Agenda Item 11

Consideration of the Medium Term Financial Strategy

2024/25 – 2027/28

Minute extracts from the following Overview and Scruitny Committees:

- Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (meeting held on 17 January)
- Highway and Transport Overview and Scrutiny (meeting held on 18 January)
- Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (meeting held on 22 January)
- Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee (meeting held on 23 January)
- Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee (meeting held on 24 January)

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Leicestershire County Council

HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
17 JANUARY 2024

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2024/25-2027/28

MINUTE EXTRACT

Public Health Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25-2027/28.

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Public Health and the Director of Corporate Resources which provided information on the proposed 2024/25 to 2027/28 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as it related to Public Health. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 8', is filed with these minutes.

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

Arising from discussion, the following points were noted:

(i) The Public Health Department had 118 members of staff and this figure included the inhouse services that the department provided such as the Quit Ready scheme. Members commended the work that had been carried out by Public Health with that level of staffing.

(ii) Members welcomed the role the Public Health department played in adding value to the work of other County Council departments and the NHS. It was emphasised that more needed to be done to publicise this.

(iii) Members noted the large amount of savings that were projected for the MTFS period 2024/25 to 2027/28 and queried whether these numbers were achievable. In response it was explained that most of those savings had already been achieved for example with the difficult decisions that had been made around the homelessness support service, sport and physical activity programmes and school food.

(iv) A member queried whether Public Health was spending the correct proportion of its budget on tackling obesity. In response the Director of Public Health acknowledged that more needed to be done in this area particularly as the percentage of adults aged 16 and over in Leicestershire that were meeting the '5 a day' recommendations was not as good as hoped. However, there were budget constraints and core costs such as the health visiting service had to be met. The weight management service received more Public Health funding than general obesity campaigns. On the whole the Director of Public Health felt that the balance was the correct one under the circumstances.

(v) In 2023 a procurement process had taken place for the Integrated Sexual Health Service. Whilst there had been expressions of interest at the soft market testing stage, no providers had bid at the final stage. Therefore, a decision had been made to extend the contract of the current provider for a further 12 months.

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 29 January 2024.

Leicestershire County Council

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 18 JANUARY 2024

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2024/25 – 2027/28

MINUTE EXTRACT

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 – 2027/28

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 2024/25 to 2027/28 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 '8' 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 financial position of the Council was both complex and sensitive. A Member commented that the growth forecasted in the report was 'frightening' and currently provided for no growth for areas such as highway maintenance in 2026/27 and 2027/28; growth being dominated by increased demand for SEN Transport.

G17 - SEN Transport

(ii) There was substantial growth in the demand for SEN Transport, but this did not appear to be reflected in the demand for Adult Social Care Transport. Members queried whether a delayed increase in number of users for Adults Social Care Transport was being forecast. The Director confirmed that the trend for SEN transport demand was not directly translating into increased transport requirements for adults. The statutory responsibility to provide SEN Transport for children to attend school did not apply to adults and given that the eligibility criteria for adult transport services was different, this was not expected. Members noted, however, that work was taking place between departments to create a better understanding on where there could be knock on effects.

(iii) A Member commented that to reduce the cost of SEN Transport, a key factor would be to understand where the demand for transport came from and where this was going (i.e. to which school). It was suggested that delays in the Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) process prevented transport needs being met as efficiently as might otherwise be possible. Some children were not able to attend the school located closest to their home and this resulted in increased transport costs. Making late arrangements for transport also added to cost and demand pressures as it was not possible to forward plan and potentially co-ordinate journeys. The Director highlighted that the Children and Families Service had been working hard to reduce the time it took to undertake an EHCP through its Transforming SEND in Leicestershire Programme, and the situation was improving but would continue to be monitored. Members noted the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be considering at its next meeting progress in delivering the TSIL programme.

