

MINUTES

CABINET

21 MAY 2019

Councillors: Anderson Griffiths
Banks G Sutton
Elliot Williams

Officers: Mark Brookes Assistant Director - Corporate and Contracted Services
James Deane Corporate Director - Finance and Operations
Sally Marshall Chief Executive
Sarah Turner PA to the Corporate Directors
Nigel Howcutt Assistant Director - Finance and Resources
Farida Hussain Group Manager (Legal & Corporate Services)
Claire Oliveri Communications and Consultation Officer

Also Attendance:

Councillor Ron Tindall

The meeting began at 7.30 pm

CA/42/19 MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2019 were agreed by Members present and signed by the Chair.

CA/43/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies of absence

CA/44/19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

CA/45/19 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation

CA/46/19 REFERRALS TO CABINET

There were no referrals to Cabinet

CA/47/19 CABINET FORWARD PLAN

The forward plan was noted with the following changes:

1. Add Hemel Garden Suburbs to the 25 June meeting
2. Add Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 30 July meeting.

CA/48/19 FINANCIAL OUTTURN REPORT

Decision

- 1) That the movements on earmarked reserves as set out in section 10 be approved.
- 2) That the capital slippage into financial year 2019/20 as set out in Appendix C be reviewed and approved.

Corporate objectives

Delivering an efficient and modern council

Monitoring Officer

No further comments to add.

Deputy S.151 Officer

This is a Deputy S.151 Officer report.

Advice

Councillor Elliot introduced the report confirming that the financial outturn report which has been presented is a provisional outturn position for 2018/19. It is provisional as the final outturn report is yet to be finalised and scrutinised by Audit. The final outturn with Audit opinion will be reviewed and approved by the Audit Committee on 18th July.

Councillor Elliot confirmed that this report asks Cabinet to review the provisional outturn position and approve the Capital slippage and movements on earmarked reserves are set out in appendix C and section 10 of the report.

Councillor Elliot summarised the report stating that the financial outturn details on the Revenue finances delivered a balanced outturn position against the approved budget for the General Fund and that the HRA has delivered an operating underspend of £255,000.

Councillor Elliot said that in regards to the Capital budget, the General Fund Capital programme has slipped £4m in the final Q4 initial dates to due to differences in three major Capital projects such as housing grant payments to housing associations for delivery of affordable homes by £2.1m, Berkhamsted multi-story car park £1.2m and Tring swimming pool completion of £300,000. Tring swimming pool has now completed.

Cllr Elliot advised that the HRA Capital programme has slipped by £1.5m this was due to slight delays in the Stationers Place project because of access problems with HCC, in the amount of £500,000, a reduction in commission of Capital works of

£900,000 as a result of a £465,000 gain/share payment from Osbornes and a well targeted replacement programme reducing the need for additional works.

Cabinet agreed the recommendations in the report.

CA/49/19 VEHICLE REPAIR SHOP

- 1) That the proposal to bring the repair and maintenance of vehicles and equipment used by Clean Safe and Green and Cemeteries back in house be approved.
- 2) That Cabinet recommend Council approve the additional capital funds required of £60k as outlined in the report to Cabinet in paragraph 3.4

Corporate objectives

Maintain a clean and safe environment.

Monitoring Officer:

The proposal should add to service resilience and produce a financial saving for the council as highlighted in the report.

The service will need to ensure that all health and safety audits and checks are complete prior to the handover back to Dacorum.

S.151 Officer

The revenue implications of bringing the vehicle repairs service in house would reduce the services, existing financial pressure by £27k p.a., with a part year effect in 2019/20.

The capital project would be an addition to the overall capital programme of £60k and would be funded through capital receipts received in 2019/20.

Advice

Councillor Anderson advised that since the appointment of Simon Smith as Transport Manager, the Council has been making a range of improvements, including initiatives such as fleet standardisation and acquiring new refuse freighters.

Councillor Anderson added that this report outlines the latest initiative which is to bring back in-house the maintenance of CSG and Cemeteries equipment. Which has been done previously under contract by Luton Borough Council since 2012, but the service is now in a position to do this work at Cupid Green Depot.

