

HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes Of the Meeting of the Joint Budget Overview & Scrutiny Panel Committee

Held at Council Chamber

Council Offices, Adam and Eve Street, Market Harborough.

On Thursday, 25 January 2024

Commencing at 18:30

Present:

Councillors Asher, Birch, Burrell, Dann, Elliott, Graves, James, Johnson, King, Nunn, Rickman, Whelband, and Gair

In attendance: Councillors Bateman, Hallam, Mahal and Mrs Page

Officers: D. Atkison (Director of Planning), C. Bland (Head of Financial Services), Liz Elliot (Deputy Chief Executive), S. Hamilton (Senior Democratic Services Officer), C. Mason (Director of Resources & s.151 Officer), J. Richardson (Chief Executive),

Apologies: Councillor Bannister, Sarfas, and Taylor.

1. Election of Chairman for 2023/24

Councillor Elliot was nominated as Chairman. It was **CARRIED** that Councillor Elliot was now the Chairman of the Joint Budget Overview & Scrutiny Panel.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies of absence were received from Councillor Sarfas, Taylor and Bannister. Councillor Gair substituted for Councillor Sarfas.

3. Declarations of Members' Interests

Councillor King declared a pecuniary interest in Item 4 as he is a Member of the Leicestershire Pension Scheme Committee.

4. Draft 2024.25 Budget and MTFs (2025.26 to 2028.29)

Councillor Graves, Cabinet Member for Finance provided a brief introduction to the report and explained some of the highlights of the draft budget. Clive

Mason, Director of Resources (& s.151 officer) went through the executive summary and the highlights of both the Draft Budget and MTFs. He further explained that the purpose of the report was to scrutinise the Draft Budget 2024/25 & Medium-Term Financial Strategy (2025/26 to 2028/29) (Annex 1) and report its findings to Cabinet. Cabinet would then consider any comments from the Panel at its meeting on 12 February 2024. It was anticipated that Cabinet would recommend that Council determine the budget on 26 February 2024. Members asked various questions around revenue, costs savings on BC25, garden waste, parking charges and Leisure Contract capital costs These questions were answered and any points were clarified.

Action Point: It was confirmed there would be a Member Briefing around UKSP Rural England Grant Fund organised shortly and therefore some of the queries asked would be clarified there.

Action Point: Clive Mason would clarify the revenue costs of 5% on FCC contract to Councillor King.

Further questions were asked around increases of police and county council percentages, outstanding monies owed by a housing provider, explanation of risks in relation to the smoothing reserve, considerations of future funding in relation to spending reserves, Lutterworth funding and allocations, solar farm development in the capital program, provision for street furniture, new home and business rates formulas, list of capital fund allocation removals from the budget as an appendix to the budget, maintenance of the Roman Way properties, robustness of strategies, delegation to capital projects limits/thresholds, Council tax 3% referendum, Quarterly Monitoring reports scrutiny, apprenticeships, Parish Liaison Officer and Community Engagement and Strategy Operational Plan.

Clive Mason, Councillor Graves, David Atkinson and John Richardson provided answers and explanations to the aforementioned queries.

Action Point: Clive Mason to provide an appendix containing a list of the capital fund allocation removals from the budget.

Action Point: Clive Mason to look into if the Quarterly Monitoring reports would report back to Scrutiny.

Thanks were given to everyone who attended and participated in the meeting.

5. Any Urgent Business

There were no urgent business matters.

The meeting ended at 21:04