

Time Commenced – 18:00
Time Finished – 19:50

Executive Scrutiny Board

15 January 2024

Present: Councillor Poulter (Chair)
Councillors Amin, Bolton, Care, Eyre, M Holmes, J Khan,
Lindsey, Mulhall, Rawson, C Wright

In attendance: Councillor Dhindsa – Cabinet Member for Communities and Streetpride
Councillor Hezelgrave – Cabinet Member for Cost of Living, Equalities and Customer Inclusion
Councillor Shiraz Khan – Cabinet Member for Housing, Property and Regulatory Services
Councillor Martin – Cabinet Member for Integrated Adult Care and Health
Councillor Peatfield – Cabinet Member for City Centre, Regeneration, Culture and Tourism
Councillor Shanker – Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Strategy, Governance and Finance
Councillor Swan – Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Transport and Sustainability
Councillor Whitby – Cabinet Member for Children’s Social Care, Learning and Skills
Councillor Ashby
Councillor Koslowski
Verna Bayliss – Director of City Sustainability
Andy Brammall – Director of Digital and Physical Infrastructure and Customer Engagement
Sam Dennis – Director of Communities
Robyn Dewis – Director of Public Health
Emily Feenan – Director of Corporate Governance, Procurement and Property and Monitoring Officer
Heather Greenan – Director of Policy, Insight and Communications
Suanne Lim – Director of Early Help and Children’s Social Care
Steven Mason – Democratic Services Officer
Toni Nash – Head of Finance
Gurmail Nizzer – Director of Commissioning and Delivery
Alison Parkin – Director of Financial Services
Perveez Sadiq – Director of Adult Social Care Services
Pete Shillcock – Group Accountant
Paul Simpson – Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service
Elly Tomlinson – Group Accountant

62/23 Apologies for Absence

There were none.

63/23 Late Items

There were none.

64/23 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

65/23 Budget Proposals 2024/25 – 2026/27

The Board received a report of the Director of Financial Services on Budget Proposals 2024/25 – 2026/27.

The Director of Financial Services addressed the Board and introduced the item.

In response to a question about Council Tax collection rates, the director commented upon the increase in the collection of Council Tax, comparator authorities and the effect of AI to collect more Council Tax.

Andy Smith, Strategic Director of People Services provided an overview for his directorate.

In response to questions, the strategic director commented upon unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and the former levels of funding, the importance of councils being properly funded to house those young people and future spending reviews. Councillor Whitby, Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Learning and Skills also responded.

In response to questions, the strategic director also commented upon home to school transport savings, Shared Lives carers and fostering carers, the effort and resource to move into partnerships and fostering recruitment.

Alison Matin, Cabinet Member for Integrated Adult Care and Health, commented upon carers, the statutory duty to provide care, dialogue with carers to identify support required and carers forum meetings. Councillor Whitby also commented upon this.

Councillor C Wright asked about the extent to which the pandemic had fed into the budget challenges and her particular concerns regarding children in poverty.

Councillor Poulter commented upon hospital discharges and pharmacy issues causing delays. Robyn Dewis, Director of Public Health, outlined the difficulties.

Councillor Eyre commented upon the proposal for the four-year contract for home to school transport and the projected savings being front-loaded. Councillor Shanker, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Strategy, Governance and Finance, commented upon the front-loaded savings.

Councillor Care asked about public health, improving health, targeting support for council officers and Livewell being promoted to staff. Robyn Dewis responded.

Councillor Martin responded to the questions about hospital discharge and expressed the importance of individual experiences being reported through ICP.

Sam Dennis, Director of Communities, introduced the proposals for the Place Directorate.

Councillor Dhindsa, Cabinet Member for Communities and Streetpride, commented upon his portfolio, with particular focus on ground maintenance, parks and waste collection.

Councillor Poulter asked about the savings in relation to waste collection, in light of the proposed increased costs at Raynesway. Sam Dennis and Councillor Dhindsa responded and outlined projected increased income from enforcement.

