

RESOURCES POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

Meeting - 8 December 2016

Present: Mr Egleton (Chairman) and
Mr Sangster

Apologies for absence: Mr Hogan and Mrs Jordan

51. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Policy Advisory Group (PAG) held on 27 September 2016 were received.

52. PORTFOLIO BUDGETS 2017/18

The PAG considered a report seeking Members' comments for the draft Revenue Budget and the Fees and Charges schedule for 2017/18 for the Resources Portfolio, prior to consolidation of all portfolio budgets for consideration by the Cabinet.

The report outlines the context of the overall financial position facing the Council for the coming year, and confirmed that as a result of the Government's deficit reduction strategy, Local Authority funding is subject to continuing significant reductions, particularly from 2018/19 onwards, alongside constraints on the level of Council Tax increases, and with regards to the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

In considering the report, the PAG particularly noted:

- that it would be prudent at this stage not to include any funding for new recurring expenditure, or to expand services;
- that the authority needs to identify measures to compensate for the reductions in resources, which would include joint working with CDC;
- the decrease to the Resources Portfolio budget is £316k (8.9%), including an assumed £120k from the letting of first floor Capswood 1, and £106k increase in car parking income.

During discussion amongst Members, it was clarified that the change on Housing Benefit subsidy related to the change to only budget for housing benefit on temporary accommodation placements at the level of the local housing allowance, not the actual rent charged. The additional cost from the Resources Portfolio would be reflected in the Healthy Communities Portfolio, so that the true cost of temporary accommodation would be clear. This highlighted the importance of the Council taking action to address the temporary accommodation situation, which has a major negative impact on the revenue budget.

It was further explained to Members that the planned expansion of the main Gerrards Cross car park was predicted to increase the Council's income. Additionally, Members noted that a strategic asset review was taking place in order to ascertain if returns could be generated from the Council's property assets.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, the Portfolio Holder **RECOMMENDED** the onward submission to Cabinet of:

- The 2017/18 Revenue Budget
- The 2017/18 Fees and Charges

53. TREASURY MANAGEMENT - QUARTERLY REPORT QUARTER 2 2016/17

The PAG received a report, setting out the Treasury Management performance of the Council, with the position largely remaining unchanged in term of interest rates and economic climate for June-September 2016, which was reflected in the return rates achieved. The report detailed that:

- the total loans outstanding at the end of the quarter were £23m as set out within the table in paragraph 3.3.
- at the end of September, £2.655m was held in an instant access account for the purpose of day to day cash flow.
- the corporate bonds held at the end of the quarter were identified in the table in paragraph 3.5, with a total value of £749k.
- the table at paragraph 3.6 showed the fluctuations in cash and instant access investment levels, comparing 2015/16 against 2016/17, depicting the cyclical nature of cash outflow.

During discussion Members' attention was brought to the graph in paragraph 3.6, which showed that sufficient levels were kept in the cash reserves in anticipation of the likely cash flow through to the end of the year.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

54. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Portfolio Holder explained to the Members of the PAG that the Homelessness B and B costs had been sent to Members in order that they could see the significance of these numbers and costs. Members agreed that revenue-saving solutions to these costs needed to be looked at, as the trend in Key Performance Indicators showing the numbers of those in B and B's and temporary accommodation to be increasing. Members noted that CDC use a hostel for those who are homeless, and that thought may need to be given as to where a similar facility could be based in South Bucks in order to reduce costs.

55. EXEMPT INFORMATION

"That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 following item of business is not for publication to the press or public on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act."

(para 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information))

56. PART II MINUTES

The Part II minutes of the meeting held on the 27 September 2016 were confirmed.

The meeting terminated at 6.35 pm