

Minutes of the Meeting of the STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE held on 17 November 2020

PRESENT -

Councillor Eber Kington (Chairman); Councillors Arthur Abdulin, Steve Bridger, Kate Chinn, Nigel Collin, Hannah Dalton, David Gulland, Colin Keane and Barry Nash

Officers present: Kathryn Beldon (Chief Executive), Damian Roberts (Chief Operating Officer), Lee Duffy (Chief Finance Officer), Amardip Healy (Chief Legal Officer), Judith Doney (Head of Digital and Service Transformation), Mark Shephard (Head of Property and Regeneration), Brendan Bradley (Chief Accountant), Gordon Walker (CTS Scheme Adviser), Sarah Ironmonger (Director, Audit), Sarah Keeble (Democratic Services Officer) and Tim Richardson (Committee Administrator)

45 QUESTION TIME

No questions had been submitted or were asked by members of the public.

46 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made in items on the Agenda.

47 2019-20 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT FINDINGS ADDENDUM

The Committee received a report presenting the 2019/20 Statement of Accounts and Grant Thornton's Audit Findings Addendum following the external audit.

The Committee received a verbal introduction to the report from Sarah Ironmonger on behalf of Grant Thornton (the External Auditor).

The following matters were considered:

- a) **Reason for re-approval:** Members noted that this report was recommended for re-approval from when it was previously heard and approved at the previous Committee meeting in September. It was noted that it was usual to have some outstanding items on the Annual Statement of Accounts, but rare for it to have to come back to the Committee to be re-approved based upon amendments. The Committee noted that the reason for re-approval was to exercise good practise as the addendum included some changes in wording to Note 4 and some minor changes to disclosure notes.
- b) **Emerald House:** Members noted the reasons why some of the aspects of the Emerald House property had been initially missed. It was noted that

Emerald House will not be an income generating property until 2022, as it sits currently in a two-year rent-free period following acquisition. It had been omitted from the Council's accounts as no rent is due until 2022, but has since been included for future years.

Following consideration, it was resolved unanimously that the Committee:

- (1) **Re-approved the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2020;**
- (2) **Considered the amendment to the Statement of Accounts since 22 September S&R Committee, as set-out in the Audit Findings Addendum;**
- (3) **Agreed the management action in response to the audit recommendations within the Audit Findings Addendum;**
- (4) **Agreed that the Chairman or Vice Chairman of Strategy and Resources Committee and the Chief Finance Officer sign the Letter of Representation on behalf of the Council;**
- (5) **Agreed to delegate any further amendments to the 2019/20 Statement of Accounts to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Chairman or Vice Chairman of Strategy and Resources Committee.**

48 LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2021

The Committee received a report providing an update on the current Local Council Tax Support Scheme and seeks approval for the introduction of an income banded Council Tax Income Discount scheme, for those of working age, from 1 April 2021.

The following matters were considered:

- a) **Response rate:** Members noted the response rate from residents regarding the recent Council Tax survey. It was noted that to aid ease of response, residents currently in receipt of Council Tax support were sent paper copies of the survey and supplied with paid-postage return envelopes, as well as an online option of completion.

Following consideration, it was resolved unanimously that the Committee:

- (1) **Agreed the actions proposed to replace the current means tested Local Council Tax Support Scheme with an income banded Council Tax Income Discount scheme from 1 April 2021;**

(2) Agreed the revised Section 13A discretionary relief policy, in respect of Council Tax in individual cases.

The Committee gave thanks to the Revenues and Benefits team for the work they have done and continue to do for the Strategy and Resources Committee, with a request that it be Minuted.

49 VENUES UPDATE

The Committee received a report notifying the Committee of the recent report taken to Community & Wellbeing Committee and the measures taken to safeguard Bourne Hall's key income streams during the current lockdown.

The Committee received a verbal introduction from the Head of Property and Regeneration.

Following consideration, it was resolved unanimously that the Committee:

(1) Noted the contents of the report taken to Community & Wellbeing Committee at its meeting held on 16 November 2020;

(2) Noted the partial closure of Bourne Hall to the public for the duration of the current lockdown.

50 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 22 September and the Restricted Minutes of the meeting held on 22 September and the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 October were agreed as a true record and the Committee authorised the Chairman to sign them.

The meeting began at 7.00 pm and ended at 7.49 pm

COUNCILLOR EBER KINGTON (CHAIRMAN)

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