Meeting: **Scrutiny Commission**

Date/Time: **Monday, 31 January 2022 at 10.00 am**

Location: **Council Chamber, County Hall, Glenfield**

Contact: **Mrs J Twomey (Tel: 0116 305 2583)**

Email: **joanne.twomey@leics.gov.uk**

Membership

Mr. M. T. Mullaney CC (Chairman)

Mr. T. Barkley CC	Mr. J. Morgan CC
Mrs. H. J. Fryer CC	Mrs. R. Page CC
Mr. S. J. Galton CC	Mr. T. J. Pendleton CC
Mr. T. Gillard CC	Mr J. Poland CC
Mr. Max Hunt CC	Mr. T. J. Richardson CC

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA PACK

Item		Report by	
11.	Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 - 2025/26 - Consideration of responses from other Overview and Scrutiny Committees		(Pages 3 - 20)

The purpose of this item is to enable consideration of the responses of the following Overview and Scrutiny Committees to their respective areas of the Medium Term Financial Strategy **(minute extracts attached)**:

- Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (meeting held on 19 January)
- Highway and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee (meeting held on 20 January)
- Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (meeting held on 24 January)
- Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee (meeting held on 25 January)
- Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee (meeting held on 26 January)

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Leicestershire County Council

HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
19 JANUARY 2022

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2022/23 – 2025/26

MINUTE EXTRACT

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 – 2025/26

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Public Health and the Director of Corporate Resources which provided information on the proposed 2022/23 to 2025/26 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as it related to the Public Health Department. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item '9' is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Mrs. L. Richardson CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Health, to the meeting for this item.

In introducing the report the Director informed the Committee that the 2022/23 Public Health Grant allocation had not yet been announced which was of concern and the date of the announcement was not known. Although the Chancellor had indicated in his Autumn 2021 statement that there would be a real terms increase for the 2022/23 Public Health Grant, the department's budget had been based on an assumption that the Public Health Grant would remain the same as the previous year.

The Cabinet Lead Member highlighted that a lot of recommissioning with external providers had been carried out in order to produce savings. However, investing in prevention schemes resulted in savings in the long term for Public Health and the NHS therefore it was counter-productive to cut core services. The implementation of Integrated Care Systems would result in more partnership working between the NHS, Local Authorities and other stakeholders and it was hoped this would result in more sharing of funding as well.

Arising from discussion, the following points were noted:

(i) No growth bids were expected for 2022/23 though there were expected to be some cost pressures for example the increase in NHS salaries. Concerns were raised by members that the MTFS did not take into account increased pressures such as population growth and in response some reassurance was given that when commissioning external providers increases in cost pressures such as population growth were built into the contract and forward modelling.

(ii) Increased pressures arising from the Covid-19 pandemic were being funded from the Contain Outbreak Management funding of £3.0m, not the main Public Health budget.

(iii) In response to concerns raised as to how the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy would be delivered if there was no growth in the Public Health budget, it was explained that only part of the Strategy was about Public Health service delivery and much of it was about policy making and wider measures that could be taken across the County to improve the health of the population.

(iv) In response to a request from a member for more outputs to be included in the MTFS report so members could understand what was being achieved as a result of the Public Health budget, the Director of Public Health confirmed that the department did monitor outputs through departmental management meetings and this information would be publicised as part of the forthcoming Public Health Strategy. The Health and Wellbeing Board also had a role to play in monitoring whether sufficient funding was being invested in prevention strategies in Leicestershire.

RESOLVED:

(a) That the report and information now provided be noted;

(b) That the comments now made be forwarded to the Scrutiny Commission for consideration at its meeting on 31 January 2022.

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
20 JANUARY 2022

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2022/23 – 2025/26

MINUTE EXTRACT

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 – 2025/26

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Environment and Transport and the Director of Corporate Resources which provided information on the proposed 2022/23 to 2025/26 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as it related to the Highways and Transport side of the Environment and Transport department. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item '9' is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Mr. O. O'Shea CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Highways and Transport, to the meeting for this item.

