

FINANCE AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance and Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber on Wednesday, 17th July 2024 at 14:00 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor David Bennett in the Chair

Councillors Sally Renshaw (Vice-Chair), Rowan Clarke, Janet Tait and Jane Yates.

Officers:- Theresa Fletcher (Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer), Jim Fieldsend (Director of Governance and Legal Services & Monitoring Officer), Thomas Dunne-Wragg (Scrutiny Officer) and Amy Bryan (Governance and Civic Manager).

FCO1-24/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Justin Gilbody and Chris Kane.

FCO2-24/25 URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business to be considered.

FCO3-24/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations made at the meeting.

FCO4-24/25 MINUTES - 15TH MAY 2024

Moved by Councillor Rowan Clarke and seconded by Councillor Janet Tait

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Finance and Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 15th May 2024 be approved as a correct record.

FCO5-24/25 LIST OF KEY DECISIONS AND ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE

The Committee considered and noted the List of Key Decisions and items to be considered in private.

FCO6-24/25 FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2023/24

Committee considered a report by the Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer, which set out the outturn position of the Council for the 2023/24 financial year.

The Council had published its draft Statement of Accounts in respect of 2022/23 on 19th

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May 2023, in advance of the 31st May 2023 deadline. The report explained that the external audit of the accounts had been delayed and the report set out the knock-on effects the delayed audit conclusion had had on the work of the Finance Team, including the Medium-Term Financial Plan process.

The report set out the 2023/24 outturn position in respect of the General Fund, the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), the Capital Programme and the Treasury Management activities.

The Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer gave a presentation on the main elements of the financial outturn 2023/24.

The position in respect of the General Fund outturn was detailed in Appendix 1 and 2 to the report, which included details of the main variances and the contributions to reserves. Transfers to reserves totalled £3.824m, which was £1.455m higher than originally forecast.

The Housing Revenue Account, which was purely income and expenditure relating to the Council's housing stock, was set out in Appendix 3 and 4 to the report. The HRA continued to operate within the parameters set by the 30-year business plan and the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

The Capital Programme was expenditure to purchase new assets or enhance existing ones. Details of the capital expenditure incurred by the Council in 2023/24 on a scheme-by-scheme basis was provided in Appendix 5 to the report. The proposed carry forward of capital budgets totalled £12.332m. Requests to carry forward budgets related to individual schemes that were still in progress, where there were outstanding commitments or where a scheme had been delayed.

A brief report on the Treasury Management activity of the Council for 2023/24 was attached to the report at Appendix 6. In summary, the Council had operated within the Authorised and Operational Boundary limited approved in the Treasury Management Strategy.

Moved by Councillor Rowan Clarke and seconded by Councillor Jane Yates

RESOLVED that (1) the outturn position in respect of the 2023/24 financial year, be noted;

(2) the transfers to earmarked reserves of £1.455m as outlined in detail in paragraph 2.3, be noted;

(3) the proposed carry forward of capital budgets detailed in Appendix 5 totalling £12.332m, be noted.

FCO7-24/25 CORPORATE DEBT 2023/24

Committee considered a report by the Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer, which provided a summary of the corporate debt position as at 31st March 2024.

The report set out the sources of income as at 31st March 2024, with 2022/23 included for comparison. The figures showed an increase in income billed in the year for all sources.

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The increase in the sundry debtors income was almost all due to the Council raising invoices to Dragonfly as part of establishing the new arrangements between the Council and the company. This figure should not be so high for 2024/25.

The report also set out the level of arrears, which had increased in 2023/24 for both national non-domestic rates (NNDR) and council tax.

The report concluded that overall, in 2023/24 the Council had raised £18.493m (net) more in income on its systems. The Council's arrears had increased by £0.117m but excluding any reductions in arrears, the increase was £0.902m. The impairment allowances had been increased by £0.682m (net).

It was noted that 2023/24 had seen a significant amount of housing rents debt written-off, as officers had looked through the debt in detail as part of using a new software package purchased to help focus on the most collectable arrears.

The Committee discussed the Council's debt collection arrangements.

Moved by Councillor Janet Tait and seconded by Councillor Jane Yates

RESOLVED that the report regarding the Council's Corporate Debt as at 31st March 2024, be noted.

FCO8-24/25 FINANCE AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered and noted its work programme for 2024/25.

The meeting concluded at 14:32 hours.