(vi) The Council operated an in-house transport service which was beneficial and reduced reliance on the private market. It operated a minibus fleet and deployed that as efficiently as possible. A key risk for operating an in-house service was the ability to recruit drivers. When there were a significant number of vacancies, this affected service levels and therefore having a mixed in-house and outsourced operation helped to balance and manage that risk. The position was, however, kept under constant review.

(iv) The current outdated IT system used by passenger transport services was being replaced. Whilst this would be a big programme of work that would take time to bed in, in the longer term this would help make the service more efficient. The new system had in built route optimisation software that would enable officers to plan journeys more easily and efficiently.

(v) The Director confirmed that the pressures regarding SEN and SEN Transport was a national issue. The Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) and the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT) had recently submitted recommendations to Government on the changes and improvements needed. The Director undertook to circulate copies of those recommendations to Committee Members so that these could be endorsed.

Savings

ET6 (SR) Ending of HS2 Programme

(vi) The costs incurred by the Authority in relation to the HS2 national scheme related to the small team established to work with effected communities and HS2 Limited as the project developed. The Director confirmed that no further costs had been incurred. The savings now included in the MTFS reflected that this service was no longer needed in light of cancellation of the scheme north of Birmingham by the government.

Capital Programme

(vii) There had been a change in strategy regarding bidding for funding for infrastructure works. Government funding always required the Council to match fund any successful bid. The cost of submitting a bid could also be substantial and there was no guarantee of success. The principal that would now be applied would be that no bid would be submitted in future if it could not be clearly demonstrated that the costs and match funding could be met without the need for Council funding.

(viii) Developer contributions were agreed as part of the planning process for individual developments. It was proposed that in future, the inflation rate applied in those agreements would be subject to a calculation that would allow for rising inflation, given that some developments took years to come to fruition. At present, the inflation rate was set at the point of completion of the agreement. Rising inflation meant that the contributions agreed did not meet the subsequent costs incurred by the Council in delivering the agreed infrastructure. Members supported the change in approach and agreed that the level of contribution should reflect the costs being incurred at the point of delivery. Members noted that in future the Council would also not deliver the infrastructure until much later when contributions had been received rather than forward funding infrastructure.

(xi) It was noted that the tender for works required to Zouch bridge had closed. An evaluation of those tenders would now be undertaken following which a decision would be made on how to proceed. It was too early in the process to know whether the tenders would come in within budget.

RESOLVED:

a) That the report on the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 -2027/28 be noted;

b) That the comments now made be forwarded to the Scrutiny Commission for consideration at its meeting on 29 January 2024;

c) That the Director for Environment and Transport be requested to Committee Members copies of the recommendations raised by the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) and The Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT) in relation to SEN Transport so that these could be endorsed.

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Leicestershire County Council

ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
22nd JANUARY 2024

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2024/25 – 2027/28

MINUTE EXTRACT

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 - 2027/28.

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Adults and Communities and Director of Corporate Resources which provided information on the proposed 2024/25 to 2027/28 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, Cabinet Lead Member to the meeting for the item.

Arising from discussion, the following points arose:

Proposed Revenue Budget, Other Changes and Transfers

(i) Members questioned if the revenue budget had been compiled included pay and inflation increases. The Director reported a contingency for pay and inflation was held centrally and allocated in year when the budget was set.

(ii) Members acknowledged the challenge faced with external factors outside the control of the authority affecting ever-diminishing resources.

Growth

(iii) A Member questioned the appeared lack of rehabilitation being provided to patients on discharge from hospital which had to be picked up by family members. The Director reported that the NHS had pressures which it had to address, and that there was a different discharge process post pandemic, whereby a discharge decision used to be multi-disciplinary was now an NHS decision, which had caused some problems on the over-prescription of care on discharge. It was noted the Council had worked closely with NHS colleagues over the past 12 months on the three 'Rs': Rehabilitation, Reablement, Recovery elements. Community hospitals had recently provided additional beds for rehabilitation and recovery.

