

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) held
at 10.00 am on Wednesday, 15 September 2021

Present:

Members: Councillor R Singh (Chair)
 Councillor J Blundell
 Councillor B Gittins
 Councillor A Hopkins
 Councillor S Keough (substitute for Councillor T Sawdon)
 Councillor R Lakha
 Councillor B Mosterman

Employees:

V Castree, Law and Governance
P Jennings, Finance
A Simmonds, ICT and Digital
C Sinclair, Law and Governance
P Ward, ICT and Digital
H Williamson, Finance

Apologies: Councillor T Sawdon

Public Business

7. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

8. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2021 were agreed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

9. Reserve Balances

The Board received a presentation and considered a briefing note which provided information on the position in relations to the Council reserve balances.

The Appendix to the briefing note showed balances for each individual reserve areas over a three-year period. These were listed in the size of the balance in April 2021 (largest first) within categories. In addition, a brief description had been provided for each balance.

The Board questioned Officers and received responses on a number of matters relating to the Council reserve balances including:

- City of Culture funding and use of money post-term of City of Culture year

- LEA Schools that had moved to the Department of Education Risk Protection Arrangement
- Pension strain
- Reasons for a reserve for accrued leave
- International Childrens Games funding

The Chair, Councillor R Singh, referred to a number of 'service improvement' reserves amounting to £22m. He stated that It was important to ensure that this substantial amount be spent on improvements that could be benchmarked, monitored and fully aligned with the One Coventry Plan for the benefit of Coventry citizens.

Following discussion on matters raised at the meeting, the Board agreed to establish a Task and Finish Group to undertake further scrutiny of the above-mentioned reserves on a line by line basis and to make recommendations to the Cabinet Member on their findings.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Board note the contents of the presentation and the detailed reserves listing.**
- (b) That a Task and Finish Group be established to oversee a list of projects to ensure they align with the One Coventry Plan and to make recommendations to the Cabinet Member based on their findings.**

10. ICT & Digital Updates - Asset Register & System Monitoring

The Board received a presentation and considered a briefing note which provided information on the position with regards to ICT & Digital assets and the City Council's approach to monitoring uptime of systems.

The Board questioned Officers and received responses on a number of matters relating to the presentation including:

- Reasons for pausing the laptop refresh
- Digitisation of old documents
- Cost of staff mobile phones and concerns regarding re-using old numbers
- Unavailability of sites (particularly the Planning Portal) and notifications for users of expected outage.

Following discussion, the Board asked for further information on:

- Total cost of staff mobile phones
- Details of non-Windows servers
- Timeline for the update on devices on Windows 8 operating system
- List of critical systems and how they are monitored.

In addition, Officers undertook:

- To investigate the matter raised in respect of the re-issuing of old mobile numbers
- To consider a review of printer arrangements

RESOLVED to receive the additional information as detailed above and note the contents of the presentation and briefing note.

11. **Work Programme and Outstanding Issues**

The Board noted the Work Programme.

There were no outstanding issues.

12. **Any other items of Public Business**

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 12.30 pm)