Councillor Anderson stated that the service will require three new posts and some Capital investment, this will release a Revenue saving of at least £27,000 per year. Officers will arrange the necessary Capital works if approved and the recruitment with a view to the maintenance starting in January 2020.

Councillor Anderson added that in addition to the financial saving, the benefit of doing this is also environmental and by doing things in house, we can do things

locally without having to send vehicles some distance to be dealt with, so we are achieving an environmental benefit as well as the financial one.

Councillor Elliot enquired if there was already a Fleet Inventory Controller post. D Austin replied that we don't have one at the moment and added that given that lots of the equipment is small like strimmers and blowers, there's lots of parts and equipment, so we are looking to have impressed stock room with better stock control and the ability to take things off the shelf. D Austin confirmed that it was more efficient and being realistic we need the role to make sure we have those controls. They will also look after things like the COSH chemicals, risk assessments and other things in terms of the supply of those materials.

Councillor Sutton felt this was an excellent report and asked when we move forward with this will there be opportunities to take on work for other authorities. D Austin replied that this is the next phase and vision, then Simon Smith has got some ideas about some of the Capital investment being duplicated for MOT testing, other income sources, maybe looking at some of our partners and the Fire Service. D Austin confirmed this is the next stage and then there will be another piece of work looking at the ability to bring in additional income for the service.

Councillor Tindall suggested that when in operation and there is the opportunity, that Adult Care Services at County are contacted as they have a large fleet of vehicles to collect and take people to day centres, it might be possible to see whether they are interested.

Councillor Griffiths asked if it would be more beneficial and financially viable to go into partnership with a supplier of these parts so that we didn't have to hold the stock and you have an arrangement where they bulk buy so you got a better discount. D Austin said it did make sense and part of the work that Simon has done on standardisation means that we have impressed stock so although we have the stock on site, we only pay if we use it. So it's quite an efficient mode of operation.

Cabinet agreed the recommendations in the report.

CA/50/19 PEER REVIEW

Decision

- 1) That the contents of the Corporate Peer Challenge Review Feedback Letter as annexed to this report be noted
- 2) That the publication of the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge letter for the Council be approved.

Corporate objectives

The Corporate Peer Challenge is an opportunity for the Council to reflect on the services it delivers, how it works and the relationship it has with Members, residents and its wider stakeholder base.

Therefore, the findings and recommendations from the report will support the Council to better deliver all of its corporate objectives.

Monitoring Officer:

The Peer Challenge feedback did not identify any areas of concern from a Monitoring Officer perspective. It did, however, highlight areas for continued development, which will need to be progressed as identified in the report.

Deputy S.151 Officer

There are no direct financial implications of this decision and the report highlights the good financial management arrangements and leadership in place.

Any proposals put forward to address the recommendations will need to be either met from within existing approved budgets or will require growth bids for inclusion in the usual budget setting process.

Advice

Councillor Williams said that we would release the letter. S Marshall confirmed we would publish the letter on the website and external sources.

Councillor Williams thought the report was good and said that he was pleased with the peer review findings. There are a few bits and pieces for us to pick up on, but nothing major.

S Marshall advised that the report recognised the progress that has been made since the last review, including the strong financial base, progress on re-prioritisation of services, progress on economic development, enabling housing growth and partnerships have been strengthened. S Marshall also confirmed that in terms of leadership we are good ambassadors for the Council and where we could do more on the outward facing, which we will be the under New Normal programme, is empowering staff to release capacity within the workforce. S Marshall highlighted that a summary of the report is included at 4.1 and said that overall it is a very good report.

Councillor Griffiths pointed out the need to be proactive in publicising the review outcome as it was very positive and we need to show staff that we appreciate them. The public should also be aware of the findings and also we should email the report to our partners, involved residents, community centres etc.

Councillor Elliot said that following on from Councillor Griffiths about publicising good news, he had just had his Portfolio Holder briefing and he was told that Housing Benefits had just had the best annual figures ever and they are pretty good at their job, we need to be more positive.

Cabinet agreed the recommendations in the report.

The Meeting ended at 7.45 pm