

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) held
at 2.00 pm on Thursday, 11 January 2024

Present:

Members: Councillor E Ruane (Chair)
Councillor J Blundell
Councillor J Innes
Councillor R Lakha
Councillor J Lepoidevin
Councillor P Male
Councillor K Maton
Councillor J McNicholas

Other Members: Councillor R Brown, Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance
and Resources

Employees:

Business Systems and
Improvement:

M Greenwood

Finance:

B Hastie (Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer)),
E Dewar, T Pinks

Law and Governance:

E Jones, C Sinclair, A West

Legal and Procurement:

O Aremu (Head of Legal and Procurement), R Amor

Apologies:

None

Public Business

18. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

19. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2023 were agreed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

20. Consultation on Spending, Saving and Council Tax Proposals for 2024/25

The Board considered a briefing note in respect of the City Council's public consultation on revenue spending and savings proposals for 2024/25 and future financial years together with the approach in relation to Council Tax and the Adult Social Care precept. The note provided the Board with information about the

proposals to enable them to make any comments as part of the consultation process. The report considered by Cabinet with the relevant appendices were attached as an appendix to the briefing note.

In noting the content of the briefing note and following discussion, the Board identified the following issues to be considered as part of the consultation:

- Standardisation of residents' parking permit fees across the city.
- The impact of the removal of free parking at the War Memorial Park and the anticipated resulting parking behaviour in neighbouring streets.
- The consultation should include a note to give clarity and context in the narrative around inflation.
- The proposal for an overnight streetlight switch-off should be preceded by an analysis of the current impact of reduced street lighting to assess the possible impact of the proposal.

Officers agreed to look at any outstanding requests for residents parking schemes with a view to clearing any backlog and to provide Members with a response to the points raised above.

RESOLVED that the comments listed above be reported to the Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources in relation to the budget consultation.

21. **Delivering Value for Money in Placement Costs**

The Board considered a briefing note outlining the corporate controls in place to secure value for money when providing support to vulnerable residents. The report outlines the experience of several services in meeting demand and cost of support, describing how value for money is managed.

A private briefing note was also submitted in the private part of the agenda in respect of this item, as it contained details required to be kept private in accordance with Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

The briefing note provided details of the corporate controls in place to secure best value in securing support for vulnerable residents and highlighted the issues faced across the services listed below in securing placements.

- Adult Social Care
- Housing
- Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- Home to School Travel Assistance

Following discussion, the Board asked for further information on the following:

Adult Social Care Package Funding:

- Number of Adult Social Care service users and total cost

- Percentage markup of profit for providers
- Reasons for the increase in demand
- Location of providers (in or out of City)

Housing Package Funding:

- City Council engagement with highest cost housing placements
- Average length of stay for an individual.

SEND Package Funding:

- Checks to ensure annual reviews take place

In respect of the home to school travel assistance package funding, concerns were raised regarding costs and providers' contractual obligations, for instance, the costs incurred when a child is absent from school and the service not used. It was noted that a review was currently underway on this funding and the Board requested that a further report on this matter be brought back to the Board at the earliest opportunity.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The corporate approach utilised by the Council to deliver value for money and quality assurance through commissioning and procurement be noted.**
- 2) The current position in relation to the costs of securing support for vulnerable residents within the areas highlighted in this report and the issues experienced by those service areas be noted.**
- 3) The Board receive further information in respect of the package funding areas as indicated above.**
- 4) That the Board receive a further report on the home to school travel assistance package funding at the earliest opportunity.**

22. Work Programme and Outstanding Issues

The Work Programme was noted.

There were no outstanding issues.

23. Any other items of Public Business

There were no other items of public business.

24. Delivering Value for Money in Placement Costs

Further to Minute 21 above, the Board considered a private briefing note which included confidential matters relating to delivering value for money in placement costs.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The corporate approach utilised by the Council to deliver value for money and quality assurance through commissioning and procurement be noted.**
- 2) The current position in relation to the costs of securing support for vulnerable residents within the areas highlighted in this report and the issues experienced by those service areas be noted.**
- 3) The Board receive further information in respect of the package funding areas as indicated in Minute 21 above.**
- 4) That the Board receive a further report on the home to school travel assistance package funding at the earliest opportunity.**

(Meeting closed at 4.25 pm)