

CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

19 JULY 2024

Minutes of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held as a hybrid meeting on Friday, 19 July 2024

PRESENT: **Councillor Richard Jones (Chair)**

Councillors: Tina Claydon, David Coggins Cogan, Bill Crease, Gladys Healey, Alasdair Ibbotson, Gina Maddison, Allan Marshall, Billy Mullin, Vicky Perfect and Jason Shallcross

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor: Andrew Parkhurst attended as an observer

APOLOGY: Councillor: Arnold Woolley and Christine Jones (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services)

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Ian Roberts (Leader of the Council); Councillor Dave Hughes (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Streetscene & Transportation); Councillor Paul Johnson (Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value and Procurement); Chief Executive; Chief Officer (Governance), Corporate Finance Manager; Strategic Finance Manager; Corporate Manager - People and Organisational Development; Corporate Manager - Capital Programme and Assets and Strategic Partnerships Advisor for minute no. 22

IN ATTENDANCE: Democratic Services Manager and team

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

None.

14. ACTION TRACKING [\(Link to recording\)](#)

The Democratic Services Manager presented a [report](#) on progress with actions from previous meetings.

In respect of the action arising from the March meeting, copies of responses from the Welsh Government and UK Government would be circulated to the Committee.

The recommendation in the report was supported.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee notes the progress which has been made.

15. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME ([Link to recording](#))

The Democratic Services Manager presented the Committee's [Forward Work Programme](#) for consideration, noting that Cabinet Member titles on the Terms of Reference required updating.

As requested, Finance officers would share analysis on grant funding and expenditure incurred by the Council on the implementation of 20mph zones.

A report would be scheduled for November/December 2024 to provide details of expenditure and financial controls within the Assets portfolio. On that basis, the recommendations were supported.

RESOLVED:

(a) That the Forward Work Programme be approved, as amended; and

(b) That the Democratic Services Manager, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises.

16. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND BUDGET 2025/26 ([Link to recording](#))

The Corporate Finance Manager presented a [report](#) on the first stage of developing the budget for 2025/26 prior to consideration by Cabinet.

Separate responses would be shared with the Committee on (i) the rationale for funding transportation for pupils out of county to Chester Catholic High School as opposed to using local provision; (ii) the process for dealing with people presenting as homeless with no local connection; and (iii) potential benefits arising from the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000.

On that basis, the recommendation was supported.

RESOLVED:

That the comments on the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget 2025/26 be reported back to Cabinet when it considers the report.

17. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2023/24 (OUTTURN) AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24 (OUTTURN) ([Link to recording](#))

The Corporate Finance Manager and Strategic Finance Manager presented reports on the 2023/24 final outturn for the [Council Fund and Housing Revenue Account](#) and [Capital Programme](#) prior to consideration by Cabinet.

Separate responses would be shared with the Committee on (i) the cost of purchasing vehicles for the Fleet contract renewal; (ii) percentage of reserves against revenue held by other local authorities for comparison purposes; (iii) information on the shared service accommodation charge from Gwynedd Council under Planning, Environment & Economy; and (iv) details of the previously understated £0.042m Food Poverty costs in Housing & Communities. Also, an update on mitigation options for homelessness was requested for the September meeting.

On that basis, the recommendations were supported.

RESOLVED:

(a) That having considered the Revenue Budget Monitoring 2023/24 (final outturn) report, the Committee confirms that there are no specific matters to be raised with Cabinet; and

(b) That having considered the Capital Programme Monitoring 2023/24 (final outturn) report, the Committee confirms that there are no specific matters to be raised with Cabinet.

18. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2024/25 (INTERIM) ([Link to recording](#))

The Corporate Finance Manager presented a [report](#) which provided the first overview of the budget monitoring position for the 2024/25 financial year.

The recommendation was amended to reflect the debate.

RESOLVED:

(a) That having considered the Revenue Budget Monitoring 2024/25 (interim) report, the Committee confirms that there are no specific matters to be raised with Cabinet; and

(b) That comments on the process for dealing with exempt reports be referred to the Constitution & Democratic Services Committee for consideration.

There was a brief adjournment at this stage of the meeting.

19. GOVERNANCE FOR THE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME ([Link to recording](#))

The Chief Officer (Governance) presented a [report](#) on the proposed governance structure for the transformation programme which aimed to make savings to help meet the funding gap in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The Leader of the Council asked to put on record his thanks to the Chair for his engagement in the process.

During the debate, an amendment was put forward and lost. A subsequent amendment was put to the vote and carried, which reflected concerns around regularly reviewing progress on outcomes and resources. Officers noted the request for updates on the programme to indicate a 'failure standard' to identify any potential risks.

RESOLVED:

(a) That the Committee endorses the proposed governance structure and recommends it to Cabinet to commit to resourcing Year 1 (2024/25) of the programme; and

(b) That the Committee adjusts its own work programme to take account of the role it will play in the transformation programme.

20. DIGITAL STRATEGY - AUDIT WALES REVIEW, RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSED ACTIONS ([Link to recording](#))

The Chief Officer (Governance) presented a [report](#) on the outcome of the audit on the Council's Digital Strategy, to gain approval for the proposed action plan in response to the recommendations from Audit Wales.

A suggestion was made for a future item on Principle 2 of the Local Digital Declarations within the Council's Digital Strategy.

The recommendation in the report was supported.

RESOLVED:

That the comments made by the Committee on the proposed action plan be noted by Cabinet.

21. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 - TO CONSIDER THE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting as the following item was considered to be exempt by virtue of paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

22. THIRD SECTOR GRANT FUNDING

The Corporate Manager - Capital Programme and Assets presented an update on third sector funding; Community Chest and Strategic Funding which included progress on implementing actions from the last review and recommendations for next steps.

Officers agreed to follow up a request for clarity on the Community Chest funding to ensure consistency between the amount stated in the report and that on the Council's website. On that basis, the recommendations in the report were supported.

RESOLVED:

(a) That the Committee notes the information provided on third sector funding, along with the progress made in implementing a former review;

(b) That the Committee notes the recommendation of a further review of Strategic Funding to address the issues identified, including those highlighted by the recent Internal Audit, and that further reports are brought back to the Committee as the work progresses to provide updates; and

(c) That the Committee supports a continuation of the Community Chest grant funding scheme, subject to a review to be conducted in 2024/25, to include the terms of reference.

23. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

None.

(The meeting started at 10am and ended at 2.25pm)

Chair

.....

Meetings of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee are webcast and can be viewed by visiting the webcast library at <http://flintshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>