

THE DISTRICT COUNCIL OF TANDRIDGE

STRATEGY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes and report to Council of the virtual meeting of the Committee held on the 21 January 2021 at 7.30pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Elias (Chair), M.Cooper (Vice-Chair), Botten (Vice-Chair), Bourne, Caulcott, Davies, Duck, Langton, Lee, Milton, Pursehouse and Sayer

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Bloore, Farr, Lockwood, Mills, Morrow, Ridge, C.White and N.White

248. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 16TH DECEMBER 2020

These minutes were approved as a correct record.

249. WHOLE COUNCIL FINANCE REPORT - PERIOD 8

Progress continued to be made in respect of the finance improvement programme and an underspend of £100,000 against the revenue budget baseline of £10.6 million was projected. This represented an improvement of £300,000 since the previous month and was partly due to revenue underspends on salaries, some of which had been capitalised in accordance with the recently adopted policy for the flexible use of capital receipts. The revised capital programme had been reduced to £15.7 million and was forecast to be £600,000 underspent. The Chief Finance Officer explained her intention to ensure that, next year, the Council's capital programme will provide a more realistic estimate of actual expenditure and that future carry forwards of unspent capital budgets would no longer be guaranteed.

Members were advised that 50% provision had been made against the loan repayment due from Freedom Leisure. However, this debt hadn't been written down and was still expected to be repaid in full. It was also confirmed that Officers had worked closely with Freedom Leisure regarding the submission of a grant application for £140,000 (by the Council) to Sport England for a share of national funding to support leisure centres during the pandemic. The reduction in the adverse budget variance regarding Freedom Leisure was explained.

In response to the debate, Members were advised that Council Tax and business rate collection levels were improving but that the impact of shortfalls would not be known until the end of the year. Officers confirmed that Government (Section 31) grants to had been received to compensate the Council for business rate collection shortfalls.

Officers responded to questions from Members concerning other budget variances, including those regarding property investment income, external legal advice, and the application of Minimum Revenue Provision.

RESOLVED – that that the Committee's forecast revenue and capital budgets position for the year be noted.

250. STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

An initial version of the Strategic Plan for the Council (20/21 to 23/24) had been approved by the Committee on the 28th July 2020. This had been on the understanding that:

- the plan would be kept under review in response to changing circumstances; and
- all four Policy Committees should own and monitor delivery of the relevant parts of the Plan which fall within their respective terms of reference (in this respect, the Housing Committee had reviewed applicable actions at its meeting on the 19th November 2020).

An updated version of the plan, showing latest progress against each item where appropriate, was presented. The covering report acknowledged that, due to the impact of the national lockdown, progress in certain areas may not be possible until the summer / autumn. It was also stated that any further actions to deliver the plan's priority outcomes which have additional resource implications will be brought to Members for approval.

The Committee was invited to comment on progress made against the plan and to identify any aspects requiring additional attention of a change of approach. Various views and suggestions were expressed during the debate, including:

- all Executive Heads and Chief Officers should be shown as being responsible for the implementation of the financial recovery plan; and
- the actions should be prioritised and, where possible, made 'smarter' with more quantitative information where appropriate.

RESOLVED – that Members' feedback be noted and reflected in the next iteration of the plan.

251. STRATEGY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 2021/22 DRAFT BUDGET AND MTFs TO 2023/24

A report was presented to enable the Committee to consider its draft revenue budget, charges for services and a capital programme for 2021/22. This had been informed by the Member workshops during the previous autumn and the current Medium Term Financial Plan. The report outlined key budget principles and headline saving proposals, together with the main service functions and salary costs relevant to the Committee.

The Chief Finance Officer explained that the Committee's budget comprised both 'business as usual' items (including salary costs) and corporate items that the Committee couldn't influence. She also referred to the Government's provisional financial settlement for the sector which was only for the one year (2021/22) and the fact that future local government finance reforms could present significant challenges for Tandridge. Given this uncertainty, it was necessary to establish financial resilience and flexibility to deal with unforeseen events without having to draw upon reserves, hence the provision of a general fund contingency budget.

Members discussed the scope for taking a more strategic approach for addressing budgetary tensions between committees as part of the Council-wide budget setting process. As far as the budget setting for 2021/22 was concerned, it was acknowledged that this Committee would be responsible for addressing such tensions at its meeting on the 2nd February and for making clear recommendations for consideration by Council on the 11th February.

Notwithstanding these issues, the Chair observed that, as far as this current meeting was concerned, the Committee was being asked to make decisions about its own draft budget.

RESOLVED – that

- A. subject to further consideration by the Committee on the 2nd February 2021 as part of the Council wide budget setting process (to be ratified by Full Council on 11th February 2021):
 - (i) the Committee's draft revenue budget for 2021/22 be in the sum of £4,316,274, as shown in Appendix A
 - (ii) the Committee's draft capital programme for 2021/22 be in the sum of £5,366,600 for 2021/22, as shown in Appendix B; and
- B. in accordance with the Committee's delegated powers, the fees and charges for 2021/22, as detailed in Appendix C be agreed.

