

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD IN REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON MONDAY, 1 FEBRUARY 2021 AT 10:00

Present

Councillor CA Green – Chairperson

SE Baldwin
T Giffard
JC Spanswick

JPD Blundell
M Jones
T Thomas

N Clarke
KL Rowlands

J Gebbie
RMI Shaw

Apologies for Absence

RL Penhale-Thomas

Officers:

Meryl Lawrence Senior Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny
Tracy Watson Scrutiny Officer

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

2. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2021-22 TO 2024-25 AND DRAFT BUDGET CONSULTATION PROCESS

The Senior Democratic Services Officer – Scrutiny presented the report to the Committee and referred to Appendix A, the final report of the Budget Research and Evaluation Panel (BREP) and Appendix B, the response from the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees to Cabinet regarding the MTFs and draft budget proposals. She advised that in paragraph 9 of the report the Committee was asked to determine whether it wished to submit the recommendations outlined in Appendices A and B to Cabinet on 9 February 2021, as part of the budget consultation process, subject to any modifications and amendments that the Committee decided were appropriate.

The Chairperson asked if any Members had any questions or comments on the recommendations in Appendix A or B.

Following discussions regarding the BREP Final Report in Appendix A, the Committee strengthened the wording of the following BREP Recommendations, by agreeing the addition of the words in bold and italics below:

Recommendation 3:

The Panel recommends that all Directorates identify all Covid-19 related costs and budgetary pressures ***with clear differentiation between savings and cuts and with clear differentiation between budget pressures and the impact of Covid-19 pressures*** and in particular ensures there is full cost recovery, where appropriate, from WG.

Recommendation 5:

The Panel recommends a review of revenue costs for all new school builds, subject to the School Modernisation Programme and to establish whether there are cost savings in overall revenue costs for the new schools. ***The Panel also requested assurance that the School Modernisation Programme was compliant with the carbon neutral green policy adopted at Council.***

Following consideration of the Combined Meeting of all Scrutiny Committees' recommendations on the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-22 to 2024-25 in Appendix B, the Committee made the following additional recommendations:

Recommendation 13:

The Committee expressed concern about spending on consultants because of the lack of in-house capacity due to service cuts made over the years and recommended that future MTFS budget savings proposals include any such implications. (COM1)

Recommendation 14:

While the Committee acknowledged that there were huge pressures upon the authority from the impact of Covid-19, there were incredible pressures in local communities and the Committee recommended that Cabinet embrace the concept of prioritisation based upon the needs of local communities.

RESOLVED: That the Committee determined that it wished to submit the recommendations outlined in Appendices A and B to Cabinet on 9 February 2021 as part of the budget consultation process, subject to the inclusion of the above amendments and additional recommendations agreed by the Committee.

3. URGENT ITEMS

None.