

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

RESOURCES O&S COMMITTEE – PUBLIC MEETING

1400 hours on Thursday 11 March 2021 (On-line Meeting)

Present:

Councillor Sir Albert Bore (Chair)

Councillors: Muhammad Afzal, David Barrie, Meirion Jenkins and Paul Tilsley

Also Present:

Councillor Tristan Chatfield, Cabinet Member, Finance and Resources

Sara Pitt, Assistant Director, Service Finance

Jayne Bowles, Scrutiny Officer

Emma Williamson, Head of Scrutiny

1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

The Chairman advised the meeting to note that this meeting will be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast via the Council's Internet site (www.civico.net/birmingham) and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there are confidential or exempt items.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Yvonne Mosquito.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

4. ACTION NOTES – 8 FEBRUARY 2021 & 11 FEBRUARY 2021

(See documents 1 and 2)

The Chair confirmed the letters to Cllr Holbrook and Cllr Pocock had been sent and circulated to Members.

RESOLVED:-

The action notes of 8 February 2021 and 11 February 2021 were agreed.

5. FINANCIAL MONITORING 2020/21 – MONTH 10

(See document 3)

Councillor Tristan Chatfield, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, and Sara Pitt, Assistant Director, Service Finance, attended for this item.

The following points were highlighted:

- The overall position is positive, with caveats around Covid spend but this is largely compensated for by Government funding;
- There is currently a net underspend of £9.2m which represents 1.1% of the overall budget, made up of a £16.4m underspend on non-Covid issues and a £7.2m overspend relating to Covid;
- The main factor with regard to the underspend relates to Adult Social Care as a result of transformative savings and the NHS picking up much of the cost of patients in Covid care;
- It was confirmed that this matter had been referred to the Health and Social Care O&S Committee;
- The bid for the £2.9m funding to support leisure centres was submitted on 15th January and Members were informed that the bid had been successful, albeit at a lower figure of £2.6m;
- Cabinet has approved the transfer of non-ringfenced underspend at the end of the year into the Delivery Plan reserve to support the delivery of that plan, which is essential in terms of improvement and the Council's future financial position;
- Through Star Chambers and general discussions, as the Covid emergency subsides, there will be a need to make sure the organisation is unwinding its spending where Covid is concerned in order to reach a more settled financial position;

In the course of the discussion, and in response to Members' questions, the following were among the main points raised:

- Members noted that there was a report going to Cabinet on the ERP project, a matter which had been of interest to this committee for some time;
- There were concerns that the project is running late and the budget has increased, with all the requirements still not having been defined;
- Cllr Chatfield told Members that there is a lot more detail in the report which hopefully meets the objective of being open around costs and how the delay has arisen;
- It was suggested that the committee should continue to monitor this and it was agreed that the report should be included on the agenda for the April meeting;
- In response to a question about the cost of servicing debt, it was pointed out that this was an issue which had been referred to in previous monitoring reports;
- Members were told that in a comparison of local authorities, some concern had been flagged up about the level of BCC debt, which is higher than many other core cities, however it was noted that Birmingham is a larger authority;

- There are a range of ways the debt profile is managed and it is dependent on some things out of our control. However, there is a need to make sure there is an awareness of the risk of interest rates going up;
- In terms of capital expenditure, it was pointed out that in the commentary there is no identification of the projects that are slipping and Members asked that in future reports a short paragraph is included which summarises the position and identifies where the slippage is taking place, as it does for Revenue.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and officers for their attendance and for the new format of the monthly reports which has resulted in Members needing to ask fewer questions.

RESOLVED:-

The report was noted.

6. PLANNED PROCUREMENT ACTIVITY REPORT

(See document 4)

There was no indication from Members that there were any matters to refer to the Cabinet meeting.

RESOLVED:-

The report was noted.

7. WORK PROGRAMME

(See document 5)

The Chair advised that there would be an informal session following this meeting to look at matters to bring forward as part of the work programme. It was confirmed that one of the subjects for discussion would be in relation to a piece of work on Agency Workers, Consultants and Interims.

With regard to the Forward Plan items listed on the work programme, Members were told that the “Procurement Strategy for supply of non-permanent workers and permanent recruitment solutions”, originally scheduled for March, would now be going to Cabinet in April.

RESOLVED:-

The report was noted.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Noted.

9. REQUEST(S) FOR CALL IN/COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION/PETITIONS RECEIVED (IF ANY)

None.

10. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

11. AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS

RESOLVED:

That in an urgent situation between meetings, the Chairman jointly with the relevant Chief Officer has authority to act on behalf of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 1437 hours.