

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

25 JANUARY 2018

Present: Councillors Webb (Chair), Howard (Vice-Chair), Rankin, Turner, Davies and Dowling

Apologies for absence were noted for Councillor Bacon, Charman, Cooke, Atkins and Cartwright

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor	Minute	Interest
Webb	Draft Corporate Plan 2018/19 to 2020/21 Consultation on the Revenue Budget 2017/18 (Revised) and 2018/19 plus Capital Programme 2018/19 to 2020/21	Personal – he is a member of East Sussex County Council, Better Together and Health and Wellbeing Board Personal – He is a trustee of Combe Valley Park
Howard	Consultation on the Revenue Budget, 2017/18 (Revised) and 2018/19 plus Capital Programme 2018/19 to 2020/21	Personal – He is a trustee of Combe Valley Park
Chowney	Consultation on the Revenue Budget, 2017/18 (Revised) and 2018/19 plus Capital Programme 2018/19 to 2020/21	Personal – he lives near to Winchester Gardens.

19. DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2018/19 TO 2020/21

The Director of Corporate Services & Governance presented a report on the Draft Corporate Plan for 2018/19 to 2020/21. Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were invited to comment on the draft plan, as part of the consultation process.

The committee commented that the new infographics and style of the corporate plan had made the document much more vibrant and engaging. The council's corporate

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

25 JANUARY 2018

plan sets out the strategic direction and corporate priorities. The draft plan has been structured around three opportunities; inclusion, growth and futureproofing. The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council will be meeting with a range of organisations from the local community, voluntary and business sectors throughout the public consultation period.

The infographic for growth included the median weekly wage in Hastings, compared to our nearest neighbour. Discussion took place regarding possible alternative measures, including the average wage.

Consideration was given to the impact of further funding reductions to the council's partner agencies, including East Sussex. It was noted that reductions to funding made partnership working between agencies even more important. The council would continue to work with partners, such as the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) on a range of issues. The council was also represented on a number of partnership boards, including the Health and Well-Being Board.

Thanks were given to all those involved in drafting the corporate plan.

RESOLVED (unanimously) that:

- 1. That the comments of the Budget Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the council's draft corporate plan for 2018/19 – 2020/21 be referred to Budget Cabinet for consideration.**

Reasons for Recommendations:

To ensure the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's comments can be considered by the Budget Cabinet, prior to final recommendations being made to the Full Council.

20. CONSULTATION ON THE REVENUE BUDGET 2017/18 (REVISED) AND 2018/19 PLUS CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2018/19 TO 2020/21

A report was presented by the Assistant Director, Financial Services and Revenues.

The report presented the revised revenue budget for 2017/18 and a budget for 2018/19. The revised budget for 2017/18 takes account of the known variations to expenditure and income streams that have occurred since setting the budget in February 2017.

The report identified that a balanced budget can be achieved in 2018/19 although this involves using £923,000 of reserves built up for this purpose. The forecast deficit for 2019/20 is some £933,000, in 2020/21 it is £1.9m, and in 2021/22 it is £2.3m. It should be noted that the final grant settlement figures from government have yet to be received along with Disabled Facility Grants and Discretionary Housing Payments; once received adjustments will be made to the figures detailed in this report.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

25 JANUARY 2018

Members noted that the council receives a significant income from processing planning applications. Objections had been raised from a neighbouring authority to a number of applications. The council has been seeking advice about how to resolve this matter, and in the meantime has contacted applicants affected by the objection to update them.

The council had commissioned a local organisation to run the Coast Currents Festival in 2017. The event had been very successful and secured funding from the Arts Council. It was proposed to continue this approach for future years, achieving savings of £20,000 to the council.

Following a recommendation by the council's external auditors, Cabinet would receive a report on the savings achieved as part of the Priorities, Income, Expenditure Review (PIER) against the projections in the budget with the final accounts.

The Assistant Director, Financial Services and Revenues noted that the figures for commercial property income would be corrected to £963,961. Discussion took place regarding the council's income generation programme. Earlier in the year, the council had approved its energy generation strategy and a business plan for the new housing company. Funding of up to £1.7 million set aside to fit solar panels on council owned buildings. The council would also be exploring opportunities for wind powered energy generation. Members noted that the decision making structures needed to be sufficiently flexible to enable officers to respond to opportunities.

Consideration was given to the nature of marketing the town and attracting business. It was stated that the online report system for MyHastings was being marketed currently, and that sites such as Visit1066 are due to be updated.

Members noted that there was £1.6m in Parks and Gardens. It was noted that there are lots of components to Parks and Gardens, including landscaping and event management. The Assistant Director, Finance and Revenues agreed to provide a breakdown of the Parks and Gardens finances.

Questions were raised on the section of the report which stated that net expenditure had inflated. It was explained that funding from the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), which the council administered as part of the Healthy Hastings and Rother Programme, made spending seem higher.

Discussion took place regarding the Coastal Space Initiative. The initiative, which was delivered in partnership with Optivo, had brought a number of disused properties back in to use as social housing. The council had borrowed money to support the project, and retained a 50% share in the ownership of the properties. It was noted that at the time, the goal was not to make a financial gain, but to change the area for the benefit of the community. It was stated that phase three of the contract would be completed in the next few months.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

25 JANUARY 2018

RESOLVED that members comments will be reported back to Budget Cabinet on 12 February 2018.

The reason for this decision was:

Members views are sought as part of the consultation process.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at. 7.30 pm)