Arising from discussion, the following points were noted:

Growth

(i) The largest growth item was Special Educational Needs (SEN) transport with £1.2 million to be spent over the base budget rising to £5.15 million by 2025/26. In Leicestershire approximately 2,500 children were using SEN transport and the costs amounted to one third of the whole Highways and Transport budget. Some children needed escorts or medically trained escorts, and some children were unable to be transported with other children due to behavioural issues and therefore required solo transport which were some of the reasons why the transport was so costly. Currently the County Council's own fleet was used to transport some of the children and consideration was being given to whether the fleet could be used more in the future rather than via private taxi contracts. One of the challenges for this approach was that the children for a particular educational setting could reside far away from each other and therefore it would be difficult for them to share the same vehicle without having to spend too long in the vehicle. Members were of the view that closer scrutiny needed to be given to SEN transport and in particular consideration needed to be given to whether the County Council was the appropriate organisation to fund all the SEN transport costs.

(ii) Whilst the use of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) was a growth item with an up front cost of 0.06 million it had the benefit of reducing the Council's use of diesel fuel and therefore the fleet's emissions.

(iii) Highways maintenance work came under both the revenue and capital elements of the budget. The Department for Transport had given indicative allocations for Highways maintenance for 2022/23. Over the past few years the allocation had been very similar each year and when inflation was taken into account this meant a reduction in real terms.

Other factors influencing MTFS delivery and other funding sources

(iv) There were concerns about the future viability of the public transport market and in particular that bus operators would cease to run some services. The Bus Recovery Grant had been set up to support commercial bus operators due to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on patronage however this scheme was due to end shortly. The County Council was intending to write to the Department for Transport asking for the Grant to be extended for a longer period of time.

Capital Programme

(v) In response to a question from a member in relation to Zouch Bridge it was explained that the setting up of toll gates on highways required specific legislation and there were no plans for tolls in Leicestershire.

(vi) The Capital Programme for the MTFS period 2022/23 - 2025/26 allowed for £152.15million to deliver major infrastructure schemes including Advanced Design Programmes worth £12.10. These Programmes included feasibility work for large projects as well as cycling and walking initiatives.

(vii) Some of the costs of diverting traffic away from Melton Mowbray town centre i.e signage had been included in the scheme costs for the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road however additional money would also need to be spent for this purpose and this funding would come from the wider Melton Mowbray Transport Strategy.

(viii) External funding had been received from the National Productivity Infrastructure Fund (NPIF) for two road junctions in Hinckley where Rugby Road met Brookside. In total the project would cost £5 million and £3.5 million of that would come from the NPIF and the remainder from Developer contributions and match funding. The work was due to begin in April 2022.

RESOLVED:

(a) That the report and information now provided be noted;

(b) That the Committee recommends that further scrutiny should take place of the SEN transport budget;

(c) That the comments now made be forwarded to the Scrutiny Commission for consideration at its meeting on 31 January 2022.

Leicestershire County Council

ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 24th JANUARY 2022

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2022/23 – 2025/26

MINUTE EXTRACT

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 – 2025/26

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Adults and Communities and the Director of Corporate Resources which provided information on the proposed 2022/23-2025/26 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as it related to the Adults and Communities Department. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8', is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Mrs. C. M. Radford CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Adults and Communities and Mr. T. Parton CC, Cabinet Support Member, to the meeting for this item.

In introducing the report, the Director advised members that the MTFS had been prepared with the plethora of adult social care reform papers, recently published by the National Government, in mind. This included the Health and Care Bill 2021 which was expected to be enacted before the summer recess.

Arising from the comments and questions raised, the Committee was advised as follows:

Service Transformation

(i) Improving customer experience and satisfaction was a fundamental ambition of the Department's Strategy. The other ambitions such as building a flexible, talented, motivated workforce and investing in social care accommodation were key to achieving this ambition.

(ii) Members were assured that the improvements the Department intended to make to its digital offer were not intended to replace existing services, but instead provide alternative ways to connect to services. It was recognised that the use of digital services may not be suitable for all service users and that an individual approach would need to be taken. However, as the world progressed there was also a need for the Department to keep pace with the advances in digital technology to ensure service users were prepared for future events such as the 'Digital Switchover' in 2025. Members were reminded that the vast majority of people the Department were in contact with were family members of service users and professionals who were more likely to embrace alternative digital solutions. The Lead Member highlighted that the Covid-19 pandemic had provided many people (including older people) with an opportunity to familiarise themselves with digital communication such as social media.