(iv) There had been some changes to the way NHS out of hospital services have been commissioned. It was reported that pre-pandemic there had been a substantial amount of community nursing and therapy services that would work with people on discharge, but that service was no longer available. However, resources had been re-directed to the development of virtual wards which had been very successful, for example, working with people with respiratory and coronary conditions. The NHS were also under immense pressure with regards to waiting lists and people waiting for various forms of treatment. The Council was working with the NHS to address totality of need, but there was a £3.2million shortfall of funding as outlined at paragraph 34 in the report.

(v) Members queried the 30% year-on-year growth in older people demand and asked how the increase was calculated. It was reported that in order to forecast growth, finance worked on the number of service users and average costs, and used a national formula on the prediction of the number of people coming through as new entrants, which would usually be different each year.

(vi) Members queried the Discharge Fund increasing by 50%. It was reported that the growth figure was actual demand and costs which was then netted off with extra money from the NHS further down in the accounts. It was noted that the Discharge Fund was limited to certain periods of time.

(vii) Members noted the increase in costs over the next few years and asked if enquiries had been made of central government for additional money. The Director reported that conversations had been held with the Department for Health and Social Care and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, neither of which had suggested there would be any more funding made available. It was further noted that much of the social care funding for 24/25 had been announced in 2022/23, a two-year settlement at that point. The Director commented that he was not aware of any additional funding coming through, though every opportunity would be explored by the Leadership of the Council.

(viii) The Director reported that considerable savings had been made in the past through the Target Operating Model, thought to be in excess of £10million, though likely to be much more when applying inflation. It was noted that this had alleviated some of the budget pressures being experienced currently.

(ix) Members noted that the increase in the National Living Wage (NLW) added significant pressure on the Council's budget, in particular for adults social care. This was because the majority of social care services were delivered on the basis of the NLW for care staff, of which there were in excess of 17,000k care staff the Council supported through contracts. The NLW was set to cost the Council over £20million, which was more than the Council could raise through the adult social care precept on Council Tax.

<u>Adult Social Care – Savings</u>

(x) A Member queried under AC16 (Eff) how the demarcation between care and non-personal care was made, and how, if the situation arose that a person would not do a job because it wasn't allocated to them would be addressed, or if a person on a lower hourly rate was being sent some distance to undertake a five-minute job. The Director confirmed that each individual circumstance would be looked at on its own merits, and that nothing would be implemented without reviewing all roles prior to any changes being made. It was noted that home care fee rates in the county compared well with other authorities, with upwards of £26 to £27 an hour being paid which, if being used for shopping, could be delivered through working with the volunteering community sector for £15 to £20 per hour, therefore some significant savings could be made, but only if not detrimental to the individual.

(xi) A Member questioned under *AC6 (Eff) – Direct Payment Commissioning Efficiencies, if surplus balances would be taken back from people. The Director reported that the review of Direct Payment packages was undertaken every year and was considered to be good housekeeping. It was noted that people were given direct payments into a bank account to pay for their own care with a contingency of at least four weeks in advance. Where people built up a surplus balance, they would be asked to return anything they had not used over what would need to cover their next four weeks of care, the sums of which could be in the thousands of pounds of public money. Members noted that largely people returned it when requested to. Over £40million had been made in Direct Payments, with around 3-4% being returned. It was further noted that if people were given the opportunity to purchase care, they would often purchase less than when Adult Social Care services arranged it, often relying on family and friends instead. Members raised a concern that, if people were not spending the money sent to them, were they receiving adequate care. Members requested that during the course of the year, a report on direct payments be brought to the committee to allay the concern that Members had made.

Communities and Wellbeing

(xii) In response to a Member's query regarding *AC19 (SR) Review Green Plaque Service, and if sponsorship had been considered, the Director reported that sponsorship had been looked at with potentially joining or integrating with some of the district council that ran similar schemes in the past. However, this had not been a viable option. Other options had also been considered before ceasing the service, the decision for which had been made in the previous financial year by full Council, though it had only recently been implemented.

