

CABINET

8 SEPTEMBER 2020

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STRATEGIC PLAN OUTTURN

1. Decision:

The Cabinet noted the Council's performance against its delivery plan targets as of April 2020 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report and available corporate indicators as set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

2. Statement of Reasons:

This Cabinet report described the council's achievement against its performance targets as set out in its Delivery Plan for 2018-2020, which reflected the commitments and priorities set out in the council's Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020.

The report provided the final outturn of the council's performance as at the end of March 2020, which represented the end of year position and the final year of the previous strategic plan. Any updates on actions since April 2020 had not been included in the report but would form part of the monitoring for the new Strategic Plan via the 2020 Delivery Plan in forthcoming briefings and reports from October.

The 2018 to 2020 Delivery Plan was monitored throughout the year and updates were entered into the council's performance management system (Pentana). The final performance report at Appendix 1 was drawn from the system in April 2020 prior to the adoption of the new Strategic Plan. Any updates made after the April extract were highlighted in red.

Corporate Indicators which demonstrated the outturn and achievement of high level objectives were set out at Appendix 2.

The original report was due to be considered by scrutiny in June 2020, however due to the pandemic key data was not available. Some data was still missing and where gaps still existed, this was highlighted.

3. Any Alternative Options:

This report details performance against the council's Delivery Plan 2016 – 2020, which has previously been agreed by Cabinet as the most appropriate method for managing and monitoring council performance.

MONEY MATTERS 2020/21: REVIEW OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE FINANCIAL STRATEGY

1. Decision:

The Cabinet:

- 1.1 Noted the report and issues raised within and that Leadership Team with Cabinet Members will continue to closely monitor and manage the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 1.2 Noted the further grant provided by the Government in 2020/21 of (£140,417) and the projected support for income losses that will be used to offset additional spend and income reductions and approved an update to the MTFs.

2. Statement of Reasons:

The Cabinet report covers the financial performance from April to June (Quarter One) for 2020/21 including updated projections of the financial impact of COVID-19.

The Medium Term Financial Strategy projected general reserves at 31 March 2021 would be £8,056,988. At this stage, general reserves are forecast to be £6,848,974, a reduction of (£1,208,014) related to:

- A lower than budgeted contribution in 2019/20 of (£32,344).
- Updates in 2020/21 summarised in para 3.18 increasing the contribution by £83,540
- A projected contribution contained in this report for 2020/21 of £8,690.
- The adverse impact of COVID-19 in 2020/21 of (£1,267,900).

The Capital Programme is projected to be (£23,203,000) lower than the Approved budget due mainly to no planned investment in property.

Capital Receipts are projected to be (£116,000) which is (£431,000) lower than the Approved Budget due to an anticipated delay in the sale of land at Netherstowe and Leyfields.

In terms of Council Tax, Business Rates, Sundry Debtors and Supplier Performance:

- Council Tax collection performance was 27.44% and total arrears were £3,022,164.
- The Council Tax Collection Fund is projected to be in deficit, with the Council's 13% share being £502,630 compared to the Approved Budget of (£34,600) in 2020/21.
- Sundry Debt for income to be collected in 2020/21 has reduced by (£837,190) compared to 2019/20 and the value outstanding at 30 June 2020 has increased by £1,022,837.
- Retained Business Rate Income is projected to be (£3,020,100) in line with the Approved Budget.
- The Business Rates Collection Fund is projected to be in deficit due to COVID-19 reliefs that will be fully reimbursed by grant. The Council's 40% share of the deficit is projected to be £4,264,000.
- There will be a timing difference due to statutory arrangements between receipt of grant in 2020/21 and the period when the deficit is charged to the Revenue Budget. Therefore the Business Rates volatility earmarked reserve will be utilised to 'smooth' the financial impact.
- Business Rates collection performance was 25.79% and total arrears were £1,077,115.
- The payment of suppliers within 30 days was 82.96% and remains below our 90% target.

The Council's investments achieved a risk status of AA- that was more secure than the aim of A- and yield exceeded all four of the industry standard London Interbank (LIBID) yield benchmarks.

3. Any Alternative Options:

These are considered as part of the ongoing development of the Strategic Plan and the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

1. Decision:

The Cabinet:

- 1.1 Approved the changes made in the updated SCI (Statement of Community Involvement) at Appendix A of the Cabinet report which is in line with the temporary legislation in relation to Coronavirus (Covid-19), the associated Explanatory Memorandum to the Town and Country Planning Regulations and the updated government guidance and adoption statement.
- 1.2 Delegated authority to allow further minor changes to comply with statutory requirements to the SCI to be undertaken by the Head of Economic Growth & Development in consultation with the Cabinet member for Visitor Economy & Local Plan.

2. Statement of Reasons:

Due to temporary legislative changes in light of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic there is a need to review and update the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). In respect of local plans the legislative amendments primarily involve changes to face to face interactions to be consistent with the latest guidance on social distancing, the need for the physical placing of consultation documents for physical inspection becoming a non-statutory requirement, and the encouragement through guidance on increased innovative and creative online interaction being undertaken instead of physical meetings. Where stakeholders are unable or choose not to use online methods to communicate, the council will seek to engage with such groups creatively with the means set out in this report. In respect to the publicity arrangements for planning applications, the legislative changes allow authorities greater flexibility to take other reasonable steps to publicise planning proposals where the requirement for site notices, neighbourhood notifications or newspaper publicity cannot be discharged.

Whilst the catalyst for the changes are regulatory and the legislation currently only covers the period up to 31st December 2020, it is considered prudent to make amendments to the current SCI in order to cover future consultations on the Local Plan Review, other development plan documents and in respect of the consultation process on planning applications beyond that period. This approach reflects likely ongoing restrictions into 2021, and will be kept under review.

The changes proposed are considered to be in line with government advice and will provide for new and innovative ways of consultation in line with social distancing advice.

It is considered that as the changes follow social distancing advice and require relatively modest change, that Cabinet can adopt the amended SCI without the need for the amended SCI to be consulted upon.

Cabinet is asked to delegate authority to allow further minor changes to the SCI that may have to be undertaken as a result of evolving Coronavirus (Covid-19) guidance to be undertaken by the Head of Economic Growth & Development in consultation with the Cabinet member for the Visitor Economy & Local Plan.

3. Any Alternative Options:

Cabinet decide not to approve the revised SCI. This would pose a risk to staff and the public in requesting them to fulfil obligations and undertake actions in contradiction to Social Distancing

guidelines. The changes will ensure that the SCI is consistent with the actions the council is obliged to undertake to satisfy Coronavirus (Covid-19) legislation and guidance.