Proposed Revenue Budget

(iii) In response to concerns regarding the risks and challenges to care providers arising from inflation, the Director confirmed that the largest cost to care providers was workforce costs, so the rise to the National Living Wage of 6.6% would be significant to both care providers and the Council. This along with the other elements of inflation would be something that the Council would need to take a view on at the appropriate time to determine the amounts to apportion to care providers. Members noted that the Department also worked with the adult social care market to agree the levels set were reasonable. Members further noted that care providers were regularly in touch with the Department to provide information on a number of areas such as cost, which was helpful when determining the amounts.

(iv) There were a number of ways that care providers were supported to manage inflation. For example, there were many government grants that had been made available during 2020/21 that were targeted to support care providers with their costs and some more of this type of grant were expected to be confirmed for the year 2022/23. Each Council Department was expected to manage the levels of inflation affecting its own services to minimise impact on corporate inflation contingency, so to help with this an annual review on the standardised uplift rate was taken by the Adults and Communities Department in consultation with an independent advisor. If further funds were required from the central contingency fund then the Department's needs would need to be balanced with other departments, but to date the Department's requirements for inflation had been allocated.

(v) The Chairman highlighted that some of the difficult decisions the Council had made, including the application of the Council Tax Adult Social Care Precept and the efficiency savings the Department had made over recent years whilst maintaining services, had put the Department in a uniquely stronger position to deal with the effects of the pandemic.

Growth

(vi) Members noted with concern that, although adjustments may be required later on, the significant amount of growth anticipated over the course of the MTFS was the single largest growth request the Department had ever put forward. This was largely a reflection of the increased demand and increased costs for care that had arisen since the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

(vii) G5 Older People demand – Members noted that for an average year for older people's care it was reasonable to expect an increase to the level of growth of around 1.5%. However, over the last 12 months this had risen to 5%. It was difficult to predict what growth may be experienced over the medium term due to the uncertain impact of the pandemic, and with older people only tending to stay in care for an average of around two or three years there was also a significant turnover rate.

(viii) One of the effects of the changes to the hospital discharge process to relieve the pressure on hospitals was that the number of people being temporarily placed into residential care in Leicestershire had risen by around 75%. It was difficult to say how long people stayed in temporary accommodation as each case varied and presented different challenges. Though, to avoid conditions becoming worse and in the interests of maximising independence, the Department worked to arrange the appropriate care package during the first four weeks (funded by the NHS) upon discharge wherever possible. The Director undertook to provide further information to Committee members to confirm the average length of stay for temporary placements outside of the meeting.

(ix) <u>G6 Learning Disability demand</u> – it was clarified that there were a number of reasons for the unusually high amount of growth required for this area. These included:

a. costs of care having risen steeply over the last couple of years;
b. rising building costs affecting the developments of accommodation, which were often bespoke in design;
c. the Council had a robust strategy in place with Health partners for the Transforming Care Programme which was quickly progressing. As part of this, effort was being made to bring those people with complex needs that had been accommodated in hospital for a long period of time at considerable cost to the Council back into the community.

(x) There were fewer suitable accommodation settings available for people with specialist needs meaning it was not always possible for placements to be made ‘in-house’. However, such persons were usually able to be placed ‘in area’ and the Department worked with a number of organisations to achieve this.

(xi) The Director reported an error at paragraph 29 (G8 Physical Disabilities demand). He confirmed that although the detail of this paragraph was a repeat of paragraph 28 (G7 Mental Health demand), the demand for these areas were similar with them both being difficult to predict. This was because they were based on people that acquire illnesses or disabilities rather than people transitioning through from other services.

<u>Savings</u>

(xii) AC10 Review of Direct Services/Day Services/Short Breaks – it was clarified that this area was an efficiency saving and not a service reduction. The process for reviewing each service change made varied depending on the nature, but changes would not be made without obtaining the views of those affected. Reviews would also take place after the event to assess service user satisfaction (for example reviews had been carried with service users temporarily placed whilst the refurbishment of The Trees was carried out and they had chosen to remain where they were) and information was collated to review how the process went. Members were reminded that in addition to the reports the Committee already received relating to service changes reports on the outcomes of such changes could also be provided to the Committee at its request.

