

CORPORATE SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday 24 November 2016

Present:

Councillor Sheldon (Chair)
Councillors Warwick, Ashwood, Baldwin, Hannan, Harvey, Musgrave and Robson

Apologies:

Councillors Holland and Lamb

In attendance

Councillor Edwards - Leader

Also present:

Deputy Chief Executive, Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support, Principal Accountant Service (PM), Principal Health and Safety Officer, Policy Officer (MP-J) and Democratic Services Manager (Committees)

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MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 29 September 2016 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as correct.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

No declarations of disclosable interest were made.

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CAPITAL MONITORING STATEMENT TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2016

The Principal Accountant (PM) presented the report of the current position in respect of the Council's revised annual capital programme and to advise Members of the anticipated level of deferred expenditure into future years.

The Principal Accountant advised Members that, during the first six months of the year the Council spent £4.063 million of the programme, the schemes to be deferred included Energy Saving Projects of £1,644,500 and LAINGS refurbishments of £1 million.

Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee noted the revision in respect of the annual Capital Programme to reflect the reported variations detailed in paragraphs 8.4 and 8.5 of the report, and the additions to the Capital Programme detailed in 8.6 of the report and recommend its approval by Council.

OVERVIEW OF THE REVENUE BUDGET 2016/17

The Principal Accountant (PM) presented the report to advise Members of the overall projected financial position of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and General Fund Revenue Budgets for the 2016/17 financial year after six months and to seek approval for a number of supplementary budgets.

The Principal Accountant advised Members that the General Fund had an overspend of £201,245 and the HRA an underspend of £339,878, the balance of the General Fund as at 31 March 2017 was projected to be £3,432,702, the minimum requirement for the General Fund working balance approved by Council in February 2016 was £3 million.

In response to Member's questions, the Deputy Chief Executive stated that whilst there was still uncertainty regarding the retention of Business Rates the Council would work towards increasing its reserves in the long term. It was important that the City continued to grow as this would generate income for the Council in the medium to long term.

Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee noted the report and request and Executive note and Council approves the following:-

- (1) General Fund forecast financial position for the 2016/17 financial year;
- (2) the HRA forecast financial position for 2016/17 financial year;
- (3) the additional supplementary budgets listed in Appendix C;
- (4) the outstanding Sundry Debt position as at September 2016; and
- (5) the creditors' payments performance.

TREASURY MANAGEMENT -2016-17 HALF YEAR UPDATE

The Principal Accountant (PM) presented the report on the current Treasury Management performance for the 2016/17 financial year, and the position regarding investments and borrowings at 30 September 2016. The report was a statutory requirement and was for information only with no key decisions required.

The Principal Accountant advised Members of the Net Interest Position with regards to investments and borrowing. An investment of £3 million had been made in CCLA's Local Authorities Mutual Investment Trust (LAMIT) Property Fund the yield on this investment was 4.9%, this was a long term investment commitment.

Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee noted the Treasury Management report for 2016/17 financial year and recommended approval by Executive and Council.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

The Policy Officer (M P-J) presented the report which sought approval of the Equality and Diversity policy.

Members were advised that an Equality and Diversity Task and Finish group had been set up with the key aims to help shape and form the new Equality and Diversity Policy; review and raise the profile of the Equality Impact Assessment in

line with the new policy; and to look at what staff training was required and the best way of delivering that. The next step would be to develop a detailed implementation plan.

Members thanked officers for their work on the policy.

In response to Member's questions, the Policy Officer stated that the policy would be kept under regular review and that feedback from communities during implementation would be incorporated into the policy. The policy would apply to Contractors and training and awareness for existing contractors would be incorporated into the implementation plan.

Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee noted the report and requested Executive notes and Council note, and approves:-

- (1) the adoption of the Equality and Diversity policy; and
- (2) that delegated authority be given to the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Equality and Diversity, and Corporate Manager Legal Services and Human Resources for making any further amendments to the policy, and the Constitution be amended accordingly.

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EXETER CITY COUNCIL HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

The Principal Health and Safety Officer presented the report advising Members of the Council's organisation and arrangements in respect of its statutory duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act etc. 1974 and other supplementary legislation. The Health and Safety Policy was reviewed every three years and was accompanied by a Health and Safety Policy Statement. Members were advised of the minor changes policy and that there was no change to the Policy Statement other than to date it 2016.

Members welcomed this updated policy.

Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee noted the report and request Executive notes, and Council notes and approves the Health and Safety Policy.

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BUDGET MONITORING REPORT TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2016

The Principal Accountant (PM) presented the report advising Members of any material differences to the revised budget in respect of Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee.

Members were advised that the current forecast suggested a net expenditure decrease for this committee from the revised budget of £60,060 and of the area of budgetary risk which was revenue in Estate Services.

In response to a Member's question, the Deputy Chief Executive clarified the position with regards to the Council's procurement budget and that the current restructure was being undertaken in accordance with the Council's Organisational Change Policy.

Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

TWINNING ARRANGEMENTS

The Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support presented the report providing a review of the current twinning arrangements that the City Council had, as well as detailing future involvement in events of mutual benefit and how such involvement could have a wider benefit to the community. The recommendation included the review of the International Cooperation Strategy which would be brought back to this Committee and Executive for Council to approve.

Members discussed the need to ensure that the Council's twin cities supported the wider community and how the Strategy could reflect this, the need for signage around the City which recognised the City's twin cities, and how Brexit could affect the city's links with the European twin cities.

Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.10 pm)

Chair