Savings Under Development

Transitions Review

(xiii) Members noted the work to be undertaken over the next 12 months with Children and Family Services to look at the way people moved from Children's Services into Adult Services. The Director confirmed there would be no changes until the outcome of the review was known.

Health and Social Care Integration

Better Care Fund

(xiv) Members noted that the BCF at £82.5million for 2024/25 and £22.9million as a minimum contribution of the NHS allocation would be used to sustain adult social care services, with a further £8million of NHS funding going towards adult social care services, therefore it was vital the funding was maintained.

Other Funding Sources

(xv) Members noted the smaller grants expected for 2024/25 which were received to sustain adult social care services, the most significant of which was the market sustainability improvement fund worth over £10million.

Capital Programme

(xvi) Members noted the main source of external funding of the capital programme totalling £22million was the BCF grant programme of £19.4million passported directly through to district councils for the disabled facilities grant, leaving a balance of just under £3million of discretionary funding to be used for the social care investment programme.

Future Developments

(xvii) Members noted the disabled facility grants had brought in a substantial amount of money to the district councils, and the way the scheme had run, particularly Lightbulb, and the way the County Council worked with district councils was exemplary.

RESOLVED:

a) That the report regarding the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/28 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 29th January 2024;

c) That the Director be requested to provide a report on Direct Payments to a future meeting of the Committee.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 23 JANUARY 2024

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2024/25 – 2027/28

MINUTE EXTRACT

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 – 2027/28

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 2024/25 to 2027/28 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.

Service Transformation and Revenue Budget

i. The Director emphasised that increased financial controls, which the Council had introduced around recruitment, procurement and non-essential spend in order to address the Council's funding gap, were in addition to the financial controls the Department had in place for a number of years. Members noted that all financial controls would be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

Growth

ii. Members noted that 135 individuals over the age of 18 were being cared for by the Council and that this was funded through the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) budget. The Council supported these individuals as they were classed as care leavers. Some of these young people had not yet had their asylum claim processed by the Government, and therefore could not work, claim benefits, or live independently. The Cabinet Lead Member for Children and Families had written to the Secretary of State to seek a resolution as the situation would continue to negatively impact lives and contribute to the financial growth pressure in relation to the UASC budget.

Savings

iii. The Director confirmed that 23 in-house placements would be created over the next five years through the Children's Innovation Partnership (CIP) with Barnardo's which it was anticipated would reduce reliance on the private sector

The aim was to build homes in Leicestershire so that children and young people in care could continue to live within their communities.

iv. In response to a question relating to whether CIP would be expanded to further reduce reliance on the private sector, if the expected savings were made, the Director explained that CIP would continually review the roll-out of homes in order to reduce costs and support children with complex needs through in-house placement provision.

v. In response to concern relating to the demand for tribunals within the SEND Service, the Director explained that a saving of £0.1m in 2025/26, rising to £0.4m by 2027/28, had been identified as part of the Transforming SEND and Inclusion in Leicestershire (TSIL) programme, which was likely to result in longer term reduction in demand. The TSIL programme would aim for children and young people to be placed within the correct provision at the correct time, and for a greater level of engagement with parents, carers and schools, which was anticipated to reduce the number of tribunals and as a result would have a reduced cost to the Service.

vi. The Director assured members that the Department had undertaken analysis on tribunals and that in the majority of cases a tribunal had been requested due to parents or carers having not agreed with a decision the Council had made relating to specialist provision or an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan). Members noted that the Council was responsible for its own costs associated with the tribunal process and that parents would be responsible for the cost of seeking independent advice. The Director acknowledged that the Department needed to find ways to work with parents differently to avoid tribunals, including earlier engagement, improved mediation and conflict resolution. Members noted that delays experienced within the system would result in complaints received by the Service, rather than leading to tribunal.

vii. A member suggested that despite resource challenges and the national shortage in the availability of Educational Psychologists, that there would still be a requirement for supporting parents and carers, as well as schools, with thorough and accurate assessments for EHCPs. The Director acknowledged this point, and assured members that the Department would continue to work with parents, carers and schools and focus on allocating the most appropriate level of support to children and young people at the correct time.