Councillor Swan, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Transport and Sustainability, commented upon the reduction in the budget for waste disposal.

Councillor C Wright asked about homelessness in the city and how the council was going to meet its statutory responsibilities. Sam Dennis responded and outlined proposals to help people out of bed and breakfast accommodation. Councillor Shanker also responded and reported that one of the priority areas was the purchase of properties to get people out of temporary accommodation. Councillor Poulter commented upon relevant funding that is provided by central Government.

Councillor Care commented upon education in relation to littering and that there were no proposals within the document. She further commented upon the importance of engaging with people and the Friends of Parks. Councillor Dhindsa responded and spoke about reducing fly tipping and litter, and the work of Friends of Parks and Friends of Cemeteries (Nottingham Road).

Councillor Poulter commented upon the new play area in Spondon, Friends of the Park and Spondon Cemetery.

Councillor Mulhall commented upon the proposed efficiencies in the directorate and asked about the processes in place to ensure that the savings became reality and also pointed out that there was no mention of the Sinfin Waste Treatment Plant within the budget proposals. Sam Dennis responded and commented about the use of software mapping and how efficiencies would be reported. In relation to the Sinfin Waste Treatment Plant, it was reported that there were no budget savings within the proposals and that soft market testing was taking place. Councillor Poulter asked when the soft market testing would be finished and also about the procurement process.

Councillor Shanker responded and confirmed that, once completed, the results would come back.

Councillor Dhindsa responded to Councillor Mulhall's earlier question and outlined efficiencies and the use of technology, particularly in relation to bin sensors.

In relation to Sinfin Waste Treatment Plant, Councillor Poulter asked about IAA3. Sam Dennis responded and commented upon the project timetable and confirmed that there had been a delay in the soft market testing and the procurement process and that work was ongoing to sign IAA3.

Councillor Eyre asked about savings in relation to free bulky waste collections.

Councillor Eyre also asked about Localities, PPO's and the new Localities arrangements. Sam Dennis responded and commented upon savings within Localities Teams, the review due to take place and vacant posts being held. Councillor Dhindsa also commented upon Localities and PPO's.

Paul Simpson, Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service, outlined the Chief Executives budget proposals. Members noted that Grant Thornton LLP had recently reported that, in their opinion, one in five local authorities were on the brink of financial failure. The Chief Executive outlined the importance of Corporate Governance to keep the organisation safe. The Chief Executive outlined the savings and headlines, including proposals for partners to make greater use of the Council House.

Councillor Poulter asked about the current level of reserves. Alison Parkin responded and confirmed that they were less than forecasted. Councillor Shanker commented upon rebuilding reserves.

Councillor Mulhall asked about the unachieved savings 2022/23 in the report. Alison Parkin responded and explained why they had been reversed.

Councillor C Wright asked about historical reserves and what happened to them. Alison Parkin responded and explained the spikes in social care overspend.

Councillor Bolton asked how much central Government grant funding had been reduced over the last few years. Paul Simpson responded.

Councillor Poulter asked for figures to be provided in relation to historic grant funding. Alison Parkin reported that this would be provided.

Councillor Poulter asked about savings being achieved through the costs of senior management and also about recruitment in relation to the vacant post of the Strategic Director for Place. Paul Simpson confirmed that he did intend to recruit to that post and that submissions of interest had been invited, internally.

Councillor Poulter asked about property services and partner working and pointed out that it was slower than predicted. Emily Feenan, Director of

Corporate Governance, Procurement and Property and Monitoring Officer, responded and reported on rent to external partners in the council house, property rationalisation, disposal of property/assets. It was also reported that options were being considered in relation to Allestree Hall.

Councillor Shiraz Khan, Cabinet Member for Housing, Property and Regulatory Services, commented upon property rationalisation.

Councillor Swan, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Transport and Sustainability, commented upon grant funding and central Government funding.

The Executive Scrutiny Board resolved to note the report.

MINUTES END