

Minutes

Audit & Scrutiny Committee Monday, 23rd January, 2017

Attendance

Cllr Mrs Pound (Chair)	Cllr Hirst
Cllr Reed (Vice-Chair)	Cllr Mrs Hones
Cllr Bridge	Cllr Keeble
Cllr Mrs Fulcher	Cllr Mrs Murphy

Apologies

Cllr Chilvers

Also Present

Cllr Wiles

Officers Present

John Chance	-	Finance Director (Section 151 Officer)
Steve Summers	-	Group Manager In House Services
Ramesh Prashar	-	Financial Services Manager

241. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Chilvers.

242. Minutes from previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 December 2016 were approved.

243. Budget Scrutiny Panel Feedback

Effective scrutiny can add considerable value to how the Council makes decisions on the allocation of resources. This had become increasingly important as the Council continued to set budgets against a background of tough economic conditions and severe funding cuts from Central Government. The medium term financial planning process would help to address the continued financial challenges and develop a strategic approach to address funding gaps.

The Committee were advised that the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee held on the 29th November 2016 had agreed the Budget Monitoring Mid Year Review and Medium Term Financial Plan.

Following this, the Budget Scrutiny Panel had met on the 17th January 2017 and Cllr Reed provided the following feedback.

Training had taken place before in December to enable all Members of the Budget Scrutiny Group to learn about managing the authority's budgets. The meeting held on the 17th January consisted of Cllrs Bridge, Fulcher, Keeble and Reed spending a period of time challenging Officers over many aspects of the reported figures relating to the current 2016-2017 budget.

The Budget Scrutiny Group reviewed the following:

- Outturn for 2016/17
- The Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Group were pleased to learn of the growing culture of local responsibility where service heads and senior managers were encouraged to own and monitor their budgets. In addition the Group examined line by line the General Fund Variations table and was satisfied with all responses.

The projected outcome was forecast to be in accordance with the approved budget which demonstrated excellent financial management. It was recognised that whilst a positive figure would be sought that was increasingly difficult in the current environment.

The Group discussed how vacancies were handled, the different rules around the Housing Revenue Account and Capital Spends. On behalf of the Group, Cllr Reed thanked Mr Prashar for the professional way he assisted the working group through the scrutiny process.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Mrs Pound and **SECONDED** by Cllr Reed.

A vote was taken by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

That the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee were requested to consider the feedback on the Medium Term Financial Plans.

Reason for recommendation

Effective financial management underpins all of the priorities for the Council.

244. Urgent business

There were no items of urgent business to discuss.

The meeting concluded at 19:07.