<u>High Needs</u>

viii. Members noted that there was an error in the table on page 30 of the report. The Savings Achieved at Annual Reviews in 2027/28 should have read -380 (£,000).

ix. A concern was raised regarding the impact that anticipated savings from a reduction in the number of early years specialist starts would have on children. In response, the Director assured members that, where an assessment had identified that a child required specialist provision, they would be placed within a specialist setting to meet their need. The savings identified related to children where an assessment had identified that they could have their needs best met elsewhere within the system, for example in a mainstream setting. Members noted that diagnostic work conducted as part of the TSIL programme had identified a number of cases where children could have been placed in a different setting or remained in mainstream if earlier support had been provided. The Director assured members that children currently placed within provision would not be moved out of provision that was currently meeting their needs, and that the changes would apply to newly assessed children to ensure they were placed in settings that could meet their needs.

x. Concern was raised that a reduction in the number of non-early years specialist starts may not deliver the anticipated savings and could place pressure on mainstream settings. The Director assured members that the Department would ensure children were placed in the right setting to meet their needs and that costs would be avoided by not placing children in provision that was not necessary to meet their identified needs. Diagnostic work conducted by the Department, in partnership with Newton Europe, had identified that some children within specialist provision could have had their needs met within a mainstream setting. The Director emphasised that the work taking place was about getting it right for children at the earliest possible time and ensuring children would be placed in settings that met the needs identified in the EHCP. Members were assured that the placement budget would continue to be utilised to support children according to their needs. It was anticipated that savings would be made through ensuring each child was receiving the right provision to meet their needs.

xi. Members noted that following the expected end to the Statutory Accounts Override, in March 2026, the budget deficit would no longer be ringfenced from the Council’s core budget.

<u>Capital Programme</u>

xii. Members noted the information provided at paragraphs 103 to 111 in the report.

RESOLVED:

a) That the report regarding the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 – 2027/28 and information now provided be noted;

b) That the comments now made be forwarded to the Scrutiny Commission for consideration at its meeting on 29 January 2024.

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ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 24 JANUARY 2024

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2024/25-2027/28

MINUTE EXTRACT

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 2024/25 to 2027/28 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as it related to the Environment and Waste Management Services within the Council's Environment and Transport Department. The report also sought the Committee's views on proposals to recommend to the Cabinet that the Council's net zero target dates be revised from 2030 to 2035 for the Council's own emissions, and from 2045 to 2050 for the County's emissions, in light of the Council's wider financial position. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 8', is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Mr. B.L. Pain CC, Cabinet Lead Member for the Environment and the Green Agenda and Mr. N. J. Rushton CC, Leader of the Council to the meeting for this and other items.

In presenting the report, the Director explained that the environment aspects of the MTFS related to the Environment and Transport Department only and not the wider environmental activity across the Council.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

<u>Revenue Budget</u>

i. The premium paid as part of the package to recruit and retain HGV drivers had helped the Council to be more competitive in the marketplace, although it could not compete with the attractive offers made by the bigger private sector operators in the area. Staffing overall was near full complement with the use of the premia and agency staff, but in such a competitive market, it was a challenge. Overall, the service was coping from a driver perspective by paying the premium and by using agency staff. However, there was a shortage of managers and frontline staff. Overall, 20% of vacancies were currently filled by agency staff. The Department preferred to keep the level of agency staff to 10%. Other amendments had been made to the recruitment package, such as changing contractual hours to a four day on/four day off contract, which reflected what was offered in the wider marketplace and enabled the Council to compete.

ii. Regarding the free disposal of DIY waste following the change in legislation from 1 January 2024, Members expressed concern about the volume that households could now potentially deposit at RHWS which would increase the Council's costs and were informed that households were restricted to four visits in a four-week period.