(xiii) AC12 Potential additional health income for additional recharges – in response to a comment raised, it was acknowledged that, similarly to other areas of the MTFS, the certainty of future funding for this area was unknown which created an element of risk. However, based on the conversations taking place nationally between local authorities and the NHS, the rise in national insurance contributions and the assumption that the current hospital discharge arrangements would continue, the prediction of funding continuing beyond March 2022 (when the current funding stream was due to cease) was seen as a reasonable expectation.

(xiv) A total of £300m of national funding had been made available to encourage developments of specialist accommodation for people with disabilities. It was therefore hoped that the availability of such accommodation would improve as a result.

Savings under development

(xv) Digitalisation of Service Delivery – it was clarified that the potential savings for this area were currently forecasted to be seen in the latter part of 2022/23 (quarter 4).

(xvi) It was confirmed that the Department already had processes in place to manage data security and permissions in relation to a family member managing care arrangements on behalf of a service user. The only difference with the digital approach was that the services, such as those requiring a form to be completed, would be accessed via digital means rather than in paper form. Key was obtaining consent from the service user (or power of attorney where this was in place).

Other funding sources

(xvii) The funding expected to be received (in 2022/23) from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) to continue to fund the Adult Learning Service would show in the budget as a zero balance because the funding, once received from the agency, would be spent in its entirety. Members were reminded that, other than some non-educational courses that the Council charged individual service users for, the SFA funded the entire Adult Learning Programme.

Capital Programme

(xviii) Some concern was raised that a number of the District Councils had not been spending their Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) monies due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Director confirmed that although the Council worked with the District Councils to prioritise areas of spend, the responsibility for following the conditions attached to the DFGs fell with the District Councils. Members were advised that the Government was looking at ways to build in more flexibility to the process to allow housing authorities to decide how the monies should be spent. The Chairman highlighted the need for local members to lobby MPs to improve the process. He added that the impact of the pandemic on building works and the assessments usually carried out in people's homes were significant to why the monies had not been spent.

RESOLVED:

(a) That the report regarding the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 - 2025/26 and the information now provided be noted;

(b) That the comments now made be forwarded to the Scrutiny Commission for consideration at its meeting on 31 January 2022;

(c) That the Director be requested to provide further information regarding the average length of temporary residential placements outside of the meeting.

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CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
25 JANUARY 2022

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2022/23 – 2025/26

MINUTE EXTRACT

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 – 2025/26

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Children and Family Services and the Director of Corporate Resources which provided information on the proposed 2022/23 to 2025/26 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as it related to the Children and Family Services department. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Mrs. D. Taylor CC, Lead Member for Children and Family Services, to the meeting for this item.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were raised:

Service Transformation

i) Demand for children and family services continued to increase with growth of £25m projected. In response to the pressures, the department had embarked on four main programmes of work – the High Needs Development Programme, Defining Children and Family Services for the Future (DCFSF), the Children's Innovation Partnership and departmental efficiencies. It was acknowledged that further work was still required, but the department now had new ways of working to respond to the ongoing pressures and to continue to create a more efficient service.

Proposed Revenue Budget

ii) The total gross proposed budget for 2022/23 was £703.1m, which included £482m Dedicated Schools Grant budget. The proposed net budget for 2022/23 totalled £90.5m. The largest cost to the budget was children in care and it was queried whether a breakdown could be given of how this was spent. The Director of Children and Family Services confirmed that the majority related to placement costs with a proportion also relating to staffing. A breakdown was available of how many children were in different placements and the associated costs; the number of children in care, the total costs and the average unit costs were tracked and this would be circulated to members of the Committee.

iii) A member raised the point that growth over the next four years was not just about demand but also related to meeting the complexity of needs. It was queried whether the demand could be met due to the current high level of strain on services. In response, the Director stated that the department had a number of statutory requirements that needed to be met. The growth projections incorporated the increase in demand for services, particularly relating to children in care. The department was also considering other areas where demand could be reduced.

iv) It was raised that an increase in demand for services could lead to an increase in the demand for social workers. A question was raised around the impact that this would have on the County Council in recruiting appropriate staff. The Director responded that there had been a projection for the need for more social workers. Recruitment and retention of social workers was a national issue and the County Council had undertaken lots of work to consider how it might attract staff and ensure that they remained with Leicestershire. The department's Recruitment and Retention Strategy set out plans to address this.

