

SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

Tuesday 1 December 2020 at 6.00 pm

Virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams

Held in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020; and conducted according to the Council's Standing Orders for Remote Meetings and those set out in the Council's Constitution.

Committee Members present: Councillor J. Murray (Chair)
Councillor H. Bashir
Councillor S. Ditta
Councillor K. Ferguson
Councillor K. Hussain
Councillor L. Jeavons
Councillor W. Rasab
Councillor S. Samra
Councillor I. Shires
Councillor M. Statham

Portfolio Holders present: Councillor M. Bird - Leader
Councillor A. Andrew – Deputy Leader and Regeneration
Councillor G. Perry – Deputy Leader and Resilient Communities
Councillor O. Butler – Clean and Green
Councillor B. Chatta – Personnel and Business Support
Councillor S. Craddock – Health and Wellbeing
Councillor G. Perry – Deputy Leader and Resilient Communities
Councillor C. Towe – Education & Skills

Officers present: Deborah Hindson - Executive Director – Resources & Transformation
Helen Dudson – Corporate Assurance Manager
Stuart Wootton – Financial Planning Manager
Craig Goodall - Senior Democratic Services Officer

WELCOME

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming everyone, and explaining the rules of procedure and legal context in which the meeting was being held. He also directed members of the public viewing the meeting to the papers, which could be found on the Council's Committee Management Information system (CMIS) webpage.

Committee Members confirmed that they could see and hear the proceedings.

283/20 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Nawaz.

284/20 SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor Bashir substituted for Councillor Nawaz.

285/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest or party whip for the duration of the meeting.

**286/20 LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985
(AS AMENDED)**

There were no items of business that required the exclusion of the public.

287/20 MINUTES

A short discussion took place on the corporate style of minutes.

Resolved (by roll call):

That the Minutes of the meetings held on 8 October 2020, a copy having previously been circulated, be approved and signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

**288/20 FORECAST REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN FOR 2020/21 – 5
MONTH POSITION ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

The Committee were informed of the forecast financial and revenue position for 2020/21 for the Council.

The Leader highlighted the forecast revenue and capital outturn figures to Members.

Following a query the Leader reported that the loss of income from Integrated Facilities Management was due a reduction of catering and cleaning services being provided to schools. This had been caused by their closure from March-September.

Resolved (by assent):

That the report, and the information contained within it, be noted.

**289/20 DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET 2021/22 – 2023/24 AND IN YEAR POSITION
2020-21**

The Committee were informed of the draft revenue budget as reported to Cabinet on 28 October 2020. The report contained that latest medium term financial outlook. The report also contained an updated in year budget position.

In-year position

On the 2020-21 budget the Leader reported that a revenue overspend of £420,000 was currently forecast. This did not include the impact of Covid-19. He noted that Covid-19 had impacted the Councils finances and reported the potential best and worst case financial impact.

Draft revenue budget 2021/22 – 2023/24

The Leader continued to outline the draft revenue budget 2021/22 – 2023/24. He highlighted the savings and investments in the report, and his portfolio, and noted that further savings were required to balance the budget.

Following a question the Financial Planning Manager explained that the Council had received £6m of funding to support the response to the Covid-19 pandemic. He noted that the financial impact of the virus would continue into the next financial year. The Leader added that when planning for the next three years it was challenging to predict when services could reopen and what levels of income they could return. In terms of priorities he explained there would be a focus on supporting improvements in social care and a precept would be added to Council Tax for this purpose.

A Member asked a question about staff and it was reported that the majority of officers would continue to work from home. Staff were being provided with IT to improve home working facilities. The Civic Centre capacity was currently reduced from 1,500 to 350.

The Deputy Leader (Regeneration), the Deputy Leader (Resilient Communities) and Portfolio Holder for Personnel and Business Support presented budget issues from their portfolios to the Committee. Following a question about the Town Boards the Deputy Leader (Regeneration) explained that the Government had provided £25m of funding to Bloxwich and Walsall. This money was ring fenced and not match funded.

The meeting then moved on to receive feedback from representatives of the all other Overview and Scrutiny Committees on issues identified at their meetings as follows:

- *Children's Services* – challenge was provided regarding the transformation and proud programmes.
- *Social Care and Health* – the impact of Covid-19 on this area was discussed.
- *Education* – proposals that affected home to school transport were highlighted.
- *Economy & Environment* – it was reported that draft budget was noted.

RESOLVED (by assent):

The draft revenue budget 2021/22 – 2023/24 be noted.

290/20 **CORPORATE PLAN – QUARTER 2 UPDATE**

The Committee received a report detailing performance towards achieving performance measures from the Corporate Plan up to the end of quarter 2 (30 September 2020).

The Corporate Assurance Manager presented the report highlighting the majority of performance measures were on track. She added that Covid-19 had impacted a number of measures. She also noted that data for some measures was reported annually but assured Members that work was taking place to deliver in these areas. Following a question she explained that data on some economic measures for quarter 2 would be available in quarter 3.

Resolved (by roll call):

That:

- 1. Further information on measure 10 ‘number of apprentices in Walsall’ be provided to the Committee;**
- 2. The report be noted.**

291/20 **FEEDBACK FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

The meeting received feedback from recent meetings of the remaining Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

A Member requested that a report on Carbon Neutral Council be considered by the Committee as it had not been scheduled at the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny as previously requested.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

291/20 **AREAS OF FOCUS**

The Committee considered its work programme and the Forward Plans of Walsall Council and the Black Country Joint Executive Committee.

Following a discussion the following items were identified for the next meeting of the Committee:

- Carbon neutral council;
- Equalities;
- Covid-19 update including data and vaccinations.

A discussion took place on methods of scrutiny.

Resolved (by assent):

That the Areas of Focus and Forward Plan be noted.

292/20 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be held on 2 February 2021.

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 7.47pm.

Chair.....

Date.....