

FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

30 JULY 2018

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

Present:

Councillor Christopher Akers Belcher (In the Chair)

Councillors: Stephen Akers-Belcher, Paddy Brown, Tom Cassidy, Kevin Cranney, Brenda Harrison, Ann Marshall, Shane Moore, Leisa Smith and Stephen Thomas.

Also Present: Chief Inspector Nigel Burnell, Cleveland Police

Officers: Hayley Martin, Interim Chief Solicitor
Chris Little, Director of Finance and Policy
Denise Ogden, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Chris Parkin, Head of Finance, Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Laura Stones, Scrutiny and Legal Support Officer
Steve Hilton, Public Relations Officer
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

23. Apologies for Absence

None.

24. Declarations of Interest

None.

25. Minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2018

Confirmed.

26. Final Outturn 2017/18 *(Corporate Management Team)*

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework.

Purpose of report

To provide details of the final outturns for 2017/18 and to approve the

strategy for funding the final 2017/18 General Fund overspend of £0.109m.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Finance and Policy reported that on the basis of the actual expenditure at 31st December 2017 and forecasts for the final three months of the financial year an overspend of £0.124m was forecast. This forecast anticipated departmental budget overspends being partly offset by Corporate budget under spends and the use of departmental reserves. The actual outturn is a net overall overspend of £0.109m which reflected an overspend on departmental budgets which, owing to continued demand led pressures and an underspend on corporate budgets, was not sustainable as recurring corporate savings had been built into the MTFS and the use of departmental reserves.

The Director highlighted that the outturn position for Children's Services was a net overspend of £2.610m. The majority of the overspend relates to continuing costs in relation to Looked After Children (LAC). These pressures were expected to continue into 2018/19. To address the financial impact of these pressures the MTFS is predicated on using the one-off LAC reserve with the aim of providing a longer lead time to either manage demand and/or determine a longer term funding strategy. The overall outturn position, therefore, had to be seen in light of the significant pressures in this area and the use of £1.4m of the LAC reserve in 2017/18.

The Director reported that collection rates for Business rates stood at 98.9% in 2017/18, an improvement of 0.5% on 2016/17. The national average for unitary and metropolitan councils in 2017/18 was 97.9%. Furthermore, long term collection rates for Business Rates were being sustained with 99.6% of Business rates being collected after 5 years.

The collection rate for Council Tax was 95.7% for 2017/18, an improvement of 0.4% on 2016/17. The Hartlepool collection level was still slightly lower than the 2017/18 national average for unitary and metropolitan councils of 96.1%.

The report also gave details of the Capital Budget Outturn and an update on the Capital receipts Target. Detailed appendices set out the budget outturn for individual departments.

The Director responded to a number of questions clarifying government funding and the future of the Youth Service. The Chair of the Children's Services Committee informed the Committee that she was due to meet with the town's Member of Parliament to look towards improving the funding for SEND children in Hartlepool which could potentially have a consequent benefit to the Children's Services budget.

The Chair also reported that he was working with the Director of Finance and Policy on an open letter to government highlighting the impact of the crisis in social care funding in Hartlepool. The Chair undertook to circulate

a copy of the letter to Members once it had been sent.

Decision

1. The Committee noted the final 2017/18 overspend of £0.109m which had been funded from the General Fund Reserve. This position reflected the continued pressure on services and the Council's overall financial position.
2. The Committee noted that as at 31st March 2018 capital receipts of £2.648m still remained to be achieved from future planned land sales.

27. Integrated Working – Neighbourhood Safety Group Update *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

Type of decision

Non-Key Decision.

Purpose of report

To receive a progress update in relation to implementation of the integrated place based community safety model agreed by the Finance and Policy Committee in October 2017.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods submitted a review covering the first three months of operation following the official launch of the integrated place based community safety model at the Safer Hartlepool Partnership Face the Public Event on 26 February 2018. The review identified that the model approved by the Finance and Policy Committee in October 2017 had largely been implemented as intended and within the anticipated timescale. It captured some early benefits whilst also identifying areas for improvement/further development.

Decision

1. The Committee noted the contents of the 'interim review' into the 'integrated place based community safety model.'
2. The Committee noted that the Safer Hartlepool Partnership's Neighbourhood Safety Group would continue to oversee the development of the model in line with the recommendations outlined in the review.
3. That the Finance and Policy Committee receive the outcome of a full review into the place based integrated community safety model to take place in 2019/20 with a completion date of December 2020.

28. Data Protection – Update and Policy *(Interim Chief Solicitor)*

Type of decision

Non-key decision.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report was to outline the changes that the Council had undertaken to ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018; and to seek agreement to the Data Protection Policy (attached as an appendix to the report).

Issue(s) for consideration

The Interim Chief Solicitor reported that GDPR was the biggest change to data protection law in over 20 years. The regulation is EU law and came into force on 25 May 2018. The UK had repealed the Data Protection 1998 and replaced it with the Data Protection Act 2018. Both pieces of legislation strengthen data rights. The Council had and continued to implement GDPR compliant measures, and an update on the work that had been completed and which continues to be a priority was set out within the report.

The Interim Chief Solicitor highlighted that throughout May and the beginning of June, staff were requested to attend GDPR training; this training had been mandatory and approximately 1100 people attended the training. Blue collar workers would also receive a GDPR Briefing Sheet, detailing the changes and how to keep data safe. A GDPR Members' Seminar had also been held.

Decision

That the report be noted and the Hartlepool Borough Council Data Protection Policy approved.

29. Corporate Procurement Quarterly Report on Contracts *(Director of Finance and Policy)*

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To satisfy the requirements of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules with regard to the Finance and Policy Committee receiving and examining quarterly reports on the outcome of contract letting procedures including those where the lowest/highest price is not payable/receivable; and receiving and examining reports on any exemptions granted in respect of

the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Finance and Policy reported that alongside the detailed tender information set out in the appendices to the report, additional related information showing details of exemptions granted to the Contract Procedure Rules were also included in the quarterly report.

Decision

That the report be noted.

30. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

None.

The Committee noted that the next meeting would be held on Monday 3 September 2018 commencing at 10.00 am in the Civic Centre.

The meeting concluded at 10.10 am.

H MARTIN

INTERIM CHIEF SOLICITOR

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