

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2

TUESDAY, 10 JANUARY 2023

Present:

Councillors Bullivant (Chair), Swain (Vice-Chair), Austen, D Cox, Daws, Gribble, Hayes, G Hook, Morgan and L Petherick

Members Attendance:

Councillors H Cox, J Hook, Keeling, Nutley, Taylor and Wrigley

Apologies:

Councillors Eden, Nuttall and Tume

Officers in Attendance:

Martin Flitcroft, Chief Finance Officer & Head of Corporate Services
Jack Williams, Performance Data Analyst
Trish Corns, Democratic Services Officer
Christopher Morgan, Trainee Democratic Services Officer

1. MINUTES

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2022 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chair.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Executive Member Councillor Wrigley declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute 12 below by virtue of his property overlooking the Exe Estuary and as treasurer of the Starcross/Cockwood boat club.

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None.

4. COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS

None.

5. EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN

The Executive forward plan detailing issues to be considered over the next few months was noted.

6. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee's work programme as circulated with the agenda was noted.

7. INITIAL FINANCIAL PLAN PROPOSALS 2023/24 TO 2025/26

The chair referred to the agenda report on the initial financial plan proposals 2023/24 to 2025/26 considered by the Executive on 3 January 2023.

The Executive Member for corporate resources presented the proposals including draft revenue and capital budgets for the three years 2023/24 to 2025/26. The budget was balanced using earmarked reserves. The main issues taken into account were:

- The level of council tax and the proposal to increase it by £5.54 or 2.99%. Providing a one-off cost of living payment of £5.54 to households liable to pay council tax on their main home on 1 April 2023 in 2023/24
- Reducing central funding and the need to make ongoing efficiencies using invest to save where possible.
- Maintaining 100% council tax support.
- The ongoing impact of post pandemic activity and economic conditions on income streams and changing Government funding.
- Continuing to react to the climate change emergency by maintaining ongoing budgets for a climate change officer and associated spending, temporary staffing resources in revenue and provision in the capital programme, including ongoing provisions for corporate decarbonisation schemes as set out at paragraph 5.5. of the appended Executive report.
- A £2 million provision for employment sites funded by borrowing.
- Provision for an Emergency Planning officer.
- Temporary funds for a Scrutiny Officer to assist Members with the Scrutiny function and working groups; appointment of a Digital transformation manager and other temporary resources for facilitating the Modern 25 work.
- Support for housing including the Teignbridge 100 (as set out at paragraph 5.3 of the appended Executive report) whilst backing business and bringing people and organisations together for local neighbourhood planning.
- Infrastructure delivery plan investment funded by community infrastructure levy (CIL) and external sources where available; continuation of grant-funded South West Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme as per paragraph 5.6 of the appended Executive report
- Town centre investment in infrastructure and employment as per paragraph 5.7 of the appended Executive report
- Re-establishing revenue contributions to capital initially at £300,000 per annum
- Continuation of enhanced Planning funding
- Councillors community fund set at £1,000 each

Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 (10.1.2023)

- Provision of £20,000 for year 2 of the 'Tidy Teignbridge' initiatives to improve cleanliness for town and parish councils
- Paying £500,000 off our pension deficit liability to reduce on going contributions.
- The level of reserves necessary for the council as per paragraph 4.22 of the appended Executive report.
- Estimated revenue budget gap of £3.6 million in 2025/26 and ongoing gaps (before use of remaining earmarked reserves) and action required to address this including establishing working groups to inform Overview & Scrutiny on work to reduce the gap, as per paragraph 4.26 of the appended Executive report.

In response to questions the Committee noted:

- The new post of an emergency planning officer would provide a dedicated person to deal with emergency situations such as a power outage for several days as a result of a snowstorm and would address the risk of not having a dedicated officer in place.
- Appendix 7 of the Executive report was the budget and financial plan for the next 5 years. OS 1 and 2 Committees should form task and finish groups to refer to this document and scrutinise services to suggest action to reduce the expected budget gap of £3.6m in 2025/26. This work could commence prior to the May elections and would need to feed into future budget proposals each year up to and including 2025/26. It would be an ongoing process to reduce the budget gap and would work with the potential savings identified by Ignite.
- The one-off cost of living payment of £5.54 to households liable to pay council tax would protect the Council tax base rate for future years and would amount to some £330k.

