

Emergency Committee

Wednesday 6 May 2020 at 14:30 at Sandwell Council House, Oldbury

Present: Councillor Y Davies (Chair);
Councillors Ali, Crompton, Hadley, Millard and Shaeen.

Officers: David Stevens (Chief Executive), Alan Caddick (Director – Housing and Communities), Neil Cox (Director - Prevention and Protection), Lesley Hagger (Executive Director – Children’s Services), Stuart Lackenby (Director - Adult Social Care), Alison Knight (Executive Director – Neighbourhoods), Rebecca Maher (Service Manager – Finance), Elaine Newsome (Service Manager – Democracy), Nicola Plant (Service Manager - Regulated Services and Transformation), Sue Stanhope (Interim Director – Human Resources), Suky Suthi-Nagra (Democratic Services Manager), Surjit Tour (Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer) and Chris Ward (Director – Education, Skills and Employment).

21/20 **Chair’s Announcements**

The Chair reported that in accordance with the 2020 Coronavirus Regulations, the meeting was being held remotely to facilitate attendance and enable the consideration of important matters during the current COVID-19 situation, i.e. all members of the Committee joining in remotely were now able to contribute and vote on any matter.

Due to technical issues, the meeting was not being broadcast live but would be made available for members of the public to access after the meeting.

21/20 **Apology for absence**

Members noted the apology of Councillor Moore, Chair of the Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board.

22/20 **Minutes of Meetings**

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.



23/20 **Additional Item of Business – Pension Deficit Upfront Payment**

The Head of Finance reported that a triennial review of the West Midlands Pensions Fund (WMPF) had been completed. The total amount payable for Sandwell MBC was £32.7m. However, WMPF had enabled local authorities to make an upfront payment to cover the three-year period in order to obtain a discount. The total amount due for Sandwell MBC in this scenario would be £30.563m which was a saving of £2.137m.

This had been included in the budget figures that were approved by full Council on 10th March 2020 and the Council did not need to undertake any long-term borrowing in order to make this payment.

Agreed that the Deputy Section 151 Officer be authorised to make an upfront payment of £30.563m to cover Sandwell MBC's pension deficit for the period 2020/21 to 2022/23, to be made on 7th May 2020.

24/20 **Declarations of Interest**

No interests were declared at the meeting.

25/20 **Covid-19 Risk Management Update**

Consideration was given to the new emerging risks faced by the Council in light of Covid 19, together with the impact on existing risks, the assessment of these risks and the arrangements in place to manage these.

The reporting of these risks would contribute to ensuring that good governance, internal control and risk management arrangements informed decision making throughout the emergency period.

Agreed that the mitigations that have been put in place to date by the Council and the requirement to put in place further mitigations that may be required to manage these risks and the implications of these be noted.

26/20 **Gambling Act 2005 – Statement of Principles**

The Gambling Act 2005 (the Act) required Sandwell Council, as the Licensing Authority, to review its Statement of Principles under the Gambling Act 2005, (Gambling Policy) every three years.

Approval was sought to the Statement of Principles following consultation with stakeholders and to the 'no casino' resolution being retained.

Agreed:-

- (1) that the 'no casino' resolution be retained within the Statement of Principles;
- (2) that the Gambling Act 2005 - Statement of Principles, as now submitted, be approved and adopted with immediate effect.

27/20

Statement of Licensing Policy 2020

Approval was sought to the updated Statement of Licensing Policy for the borough outlining:-

- the sale of alcohol;
- the supply of alcohol by or on behalf of a club;
- the provision of regulated entertainment;
- the provision of late-night refreshment.

Section 5 of the Licensing Act 2003 required the Council, as the Licensing Authority, to prepare and publish its own Statement of Licensing Policy outlining how it intended to carry out its licensing functions under the Act and to publish an updated statement of that policy.

Formal consultation had been completed in line with the Act. Members of the Licensing Committee had been consulted on the revised policy and had no objections.

Agreed that the updated Statement of Licensing Policy for the borough be approved, in accordance with Section 5 of the Licensing Act 2003, with effect from April 2020.

28/20

Post Covid-19 Recovery and Reset

The Chair outlined the Council's next steps towards a reset and recovery of Council Services. The implementation of the reset was responsive to National Policy changes and driven by local considerations.

In the short to medium term, it was unlikely that there would be a return to pre-pandemic business as usual. In partnership with key stakeholders and Trade unions, the focus would be on the opportunity to reform, re-imagine and re-invent. The approach would be to rethink what we do and how we do it as a whole organisation, in order to address longstanding issues and challenges.

The key aspects of the Council's reset and recovery planning would be:-

- ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the employees in the workplace;
- maintaining business continuity across the Council;
- ensuring partnerships which was integral to recovery;

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- business, economic and infrastructure recovery;
- health and welfare recovery;
- sound governance was in place.

Whilst it was not possible to predict when the current situation would end, the Council would still need to proactively plan to move forward. The Council was now swiftly moving from response mode into a dynamic reset/recovery phase, key areas of focus would include:-

- i. planning immediate post COVID-19 response which included moving safely out of lock down;
- ii. determining recovery and reset priorities including the development of a recovery and reset plan;
- iii. reviewing how corporate strategies, policies and the organisation as a whole were reshaped to meet the needs of communities in future.

These areas aligned to the strategic outcomes outlined in the Sandwell Plan 2020 and the achievement of these outcomes remained at the centre of our strategic focus with the Recovery & Reset Plan outlining how, as an organisation, we would do this.

Agreed that the Council's next steps towards a reset and recovery of Council Services be noted.

29/20

Decisions taken by the Leader and Chief Officers in accordance with Delegated Powers

The Committee noted details of an action taken by the Director – Adult Social Care since the last meeting of the Committee in relation care home spend, in accordance with his delegated powers.

Meeting ended at 15:10

This meeting is available to view on the Council's website

<https://cmis.sandwell.gov.uk/cm5/Meetings.aspx>