

SWT Executive - 28 October 2020

Present: Councillor Benet Allen (Vice Chair in the Chair)

Councillors Benet Allen, Chris Booth, Ross Henley, Marcus Kravis, Richard Lees, Peter Pilkington, Mike Rigby, Francesca Smith and Sarah Wakefield

Officers: Dawn Adey, James Barrah, Richard Burge, Emily Collacott, Paul Fitzgerald, Tracey Meadows (Democracy and Governance), Alison North, Andrew Pritchard, Clare Rendell, Richard Sealy and Amy Tregellas

Also Present: Councillors Norman Cavill, Simon Coles, Roger Habgood, John Hassall, Janet Lloyd, Vivienne Stock-Williams, Anthony Trollope-Bellew, Ray Tully, Brenda Weston, Loretta Whetlor and Gwil Wren

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm)

52. Apologies

An apology was received from Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts.

53. Declarations of Interest

Members present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Councillor or Clerk of a County, Town or Parish Council or any other Local Authority:-

Name	Minute No.	Description of Interest	Reason	Action Taken
Cllr C Booth	All Items	Wellington and Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr N Cavill	All Items	West Monkton	Personal	Spoke
Cllr S Coles	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke
Cllr R Lees	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr J Lloyd	All Items	Wellington & Sampford Arundel	Personal	Spoke
Cllr P Pilkington	All Items	Timberscombe	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Rigby	All Items	SCC & Bishops Lydeard	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr F Smith	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr V Stock-Williams	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke

Cllr R Tully	All Items	West Monkton	Personal	Spoke
Cllr B Weston	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke
Cllr L Whetlor	All Items	Watchet	Personal	Spoke
Cllr G Wren	All Items	Clerk to Milverton PC	Personal	Spoke

Councillor S Wakefield further declared a personal interest as a director of the Community Interest Company for Toneworks and Councillor M Kravis further declared a personal interest as his partner was employed by the YMCA Dulverton Group.

54. **Public Participation - To receive only in relation to the business for which the Extraordinary Meeting has been called any questions, statements or petitions from the public in accordance with Council Procedure Rules 14,15 and 16**

No members of the public had requested to speak on any item on the agenda.

55. **Corporate Performance Report, Month 4, 2020/21**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors queried how customers found out when their complaint had been resolved.
The Assistant Director for Customer advised that the process was still being constructed but that customers would be told in a timely manner. Training on complaint resolution would be required for officers.
- Councillors queried how targets were quantified.
The Assistant Director for Customer advised that work would be needed to clarify targets and be able to quantify targets. Officers were working on ways of getting information out to customers to assist in minimising the amount of complaints received.
- Councillors were pleased to see that the targets had been met even during the Covid Pandemic.
- Councillors requested a comparison against last year's figures on complaints.
The figures would be sent out to councillors after the meeting.
- The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services apologised for the increase in complaints received on waste services at the start of the Covid Pandemic, but advised that those figures had now lowered.
- Clarification was requested on the number of appeals outlined in the report.
Clarification was given.
- Councillors requested whether the information could be broken down in ward areas.
Officers would investigate if that would be possible.
- Councillors queried what system was being used to log complaints and for the new process.
Firmstep was being used for complaints.

Resolved that Executive considered the attached performance report.

56. **2020/21 Financial Monitoring as at Month 4, ended 31 July 2020, and In Year COVID Budget Changes**

During the discussion, the following point was raised:-

- The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources thanked officers for all their hard work on the budget.

Resolved that the Executive:-

- 2.1 Reviewed the Council's forecast financial performance and projected reserves position for 2020/21 financial year as at 31 July 2020;
- 2.2 Recommended that Full Council approved a supplementary estimate of £657k from General Reserves to fund the estimated overspend related to COVID;
- 2.3 Recommended that Full Council approved the realignment of budgets for COVID related income and expenditure to offset the reported variances that net off to zero when including the £657k in 2.2 above;
- 2.4 Recommended that Full Council approved changes to the General Fund Capital Programme by a total of -£1.370m for the following headings as referred in paragraph 11.3:
 - a) £295,000 reduction to Major Transport Schemes budget;
 - b) £375,000 reduction to remove budget for Creech Castle Road Improvements contribution;
 - c) £200,000 reduction to Employment Site Enabling schemes budget;
 - d) £1,000,000 reduction to Public Transport Improvements budget as Housing Infrastructure Fund bid not successful; and
 - e) £500,000 increase to Education Provision budget funded by Community Infrastructure Levy.
- 2.5 Recommended that Full Council approved the revised Budget Total for the Growth Programme of £3.56m to be funded by New Homes Bonus as set out in paragraph 11.7 Table 8, and CIL-funded Infrastructure Capital Programme totalling £16.262m as set out in paragraph 11.10 Table 9; and
- 2.6 Recommended that Full Council approved a supplementary estimate to the Capital Programme, in 2020/21, for Toneworks, up to £500k, which was the maximum value of the grant funding applied for from the Historic England.

57. **Financial Monitoring - Outturn Position 2019/20**

Resolved that the Executive:-

- 2.1.1 Noted the reported General Fund Revenue Budget underspend of £1.836m in 2019/20 and the General Reserves Balance of £4.522m as at 31 March 2020 which provided financial resilience and flexibility to meet increased financial pressures in 2020/21 and subsequent years;
- 2.1.2 Noted the reported Housing Revenue Account Budget underspend of £8k in 2019/20 and the HRA General Reserves Balance of £2.701m as at 31 March 2020;

- 2.1.3 Approved the transfer of £1.2m of General Fund Earmarked Reserves back into General Fund General Reserves, as set out in Appendix B; and
- 2.1.4 Noted the Capital Outturn position and approved the proposed carry forward of £29.996m approved budget to 2020/21 General Fund Capital Programme (as per Appendix C) and £15.822m to the 2020/21 Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme (as per Appendix D).

58. **Financial Strategy 2020/21 to 2022/23 - Review and Update**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors queried whether the Section 151 Officer had heard from Central Government on whether any more funding was available to assist with work linked to the Covid Pandemic.
The Section 151 Officer advised that another tranche of funding had been announced for £500,000.
- Councillors queried whether there had been any indication from Central Government's on their trajectory on which direction they would take on future payments of New Homes Bonus.
The Section 151 Officer advised that they had not forecast for any future payments to be received after this financial year. However, there had been a hint that this might change once the Government review had taken place.

Resolved that the Executive:-

- 2.1 Approved the updated Financial Strategy for 2020/21 to 2022/23, including agreement of the principle of using general reserves to reduce the Budget Gap in 2021/22 and 2022/23;
- 2.2 Recommended that Full Council approved the amended CIL Allocation Principles as set out in paragraph 21.15 of this report; and
- 2.3 Recommended that Full Council approved the reallocation of reserves to provide increased resilience and flexibility to mitigate COVID related financial pressures, and to support the Revenue Budget in the medium term, as follows:
 - a) To transfer £3.949m of New Homes Bonus reserve to General Reserves, noting alternative financing for relevant capital schemes through Community Infrastructure Levy and borrowing as set out in paragraph 21.7.
 - b) To transfer £1.0m from the Business Rates Volatility Reserve to General Reserves as set out in paragraph 14.6.

(The Meeting ended at 7.10 pm)