

Minutes of a meeting of the **JOINT PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANEL AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL** held in line with the Local Authorities & Police & Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority & Police & Crime Panel Meetings) (England & Wales) Regulations 2020, on Thursday, 21 January 2021 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

B Alcock (Chairman)

J R Astill	A C Cronin	G T D Rudkin
J Avery	R A Gibson	G P Scalese
A C Beal	M Hasan	A C Tennant
F Biggadike	J L King	J Tyrrell
M D Booth	J D McLean	S C Walsh
C J T H Brewis	N H Pepper	D J Wilkinson
T A Carter	P A Redgate	A R Woolf

In Attendance: The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Strategy and Partnerships, the Place Manager, the Strategic Finance and Compliance Manager, the Strategic Finance Manager, the Interim Director (Acting), the Housing Landlord Services Manager, the Democratic Services Trainee and the Democratic Services Officer.

**7. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

Councillor B Alcock was elected as Chairman for the duration of this meeting.

**8. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were none.

**9. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were none.

**10. DRAFT BUDGET, MEDIUM TERM PLAN AND CAPITAL STRATEGY (SCRUTINY)**

Consideration was given to the report of the Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Executive Director Commercialisation (S151) which asked the Joint Panel to consider and scrutinise the Draft General Fund and Housing Revenue Account 2021/22 revenue and capital estimates and the Draft Financial Medium Term Strategy.

**Action By**

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The Joint Panel received a presentation from the Strategic Finance and Compliance Manager which outlined the following areas:

- Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)
- General Fund Revenue & Capital
- Council Tax levels
- HRA Revenue & Capital
- Reserves

The Joint Panel were informed that the Treasury Management Policy was considered outside of the report by the Governance and Audit Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and would be presented to Cabinet as part of the final Budget paper.

Following consideration of the report and the presentation, the following issues were raised:

- Members highlighted the risks and uncertainties around whether the powers stations were rated or un-rated, and whether one of them would be coming on stream to pay business rates. The Strategic Finance and Compliance Manager informed the Panel that the uncertainty was around the Long Sutton power station and what the future operating of the station would be. Conversations were being held with the Administrators.
- Members asked, for the interest payments of the loan given by the Government to purchase council housing stock, and what percentage of the Housing Revenue Account expenditure that represented for 2021/22? The Strategic Finance and Compliance Manager confirmed that the interest on the Housing Revenue expenditure was £2,348,000 and the proportion it represented for 2021/22 was 19%.
- Was the Sutton Bridge power station currently paying business rates? The Strategic Finance and Compliance Manager would refer back to the team and inform the Panel after the meeting.
- Was the new Spalding power station paying business rates? The power station extension had now been added to the rating list and backdated to July 2019. The team were in the process of administering Business Rate bills.
- Members asked, with regards to the Capital Programme, were

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the amounts allocated to Assets and Property (Priory Road projects) necessary? The Capital programme items were being reviewed. Some work e.g air conditioning installation was being carried out while other projects were currently being assessed.

- Members enquired why the Moulton Park project had not been added to the Budget? The Interim Director informed the Panel that Moulton Park was not currently at a position to be added into the budget and a workable, sustainable solution was being looked at with Moulton Park being a self-funded asset at no cost to the public purse.
- Members asked why the £7k roofs budget for the Industrial units at Sutton Bridge had been removed from the Capital budget? The Strategic Finance and Compliance Manager stated that £100k was approved for this in the previous year which was still committed to the scheme, with £7k listed for 2020/21 and £93k for 2021/22.
- Was a reduction anticipated in the funding provided by the Government? The Strategic Finance and Compliance Manager informed the Panel that there was not enough intelligence at this time to understand whether this would be the case as the new methodology had not been developed and was still under consultation.
- Members enquired whether the additional £4k included in the Spalding Special Expenses 21/22 budget related to Spalding Cemetery? The Strategic Finance and Compliance Manager informed the Panel that the £4k was to cover any increased revenue running costs for all services within Spalding Special Expenses. The Interim Director also informed the Panel that a working group which included Councillors Grocock, Coupland and Sneath, had been set up to look at the expenditure needed on the Cemetery.
- Members queried Leisure Facilities Business rates were not anticipated during negotiations for the new contract? The Place Manager informed the Panel that this was a contractual issue that was being discussed with the current Contractor. The Place Manager would provide an update to the Panel at a later date in terms of the progression of the matter.
- With regards to rates payable as a result of the siting of markets, had any work been carried out to look at whether the rates could be exempt? The Place Manager informed the

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Panel that due to the changes with Covid, business rates on the market had been paused as the Council were no longer putting up market stalls and traders were doing this themselves.

- Had any additional funding been added for fly tipping? The Place Manager informed the Panel that at December 2020, there had been a rise in the incidence of fly tipping of 180%. The Strategic Finance and Compliance Manager would forward the financial information to Councillor Tyrrell after the meeting.
- With the Drainage Boards being under pressure, due to the increased rainfall in recent months, had any additional assistance been included within the budget to assist? The Portfolio Holder for Finance informed the Panel that, like the Council, the Drainage Boards ran reserves for use when required. The amount of money paid to the four Drainage Boards this year was more than half the amount of Council Tax collected. Both the Council and landowners contribute towards the IDBs (45% and 55% respectively). The Authority met each year with the Drainage Boards to agree upon the levy to be charged. It was stated that the service provided by the Drainage Board was good value for money. It was stated that a review of the way in which the monies were levied was required, and members would be pursuing this.
- Members requested an update on the ICT programmes for a future Performance Monitoring Panel meeting to look at the infrastructure and costs associated with the Digital strategy.
- Members asked whether there was a risk in losing receipts in relation to Right To Buy? How did we ensure that in purchasing housing stock SHDC received value for money? The Strategic Finance and Compliance Manager informed the Panel that there were time constraints attached to Right to Buy receipts. but there had been an extension due to the Covid situation, and this was being monitored. The Housing Landlord Services Manager informed the Panel that in relation to the purchase of Housing stock, a thorough appraisal process would be undertaken in assessing the schemes, which would look at a number of key components before approval of the purchase to ensure value for money.
- Members asked whether the reduction in Land Charges income was due to private enterprises offering the land charges searches at reduced rates and if so, what could be

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done to counteract this? The Strategic Finance and Compliance Manager informed the Panel that the reduced income was not due to private enterprises offering the service at a lower price, rather that part of the service was free, and that individuals could choose to undertake the search themselves. Therefore, a change in demand for the service had led to the income reduction.

**AGREED:**

- a) That the report be noted; and
- b) That the Cabinet should consider the following issues going forward:
  - Revenue Estimates for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account 2021/22, as set out in Appendices A, B and C;
  - Reserves position 2021/22 to 2024/24 as set out in Appendix D;
  - Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2024/25 as set out in Appendix E;
  - Capital Strategy as set out in Appendix F;
  - Fees and Charges Schedule as set out in Appendix G.

**11. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT**

There were none.

(The meeting ended at 7.34 pm)

(End of minutes)