Growth

iii. Pre-existing arrangements were in place to manage the disposal of asbestos at certain Council Recycling and Household Waste Sites (RHWS), and details were available on the Council's website for the public to follow. This was not charged for at the same rates but had been included in the new process now in place linked to the legislation for the disposal of DIY waste. All items known to include asbestos, including artex, were covered within these arrangements with a need to have a permit for removal and disposal for health and safety reasons.

Savings/Savings under Development

iv. The income from the sale of items from the RHWS for reuse was included under ET9 'service approach', which was a broad description in the budget and included savings linked to reuse of items. The Director agreed to amend the descriptor for clarity.

v. Members expressed concern that income from the disposal of trade waste could be reduced if traders used the new legislation for the disposal of DIY at RHWS to dispose of their waste. The Director assured members that trade waste services were only available at Whetstone Transfer Station and that it had a unique trade point in the market. The RHWS across the county did not accept trade waste at any of the sites. RHWS staff monitored people disposing of waste, so could identify traders using the wrong facilities. Additionally, Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) was used to provide vehicle count data and monitor service usage levels. A report would be presented to the Committee in March on the removal of charges for DIY waste and related work.

Other Factors Influencing MTFS Delivery/Other Funding Sources

vi. A member expressed concern that the report proposed an extension to the net zero target dates by five years and stated that achieving the original target dates should be the Council's top priority. Other members added that, whilst they understood the concerns expressed, they recognised the importance of making savings to balance service delivery and the needs of residents within the resource envelope available to the Council.

vii. Mr. B. L. Pain CC, Cabinet Lead Member for the Environment and the Green Agenda, highlighted the many achievements made to date in working towards the Council's net zero targets, He added, however, that despite these many achievements, it was recognised that the Council was off track in achieving the net zero targets overall. In light of the financial challenge facing the Council there was a need to extend the Council's targets to be in line with national targets. Mr. N. J. Rushton CC highlighted that the Council had achieved a great deal in working towards the Council's net zero targets. However, with a growth bid in this area of £475,000, which was not possible to meet, the targets needed to be revised. He added that, if the growth bid was met, then the money would need to be identified from another budget within the Council which would then be reduced. The Director of Corporate Resources clarified that the £475,000 related to the cost of the team working on the environmental agenda and not the cost to the Council of conversion to net zero, which could not be costed but was way beyond the Council's means and could not be met without Government legislation and funding.

viii. Members were assured that a report on the reprioritisation of activity under the net zero targets would be brought back to the Committee, before being presented to the Cabinet and Council.

ix. The Emissions Trading Scheme was a form of taxation on the energy from waste (EFW) sector, following on from the Government's successful use of landfill taxes to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill. More detail was expected from the Government, but it was likely that the increased taxation would be passed on from the EFW treatment facilities to the County Council via an increase in the gate fee, which is a fee charged by the treatment facilities to accept waste from waste disposal authorities.

x. The Committee commended staff for the range of activity being undertaken with waste recycling.

Capital Programme

xi. Regarding the expenditure detailed in paragraph 35 table 3 for lighting, this related to the improvements to the lighting provision within RHWS and not payment for lighting/electricity use which was funded out of the revenue budget.

xii. A Member expressed concern about the increase in traffic and the need for improvements to the road and entrance to the Kibworth RHWS should the proposal to close the Market Harborough RHWS be approved. The Director assured members that a traffic assessment had been completed for all RHWS as part of consideration of the proposals. This showed that the entrance to the Kibworth site could cope with the additional traffic flow and that there were no additional measures needed.

RESOLVED:

a) That the report regarding the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 – 2027/28 (MTFS) and information now provided be noted;

b) That the comments now made regarding the MTFS, including proposals to revise the Council's net zero target dates, be forwarded to the Scrutiny Commission for consideration at its meeting on 29 January 2024.

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