

POLICY & RESOURCES PANEL

Minutes of the meeting of the POLICY & RESOURCES PANEL held at Birch Suite, Muriel Matters House, Hastings Borough Council, Breeds Place, Hastings TN34 3UY at 11.30 am on Wednesday, 5 June 2019.

Present: Councillors Barnes (Chairman), Boorman, Tutt, Pragnell and Scott

Also present: D Whittaker (Chief Fire Officer), M O'Brien (Deputy Chief Fire Officer), M Andrews (Assistant Chief Fire Officer), L Woodley (Deputy Monitoring Officer), D Savage (Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer), L Ridley (Assistant Director Planning & Improvement), M Matthews (Assistant Director Safer Communities), H Scott-Youldon (Assistant Director Training & Assurance), C Williams (Station Manager – Business Safety Support) and E Simpkin (Democratic Services Officer)

129 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Boorman declared that his wife was a Lewes District Council Councillor.

130 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dowling. Councillor Boorman was attending as his substitute. Apologies had also been received from Councillor Theobald.

131 Notification of items which the Chairman considers urgent and proposes to take at the end of the agenda/Chairman's business items

There were none.

132 Minutes of the last Policy & Resources Panel meeting held on 17 January 2019

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Panel held on 17 January 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

133 Callover

Members reserved the following items for debate:

134 Revenue Budget & Capital Programme Monitoring Provisional Outturn 2018/19.

It was noted that agenda item 135 had been withdrawn.

Unconfirmed minutes – to be confirmed at the next meeting of the Policy & Resources Panel

134 Revenue Budget & Capital Programme Monitoring Provisional Outturn 2018/19

The Panel received a report from the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer (ADR/T) which presented the provisional outturn for the 2018/19 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme. The ADR/T introduced the report, highlighting that the 2018/19 draft accounts were now available on the website for public inspection. The position as, outlined in the report, was subject to external audit processes.

The ADR/T was pleased to report a broadly positive position with a forecast underspend of £193,000 – a significant improvement from the £557,000 forecast overspend which was reported in November 2018. This improved position was attributed to actions taken by the Senior Leadership Team to manage down the overspend as well as unexpected grant receipts relating to the refund of Retained Business Rates and section 31 Grants. There was overspend in the areas of Information Technology Governance and Safer Communities. Plans had been put in place both in the budget setting process and through improved reporting and financial monitoring to address the overspend. The Panel commended the work which had taken place to manage the forecast overspend to achieve a positive position.

The Panel queried whether a further drawn down of reserves would be required for the Sussex Control Centre (SCC). The ADR/T informed the Panel that a report providing a practical assessment of the SCC project including the financial implications, would be presented to a future Fire Authority meeting. This report would address Phase 2 of the current mobilising system, West Sussex County Council's (WSCC) exit, Project 21 (future mobilising) as well as the revenue implications of the period between WSCC's exit and the commencement of any new service from March 2021. Members agreed that it would be important to delineate the financial implications of present and future arrangements.

The ADR/T addressed the Capital Programme monitoring, reminding the Panel that a revised programme was agreed in February 2019. There had been further slippage on fleet purchases, however, new appliance chassis had now been completed. The ADR/T commented on the ambitious Capital Programme for 2019/20 with new appliances and significant estates projects.

The Panel noted a correction to table 6.5.7 on page 16 of the report. The figure of £57,000 stated in the report omitted the £90,000 Operational Response Review bid. The total shortfall to be funded from the 2019/20 contingency was £147,000.

The Panel commented on the investment return rates which they felt were slightly low. The ADR/T explained that investments had been made in accordance with the Treasury Management Strategy agreed by Members. Interest rates remained low. Officers were looking into alternative investments such as property funds and would be presenting potential options to Members in due course.

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RESOLVED: That the Panel:

1. Notes:

- (i) the provisional 2018/19 Revenue Budget outturn;
- (ii) the provisional Capital Programme outturn and slippage;
- (iii) the use of reserves during the year;
- (iv) the savings taken in 2018/19; and
- (vi) the year-end investments.

2. Approves the use of the provisional Revenue Budget underspend as set out in paragraph 6.5 of the report.

135 Restricting Exit Payments in the Public Sector - Draft Consultation Response

Item withdrawn.

136 Exclusion of Press & Public

RESOLVED: To exclude the public and press from the meeting for the remainder of the business on the grounds that if the public and press were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information, as specified in paragraph 3 of Part 1 Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended i.e. that it includes information relating to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority and employees of the authority.

137 Confidential Minutes of the last Policy & Resources Panel meeting held on 17 January 2019

RESOLVED: That the confidential minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Panel held on 17 January 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The meeting concluded at 12.05 pm

Signed

Unconfirmed minutes – to be confirmed at the next meeting of the Policy & Resources Panel

Chairman

Dated this

day of

2019