<u>Growth</u>

v) Growth over the next four years totalled £25.1m. The majority of the growth requirement related to continued increases in demand and the complexity of needs for children's social care services which culminated in increased placement costs and the need for more social workers.

vi) It was noted that G1 – Social Care Placements – should read £2.265m in 2022/23 rising to £19.25m by 2025/26. The budgeted growth over four years assumed a 5% increase due to the significant work undertaken within the department with the DCFSF programme. These had been projected based on the number of children expected to be in care and the type of placements. Average unit prices for placements had also seen an increase, with a number of factors affecting this. As mitigation, placements and the costs were continuously reviewed within the department. Further investment was being made to build Leicestershire County Council owned residential homes as part of the Children's Innovation Partnership.

vii) In relation to G2 – Front Line Social Care Staff – Increased Caseloads – investment in additional front-line social care staff capacity was required. The growth was based on the number of social workers and support staff required to support the number of projected contacts and children. It was noted that the use of agency staff would still be needed.

viii) £5.6m had been budgeted to employ more social work staff to support the growth in demand. However, it was queried whether the proposed growth for the social care staff market premia (G3) should be increased in order to retain existing staff and prevent them from moving to a different local authority which may pay a higher salary. The Director commented that the market premia was one of many initiatives being undertaken as part of the

Recruitment and Retention strategy. Whilst it was known that a salary which compared well with other regional local authorities was desirable, Leicestershire offered a range of other features to encourage the retention of its staff, for example training and development, good supervision and manageable caseloads.

Savings

ix) Proposed savings for the local authority budget totalled £3.77m in 2022/23 and £14.5m over the next four years in total. Additionally, the High Needs Development Plan aimed to ensure sustainable services for children and young people with Special Educational Needs within the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. In order to achieve this, cost reductions of £25.8m were required over the period of the MTFS.

x) The DCFSF Programme (CF1) was expected to realise total annualised benefits in excess of £13m. Positive early indications had been seen in the current financial year resulting in an underspend of approximately £2m against the budget.

xi) The financial benefits from the Children’s Innovation Partnership (CF4) were expected to be seen from reduced placement costs and social worker resource. A comment was made that it had previously been necessary to place children out of county in very expensive settings, and it was asked whether the profile had changed so that children were now placed in more local settings. The Director stated that a change in the type of placements was being seen and fewer children were placed a long way away. Primarily, where children were placed out of Leicestershire, it was because the placement met their needs. It was noted that there was a national challenge in securing placements along with an increased cost of placements for children.

xii) There were currently 57 young people in residential care, with the majority having more complex needs. Key pieces of work were in place to consider the appropriateness of residential care, particularly as there had been a significant cost increase. Assurance was given that the department had clear ownership of its children in residential care and understood their needs to ensure that no child remained in residential care where it was not appropriate. Clear trajectory plans were in place to take children out of care when possible and it was also stated that there had been an increase in younger children in residential care due to their complex needs. The Lead Member for Children and Families commented that there had been a shift in the department’s work undertaken with partners to better support children and avoid residential placements where possible.

xiii) A member questioned whether there had been an increase in foster caring, and it was reported that part of the work of the DCFSF programme had been to increase the utilisation of in-house foster care provision and this was now being seen. Bespoke campaigns had been undertaken to increase the number of foster carers who would take teenagers due to an increase in the number of 15/16 year olds entering care. Consideration was also being given to a greater use of kinship care and the benefits of looking beyond foster care were beginning to be seen.

xiv) To date, around £1m departmental efficiency savings (CF5) had been identified. Further savings were currently being identified. As the DCFSF programme new ways of working were embedded, further analysis would be undertaken to identify potential new opportunities to take forward in a number of areas.

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)/Schools Block

xv) The DSG remained calculated in four separate blocks – the Schools Block, Central Schools Services Block, High Needs Block and Early Years. The estimated DSG for 2022/23 totalled £605.3m. The 2022/23 MTFS continued to set the overall Schools Budget as a net nil budget at local authority level. However, there was a funding gap of £9.1m on the High Needs Block which would be carried forward as an overspend against the grant.

xvi) In relation to the Schools Block, the DfE had further stated its intention to move to a ‘hard’ National Funding Formula (NFF), whereby budget allocations for all schools was calculated by the DfE. For 2022/23, funding remained a ‘soft’ school funding formula whilst the outcome of consultation was awaited.

