

TANDRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes and report to Council of the meeting of the Committee held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Station Road East, Oxted on the 10 November 2022 at 7:30pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Wren (Chair), Swann (Vice-Chair), Bilton, G.Black, Caulcott, S.Farr, Lee, North, O'Driscoll, Pinard and Moore (Substitute) (In place of Allen)

PRESENT (Virtually): Councillors Shiner

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors Allen

155. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18TH OCTOBER 2022

The minutes were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

156. FOOD HYGIENE RATING SCORES – PROPOSALS FOR INTRODUCTION OF A FEE FOR RE-INSPECTION

The Committee received a report recommending the introduction of a charge for requested Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) re-inspections. The Council did not charge for requests for re-inspections, however the Food Standards Agency (FSA) had confirmed that, under the Localism Act 2011, local authorities in England were able to introduce fees on a cost recovery basis for re-inspections. The report sought approval of the introduction of a flat rate £246 fee for re-inspections. The fee had been calculated as the cost of time typically spent by officers in carrying out food safety inspections, including travel, and related follow up activities. The fee was considered representative of the actual costs of conducting an inspection. The revenue income generated would support the service in achieving its budgetary requirements.

During the debate, Members raised several questions. In providing answers, Officers confirmed that:

- It was anticipated there would be approximately 6 requests per year. Requests were more likely to come from larger organisations.
- Environmental Health and Licensing worked hard to ensure that organisations were not showing expired stickers, and if there was mis-representation from food business operators, this was reported to Trading Standards at Surrey County Council.
- There was an appeals process but it was very rare for an operator to appeal. It was not thought that the introduction of a charge for re-inspections would increase the number of appeals.

It was confirmed that the first inspection and automatic re-inspections necessary due to a poor score, within 6 months of the first inspection, were free to operators. It was noted that Environmental Health were up to date on inspections post-Covid.

RESOLVED to agree the introduction of a charge for requested food hygiene rating re-inspections under the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme on a cost recovery basis.

157. QUARTER 2 2022/23 BUDGET MONITORING - COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

A budget monitoring report for the second Quarter of the financial year was presented. This concerned the expenditure against the Committee's 2022/23 revenue (£4,051k) and capital (£672k) budgets.

The projected full-year overspend was £324k. This was a £124k increase from the Quarter 1 position, but a £9k improvement from the Month 5 position. However, the overall position for the Council had improved since Quarter 1.

The key headlines were:

- A forecast revenue overspend of £238k in Waste Management, related to the projected impact of inflation. This forecast had increased by £38k from Quarter 1.
- A shortfall in expected income in relation to car parking income against budget (£44k), cesspool emptying income (£49k) and parks and open spaces income (£15k).

Appendix A to the report contained information about the revenue budget, the savings plans, the capital position and the revenue risks. It was noted that there were no changes to the savings tracker in Quarter 2 and it was expected that the majority of the £20k saving in relation to a reduction in the number of mechanical sweepers would be delivered. In terms of the capital budget, there was no variance forecast, and spend at Quarter 2 was £0.5m (25%). The revenue risks remained the same as Quarter 1, with a slight increase in the trees programming budget due to re-programming.

In response to questions from Members, it was confirmed that:

- The capital underspend on children's playground equipment was due to a review as part of the Future Tandridge Programme. Work was underway to ensure the equipment provided would fit with the needs of the community. It was confirmed that Parish Councils would be consulted as part of this process.
- Work was about to begin on the Grange Meadow access, and the end of year variance was expected to be nil.
- There was one mechanical sweeper off the road for repairs. The other sweeper continued to be operational.
- The overspend on Waste Management was as a result of inflation, and not other matters disguised by the inflationary impact. It was agreed that Officers would provide Members of the Committee more specific figures.

RESOLVED – that the Committee's forecast Revenue and Capital budget positions as at Quarter 2/Month 6 (September) 2022 be noted.

158. TO CONSIDER PASSING THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED – to consider agenda item 9 following the exclusion of the press and public in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) on the grounds that:

- i) the item involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act; and
- ii) the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

159. CONTRACT DISCUSSION

The Committee considered the exempt report. Councillor Wren, seconded by Councillor Swann, proposed an amendment to recommendation A. Upon being put to the vote, this motion was carried.

RESOLVED – that amended recommendation A and recommendations B and C in the report be approved.

Rising 8.46 pm