ongoing on the impact of the recent one year Spending Round which may have positive and negative impact on the Council's budget. These included-

- The potential impact of an Adult Social Care Precept of 2%
- Additional monies for Adult and Children Social Care £1bn (nationally)
- A small real terms increase in Public Health Grant
- Additional monies for SEND provision £700m (nationally)
- Uplift in Business Rates multiplier

BUT ALSO

- The ending of the Lancashire 75% business rate retention pool pilot
- Potential end to new 'New Homes Bonus' payments

Directors would continue to work with Executive Members to review all options to reduce costs and close the forecast budget gap.

The Committee discussed the implications of the pilot for retention of Business Rates and if taking this forward would be beneficial for the Council and in response it was informed that if the pilot was implemented in the way that it had run in Lancashire for the past year then it would be positive for Blackburn with Darwen.

RESOLVED- That the Committee be kept informed of the progress on the delivery of the budget throughout the year and the ways that are being examined to seek a reduction in the forecast deficit.

5. **Sickness Absence, Mental Health and Barriers to Employee Health and Wellbeing.**

The Committee were updated on the work ongoing on sickness absence, mental health and barriers to employee health and wellbeing. The report addressed the recommendation of the Committee held in March and examined what the Council does to support attendance and address barriers to health and wellbeing. The Committee looked at how the positive benefits of wellbeing initiatives were being delivered in terms of improved attendance and comparisons with other authorities. Information was shared on the support given to staff in terms of training and development to carry out their duties and team working.

RESOLVED- That further comparisons with other Unitary Authorities in the area be submitted to the Committee together with further information on the introduction of new technology and smarter/agile working. The absence targets and work place initiatives would be kept under review by the Committee.

6. **Removal of Call-in Provisions.**

The Committee were informed that the Chair and Vice Chair had been requested and had agreed to the suspension of the call-in provisions in respect of a decision relating to the Kerbside Recycling Contract. The Committee were informed that the issue had been the subject of a review by the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting.

RESOLVED- That the removal of the call-in provisions be noted.

Chair.....

Date of the meeting.....