252. DETERMINATION OF THE 2021/22 COUNCIL TAX BASE FOR TAX SETTING

The Local Government Finance Act 1992 required the Council to calculate and approve the tax base for the forthcoming financial year. A report was submitted to enable the Committee to fulfil this function on the Council's behalf.

RESOLVED – that:

- A. the gross Council Tax Base for 2021/22 is determined at 38,921.6 after taking account of the Councils agreed Council Tax Support Scheme, and
- B. the net Council Tax Base for 2021/22 is determined at 38,454.5 after adjustment by 1.2% to allow for irrecoverable amounts, appeals and property base changes.

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Appendix A

Strategy and Resources - Revenue Budget for Year Ending 31st March 2022								
2020-21	Strategy and Resources Committee - Revenue Estimates for Year Ending 31st March 2022					Capital	Support	Total Net
Net Direct	Description	Employee	Other	Income	Net Direct	Charges	Services	Budget
Rev Est								2021/22
£		£	£	£	£	£	£	£
(63,500)	Council Tax	25,700	60,000	(173,900)	(88,200)	0	0	(88,200)
0	Discretionary Housing Payment		191,000	(191,000)	0	0	0	0
41,200	NDR Cost of Collection	428,100		(145,500)	282,600	0	0	282,600
(3,100)	Street Naming & Numbering			(3,200)	(3,200)	0	0	(3,200)
(25,400)	Local Taxation incl Support	453,800	251,000	(513,600)	191,200	0	0	191,200
75,900	Community Safety	0	69,900	0	69,900	0	0	69,900
75,900	Community Support	0	69,900	0	69,900	0	0	69,900
0	Health - General Prevention	483,200	34,300	(517,500)	0	0	0	0
22,200	Economic Development & Promotion				0	0	0	0
394,200	Policy Unit	272,600	0		272,600	0	0	272,600
242,600	Public Relations	203,000	37,100		240,100	0	0	240,100
659,000	Policy Support & Economic Development	958,800	71,400	(517,500)	512,700	0	0	512,700
13,900	Community & Civil Defence	0	10,300	0	10,300	0	0	10,300
13,900	Emergency Planning	0	10,300	0	10,300	0	0	10,300
846,763	Corporate Management	354,200	361,865		716,065	0	0	716,065
371,800	Democratic Representation & Management	117,000	264,900		381,900	0	0	381,900
59,500	Election of District Councillors		60,700		60,700	0	0	60,700
31,500	Registration of Electors		34,100	(2,000)	32,100	0	0	32,100
1,309,563	Democratic Functions	471,200	721,565	(2,000)	1,190,765	0	0	1,190,765
462,200	Non-Distributed Cost ex Central Expenses		312,101		312,101	0	0	312,101
462,200	Pensions	0	312,101	0	312,101	0	0	312,101
1,347,600	IT Services	389,200	815,900	(6,900)	1,198,200	511,150	(400,000)	1,309,350
1,347,600	Information Technology	389,200	815,900	(6,900)	1,198,200	511,150	(400,000)	1,309,350
637,700	Finance & Exchequer Services	488,800	139,800		628,600	0	(81,000)	547,600
637,700	Financial Services	488,800	139,800	0	628,600	0	(81,000)	547,600
303,300	Legal Services	379,000	30,800	(63,400)	346,400	0	0	346,400
303,300	Legal Services	379,000	30,800	(63,400)	346,400	0	0	346,400
179,800	Media Creation Unit		150,900	(7,100)	143,800	0	(50,000)	93,800
225,800	Office Services	124,800	445,600	(250,300)	320,100	206,800	(200,000)	326,900
405,600	Office Services	124,800	596,500	(257,400)	463,900	206,800	(250,000)	420,700
403,400	Human Resources	454,600	62,900		517,500	0	(100,000)	417,500
403,400	Human Resources	454,600	62,900	0	517,500	0	(100,000)	417,500
473,400	Customer Services	493,700	5,000		498,700	0	(130,400)	368,300
473,400	Customer Services	493,700	5,000	0	498,700	0	(130,400)	368,300
951,100	Case Officer Services	1,052,300			1,052,300	0	(462,700)	589,600
951,100	Case Officers	1,052,300	0	0	1,052,300	0	(462,700)	589,600
7,017,263	Subtotal	5,266,200	3,087,166	(1,360,800)	6,992,566	717,950	(1,424,100)	6,286,416
	Corporate Income and Expenditure							
(1,287,300)	Investment Income	0	10,500	(700,700)	(690,200)	0	0	(690,200)
780,700	Interest Payable	0	780,700		780,700	0	0	780,700
(989,010)	Property Income	0		(905,010)	(905,010)	0	0	(905,010)
(496,049)	Transactions with HRA	0		(300,449)	(300,449)	0	0	(300,449)
294,900	Minimum Revenue Provision	0	535,900		535,900	0	0	535,900
(737,200)	New Homes Bonus	0		(341,360)	(341,360)	0	0	(341,360)
235,435	Contribution to / (from) Reserves	0	585,427		585,427	0	0	585,427
0	Depreciation	0	0		0	(1,635,150)		(1,635,150)
(2,198,524)	Corporate and Technical Items	0	1,912,527	(2,247,519)	(334,992)	(1,635,150)	0	(1,970,142)
4,818,739	Total	5,266,200	4,999,693	(3,608,319)	6,657,574	(917,200)	(1,424,100)	4,316,274
Capital Charges								
(1,250,500)								
Support Services								
(1,156,700)								
Total								
2,411,539								