RECOMMENDED

That Council resolves to approve the council tax base of 50,215 for 2023/24 as set out in Appendix 2 of the attached Executive 3 January 2023 report.

8. LEISURE CENTRE REFURBISHMENT PROPOSALS - UPDATE

The Executive Member for sport, recreation and culture referred to the agenda report which provided an update on refurbishment of the Leisure centres. The decarbonisation works and covid have shown that disruption to services results in time to rebuild business. The refurbishment works at Dawlish Leisure centre were complete. Financial modelling and demand analysis would be updated to direct the business going forward.

RESOLVED

The report and work undertaken to date was noted.

9. EXECUTIVE MEMBER BIENNIAL UPDATE, CORPORATE RESOURCES, COUNCILLOR KEELING

Councillor Keeling updated the Committee on services within his portfolio, which included the following:

- Regular Finance reports to Executive which identified savings in the current year of £146,000.
- Minute 7 of the budget report 2023/24 proposals above refers to new document being the 5 year strategy financial plan 2023 to 2028 at Appendix 7 which sets out some key principles that overview and scrutiny (O and S) committees are asked to look at to address the budget gap for Better 2022 and Modern 2025.
- O and S are asked to focus on various aspects of the budget and forming working groups to investigate and report back with recommendations on specific budget areas. This might be on all sorts of areas e.g. grants, use of assets, fees and charges policy, transfer or disposal of assets, commercial opportunities etc.
- The 2021/22 have been finalised and awaiting to be audited.
- All service departments have been updating business plan and these include sections on performance and service reviews will take the form of an independent review of the service which will update Business Plans.
- Managers will revisit business plans in line with the requirements of our Better 2022 process for ensuring we deliver our services in the most efficient way. The key driver going forward will be to merge this process into our work on Modern 25.
- Work is being undertaken on a comprehensive Councillors Induction Programme following the May 2023 elections and also what IT provision would best meet Councillors' requirements.
- Key challenges are mainly financial to reduce the budget gap through service reviews and the Modern 25 agenda which will look at the structure and deliver savings as the Council progresses through the ideas and options identified by Ignite, the work internally and O&S input.
- All services are investigating a series of digital enhancements to processes within the service areas as part of the council's wider modernisation programme – "Modernising Teignbridge." This work will be ongoing over the next two years as the Council changes its operating model to realise future savings.

In response to questions, it was noted that accessing services online reduces costs and is the way forward. Dedicated digital officers would assist customers to connect to services online.

10. EXECUTIVE MEMBER BIENNIAL UPDATE, JOBS AND ECONOMY, COUNCILLOR JEFFERIES

Councillor Jefferies biennial update to Committee was deferred until the next meeting on 2 February 2023 due to her apology for attending the meeting.

11. CAR PARKS TASK AND FINISH GROUP - UPDATE

Councillor H Cox, the Chair of the group advised that the group had completed its meetings and recommendations. A report would be presented to the Committee for consideration.

12. DAWLISH WARREN - CURRENT SITUATION WITH THE GEO TUBES AND SAND MOVEMENT

The Executive Member for climate change, coastal and flood risk management, and Councillor Wrigley, the Chair of the south and east Devon habitat regulations executive committee reported on the current situation with the geo tubes at Dawlish Warren. The erosion at the Warren was currently occurring quicker than expected. The Environment Agency would be removing the geo tubes and replacing with defences along the estuary to protect settlements before 2050. In the meantime planning permission has been granted to repair the geo tubes.

13. COUNCIL STRATEGY PERFORMANCE MONITORING Q1 AND 2

The Chair referred to the agenda reports covering the period April to October 2022 which updated performance of the Council's Strategy 2020- 2030 T10 priorities, under the auspices of the Committee. There were no areas of concern. Details of the programmes, projects and performance indicators with a caution status together with an explanation of the performance and improvement plan was detailed in the appendix of the agenda report.

RESOLVED

The report be received, and actions being taken to rectify any performance issues detailed in the agenda report appendix be noted.

CLLR P BULLIVANT
Chairman