School Funding Formula

xvii) Despite an overall increase in the minimum amount of funding per pupil, a number of Leicestershire schools remained on the funding floor and could experience a real term decrease in income. Schools with a decrease in pupil numbers would see an overall decrease in budget allocation. It was possible for local authorities to transfer up to 0.5% of the Schools Block DSG to High Needs following consultation with schools and with the approval of the Schools Forum. Consultation had been carried out with schools on two options for a transfer, with the majority disagreeing. A request to the Secretary of State for approval of the transfer had also not been approved.

High Needs

xviii) The High Needs DSG was £94.7m, which was an increase of 14%. The forecast position was highlighted although the financial plan would be subject to change following the findings of diagnostic work currently being completed by Newton Europe. These findings would be reported to the Committee.

xix) The provisional Early Years Block settlement was £36.1m; the final allocation would not be confirmed until June 2023. Although there had been an increase in the hourly rate, Leicestershire remained on the funding floor and received the lowest rate of funding.

Capital Programme

xx) The proposed Children and Family Services capital programme totalled £94.1m, the majority (£89.1m) for which external funding was expected. The programme continued to focus on the delivery of additional school places and additional places to support the High Needs Development Plan.

xxi) A capital investment budget envelope of £2.5m had previously been included in the MTFS to develop and assessment hub and multi-functional properties to create in-house capacity to provide placements at a lower cost. This was progressing well and the next phase in the Residential Design Brief was to source a further four properties to create additional residential capacity up to a total of £1.9m.

RESOLVED:

a) That the report and information now provided be noted;

b) That the comments now made be forwarded to the Scrutiny Commission for consideration at its meeting on 31 January 2022.

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ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE OVERVIERW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 26 JANUARY 2022

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2022/23 - 2025/26

MINUTE EXTRACT

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 – 2025/26

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Environment and Transport and the Director of Corporate Resources which provided information on the proposed 2022/23 to 2025/26 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as it related to waste, the environment and the green agenda. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item '10' is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Mr. N. Rushton CC, Leader of the Council, to the meeting for this item.

The Committee was advised that there was an error in the numbering of some of the savings items within the report and the appendix, but that the references within the table to the title of each saving were correct and comparable.

Arising from the discussion the following points were noted:

Growth

i. Conversion of the County Council's diesel fleet to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil would significantly reduce carbon emissions from the fleet. The Committee was assured that the change would be done in a managed way to ensure resilience against any unforeseen circumstance, in the new financial year, subject to approval of the MTFS by Full Council.

ii. Following the increase in kerbside collected waste as a result of the pandemic, it was queried whether there was a corresponding decrease in commercial waste. In response the Director informed the Committee that while the County Council was not responsible for commercial waste, it did handle a low level through its waste transfer stations. It was noted that commercial waste in that regard had recovered. The Department would look to capitalise on any opportunities available to it.

Savings

iii. Through a contract renewal the existing contract for disposal of wood had been renegotiated which delivered £0.4million of savings.

iv. The Authority had struggled for a number of years with its waste disposal resilience following the closure of the Cotesbach Mechanical Biological Treatment facility, that left it without a local all-weather solution to dispose of its waste, i.e. if a landfill site was closed due to high winds. This meant the distance needed to travel to redirect its residual waste could be greater. This would be managed through the reletting of contracts and Bardon Waste Transfer Station which would provide further resilience and increased holding capacity additional to Whetstone and Loughborough Transfer Stations.

v. The Director assured Members that the Department remained committed to progressing reuse initiatives as part of its Recycling and Household Waste sites service approach. It was noted progress had stalled as a result of staffing and market issues related to the pandemic, but that infrastructure had been put in place at some sites to facilitate it. Prior to the pandemic the item had been profiled over six years to achieve £200,000 income, however the business case would need to be refreshed and the savings reprofiled as the market recovered.

Capital Programme

vi. It was clarified that, in relation to the Kibworth site redevelopment, the total scheme cost was £5.5million, a portion of which had already been funded, with the remaining £2 million set out within the Capital Programme for 2022/23. The Site was expected to open Autumn 2022.

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RESOLVED:

(a) That the report and information now provided be noted;

(b) That the comments now made be forwarded to the Scrutiny Commission for consideration at its meeting on 31 January 2022.