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Appendix B

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2020/21 TO 2023/24 - Strategy & Resources					
COMMITTEE SCHEMES	Current Programme 2020/21 £	Estimated Programme 2021/22 £	Estimated Programme 2022/23 £	Estimated Programme 2023/24 £	Total Programme 2020-24 £
Stratgy & Resources					
Current Continuing Programme					
Council Offices Major Works Programme	75,000	0	0	0	75,000
Customer First/IT	150,000	50,000	0	0	200,000
IT - Hardware/infrastructure Projects GF	541,200	365,400	163,400	0	1,070,000
Investment & Development Fund	981,000	64,374,900	0	0	65,355,900
Quadrant House (incl in above)	0	0	0	0	0
Total Current Continuing Programme	1,747,200	64,790,300	163,400	0	66,700,900
Revisions and New Bids					
Council Offices Major Works Programme		0	0	0	0
Customer First/IT		(50,000)	0	0	(50,000)
IT - Hardware/infrastructure Projects GF		101,200	64,600	271,500	437,300
Investment & Development Fund		(64,374,900)	0	0	(64,374,900)
Quadrant House Phase 2		4,900,000	0	0	4,900,000
Total Revisions and New Bids	0	(59,423,700)	64,600	271,500	(59,087,600)
Proposed Programme					
Council Offices Major Works Programme	75,000	0	0	0	75,000
Customer First/IT	150,000	0	0	0	150,000
IT - Hardware/infrastructure Projects - GF	541,200	466,600	228,000	271,500	1,507,300
Investment & Development Fund	981,000	0	0	0	981,000
Quadrant House Phase 2	0	4,900,000	0	0	4,900,000
Total Proposed Programme	1,747,200	5,366,600	228,000	271,500	7,613,300

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Appendix C

STRATEGY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE Proposed Fees and Charges							
Fees and Charges	Gross Charges Current Charges 2020/21	Proposed Gross Charges 2021/22	Percentage Increase 2021/22	Budgeted Income 2020/21	Actual YTD at Sept 20	Expected Outturn 2020/21	Proposed Budget 2021/22
	£	£	%	£	£	£	£
Legal Charges (Per Hour) *							
Head of Legal & Monitoring Officer	261.00	266.00	1.9%				
Principal Solicitor, Assistant Solicitor, Senior Lawyer (F	246.00	251.00	2.0%				
Clerical Assistant, Legal Assistant (Per Hour)	182.00	186.00	2.2%				
Legal Assistant / Interns/ Case Officers	100.00	102.00	2.0%				
Support Officer / Apprentices	50.00	51.00	2.0%				
# Drafting a simple licence	510.00	520.00	2.0%				
# Drafting a simple wayleave agreement/ lease	1224.00	1248.00	2.0%				
# Renewal of simple licence	306.00	312.00	2.0%				
# Renewal of simple wayleave agreement/ lease	714.00	728.00	2.0%				
Right to Buy; Request for a management pack	204.00	208.00	2.0%				
Lease Notice	100.00	102.00	2.0%				
*Charities/ Community Groups may be eligible for a 50% discount on legal fees							
Total Budgeted Income				30,000	12,000	30,000	54,000
Court Costs (subject to confirmation from courts)							
Council Tax Summons Charges	62.50	62.50	0.0%				
Council Tax Liability Order	30.00	30.00	0.0%				
NNDR Summons Charges	102.50	102.50	0.0%				
NNDR Liability Order	20.00	20.00	0.0%				
Total Budgeted Income				125,400	-	130,000	128,500

Fees and Charges	Gross Charges Current Charges 2020/21	Proposed Gross Charges 2021/22	Percentage Increase 2021/22	Budgeted Income 2020/21	Actual YTD at Sept 20	Expected Outturn 2020/21	Proposed Budget 2021/22
	£	£	%	£	£	£	£
Land Charges							
LLC1*	27.00	28.00	3.7%				
CON29*	125.00	138.00	10.4%				
Extra Parcels	24.00	24.00	0.0%				
Part 2 Questions	18.00	18.00	0.0%				
Solicitors own Questions	61.00	62.00	1.6%				
3.10 Questions	1.25	1.50	20.0%				
Section 106 service	0.00	10.00	N/A				
Total Budgeted Income				135,000	76,600	135,000	137,700
* LLC1 and CON29 refer to the two forms required to instruct a land charge search							
Street Naming and Numbering	From £12 to £180	From £12 to £180	0.0%	3,100	4,895	5,000	3,200
Total Budgeted Fees and Charges Income				293,500	93,495	300,000	323,400