

Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

Wednesday 11 November 2020 at 5.45pm

Present: Councillor L Giles (Chair);
Councillors E M Giles and Moore.

In Attendance: Councillors Piper and Preece.

Officers: David Stevens (Chief Executive), Clare Sandland (Service Manager – Finance).

43/20 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Rollins.

44/20 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

45/20 **Matter of Urgency**

There were no additional items of business to consider as matters of urgency.

46/20 **Medium Term Financial Strategy Update**

The Board received a presentation on the Medium Term Financial Strategy which would cover three years beginning with the financial year 2021/22.

The presentation set out pressures that were to be included in the Strategy, other pressures that were not included, revised assumptions (for example around inflation) and one-off funding sources that could be utilised from within the Council's General Fund balance.



From the comments and questions by councillors, the following responses were made and issues highlighted:-

- The Property Management Account covered all aspects of the Council's offices including cleaning, utilities and facilities including vending machines.
- Pressures were already being experienced prior to COVID-19, including in Special Educational Needs and Disability transport and Legal Services.
- Following a reduction in demand for printing it had been necessary to renegotiate with the supplier, although this still resulted in a pressure.
- When established it had been envisioned that the Digital Transformation Team would be funded through savings realised as a result of digitisation of services. Whilst the work had not resulted in savings in that manner, it was identified that the Digital Transformation Team was required to continue this work and therefore there was a need to establish a target budget for this service going forward.
- Based on the latest information, the emergency funding provided by the Government was adequate to cover the costs associated with COVID-19. However, it was noted that this was the position prior to the second Lockdown period.
- Previously it had been reported that deficits caused by lower collection rates of Council Tax and Business Rates could be spread across three years; this had changed and now had to be spread across that period.
- Whilst a working assumption had been made around level of pay increase for staff, members noted that this was negotiated at a Government level and expressed their hopes that the Council would lobby strongly on this matter as Council staff had continued to work throughout the COVID-19 situation, some at significant increased risk.

Members welcomed the update on the Strategy, but highlighted the need for further detail on individual elements to allow for more in-depth scrutiny and discussion to take place.

The Chair thanked officers for attending the meeting.

Resolved that a further report on the Medium Term Financial Strategy be brought to a future meeting of the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board.

Meeting ended at 6.32pm