

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

TUESDAY, 5 DECEMBER 2023

PRESENT: Councillor G Taylor (Chair)

Councillors C Beswick, A Church, J Cox, M Johnson, A Parkes,
M Spooner and M Worthington

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor(s) C Atkins, L Malyon, L Swindlehurst, M Swindlehurst
and C Wood

APOLOGIES: Councillors C Brady, E Fallows and D Pascall

17 **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS, IF ANY.**

Councillor Beswick substituted for Councillor Fallows, Councillor Church substituted for Councillor Pascall and Councillor Spooner substituted for Councillor Brady.

18 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:-**

No interests were declared.

19 **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING.**

It was noted that a response to the query set out at minute 8 (4) regarding Churnet Valley Railway had not been received which would be chased up.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the above, the minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2023 be approved as a correct record.

20 **SECOND QUARTER FINANCIAL, PROCUREMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW 2023/24**

The Committee was informed of the Council's overall performance, procurement and financial position for the period ended 30th September 2023 ("Second Quarter 2023/24"). Detailed analysis was set out in the appendices to the report and was summarised in paragraph 3.3 of the report.

It was noted that the projected overspend is largely due to cost pressures in the waste collection service as set out in paragraph 4.4 of the report, which included a higher than anticipated pay settlement, reduce income from recycling and the projected impact of the temporary closure of the Leek Transfer Station. Members

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referred to the impact of a 0% council tax rise on the ability of the council to deliver services. Reference was made to revenue collection rates being positive.

Regarding procurement activity, reference was made to the refreshed procurement strategy, a high priority within which was the development of a local supplier policy.

It was requested that consideration be given to how the information could be presented to members which sets out both how the council is performing in comparison to the previous year, as well as performance against other similar councils. The former will be considered for inclusion in future quarterly reports and the latter is reported annually.

In respect of performance, there was discussion regarding the effective scrutiny of performance. It was requested that in future, Service Heads be invited to attend meetings of the committee on a rotational basis to provide more detailed information relating to performance in their area, such as what is underpinning performance and challenges to achieving targets.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Second Quarter 2023/24 financial, procure and performance position as detailed in Appendices A, B and C and summarised at paragraph 3.3 of the report, be noted;
2. That further to the above comments regarding performance, the Head of Communities and Climate Change be invited to the next meeting to provide more detailed performance information. It was agreed that as this would be the budget scrutiny meeting that this item will be first on the agenda and time limited.

21 UPDATED DRAFT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2024/25 TO 2027/28

The Committee considered a report that set out the Council's updated draft Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) which presents the Council's priorities in the context of the likely resources available, providing a financial context to future decision making. The MTFP is reflective of the current financial position of the Council part way through the 2023-24 year and contains a large number of assumptions that will be refined and quantified to inform a final version of the MTFP for approval in February 2024. Therefore, to this extent, the report and its contents were considered draft and indicative.

The projected gap was noted and it was commented by members that the Council's decision not to increase council tax impacts on the financial position of the Council in the MTFP and that this position cannot be sustained. It was noted that the efficiency programme includes themes around income generation and that benchmarking is undertaken with similar authorities to inform decisions on charging.

Discussion ensued around inflationary pressures, the impact of interest rates on borrowing and treasury management and the treatment of LUF funding.

Clarification was sought around the Assets Watercourse and survey which would be circulated.

RESOLVED:

That the updated draft Medium Term Financial Plan (Appendix A) be endorsed, and Cabinet be recommended to approve the plan prior to it being refined in advance of full approval in February 2024.

22 **PROCUREMENT - LOCAL SUPPLIERS.**

The Committee considered a briefing papers that set out details of Local Supplier Engagement.

Effective procurement with a focus on local business is a key objective in the Council's Corporate Plan, with the overarching aim to achieve effective use of resources and provide value for money. Several suggestions were set out within the briefing note to enhance engagement with local suppliers, including the development of a local supply chain policy, refreshing the procurement procedure rules to narrow down opportunity listing to a ring fenced region whilst maintaining fair, open, and transparent competition and improved work with Council controlled companies to support local suppliers directly.

Discussion ensued around how local suppliers could engage with the Council's procurement activities and assistance for businesses on procurement matters. Members were advised that a detailed analysis of the businesses in the area was to be undertaken and what category of spend they could support in an effort to increase engagement and close any gaps in signposting. It was requested that benchmarking data be included in future procurement reports. It was also requested that the postcodes included within the definition of 'local' used for assessing procurement from local suppliers be confirmed.

RESOLVED:

That the briefing notes and comments made above, be noted.

23 **WORK PROGRAMME**

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be noted.

24 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC.**

The Chair moved:-

"That, pursuant to Section 100A(2) and (4) of the Local Government, 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings whereby it is likely that confidential information as defined in Section 100A (3) of the Act would be disclosed to the public in breach of the obligation of confidence or exempt information as defined in Section 101 (1) of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act would be disclosed to the public by virtue of the Paragraphs indicated."

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25 **TO APPROVE THE EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING.**

RESOLVED:

That the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2023 be approved as a correct record.

The meeting closed at 11.55 am

_____ Chairman