

## **BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET**

### **RESOURCES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

Wednesday, 28th November, 2018

**Present:-** Councillors Lisa O'Brien (Vice-Chair, in the Chair), Jasper Becker, Joe Rayment, Andrew Furse, Sally Davis and David Veale

#### **34 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### **35 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chairman drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

#### **36 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Councillor Sarah Bevan gave apologies. *The Vice-Chair, Councillor Lisa O'Brien chaired the meeting.*

#### **37 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

#### **38 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN**

There was none.

#### **39 ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS - TO RECEIVE DEPUTATIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS OR QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THIS MEETING**

Councillor Karen Walker made a statement regarding '2019-2020 Budget – Will Peasedown St John be included?' In the statement she set out the wish list for the forthcoming Council budget. *A copy of this statement is attached to these minutes.*

#### **40 MINUTES - 6TH NOVEMBER 2018**

The Panel confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting as a true record and they were duly signed by the Chairman.

#### **41 COUNCIL RESTRUCTURE - UPDATE**

Ashley Ayre – Chief Executive and Cherry Bennett – Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development, introduced the report which covered the following: Redundancies and Restructuring; Senior Management Restructure; Service Re-

Design and Staffing Savings; Cessation and contracting out; Health and Care Integration; Organisational re-design and transformation and Partnerships and Savings Monitoring.

Panel members asked the following questions and made the following points:

Councillor Furse asked if what was expected from WECA was realistic. The Chief Executive explained that work was being done regarding WECA's role on integrated transport and what form this will take. Affected staff will be consulted as some of the Council's role transfers to WECA. There will be an effective set up before any services are transferred.

Responding to a query from Councillor Furse, the officer explained that the annual saving and cost of severance are two separate things and the gap is funded by a reserve account specifically ear marked for this purpose.

Councillor Rayment asked about the Senior Restructuring and the redundancy packages. The Chief Executive explained that two of the Strategic Directors had expressed an interest in voluntary redundancy – this enabled an internal promotion. He explained his belief that internal promotions are positive for the organisation.

Councillor Rayment asked for a breakdown of the voluntary and compulsory redundancies and asked if more redundancies are likely to be compulsory going forwards. The officer stated that the majority so far had been voluntary as would be expected in the first tranche but there may be more that are compulsory going forwards. She stated that she would send the exact figures to Panel members.

Councillor Rayment asked if more low income staff would be made redundant. The officers explained that the proposition behind the restructuring was that it should be proportionate over the whole organisation. It was also explained that it may not need to be 300 FTE now as other savings had been made and vacancies not filled.

Councillor Becker asked if redundancies created more burden on the Pension fund. The Chief Executive explained that this was a complex area. He explained that packages will be considered but the Council must pay the 'strain on the fund' in line with pension regulations. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Efficiency, Councillor Charles Gerrish added that pensions are paid by the Pension Fund which the Council contributes to.

## **42 BATH TOURISM PLUS ACCOUNTS**

Councillor Charles Gerrish, Cabinet Member for Finance and Efficiency introduced the report. He explained that he was bringing this report as requested by the Panel at their last meeting. He explained that the latest information showed that the accounts are already moving in the right direction as compared to the same period last year.

Panel members asked the following questions and made the following points:

In response to a question from Councillor Becker regarding pensions, the Cabinet Member explained that the pension liabilities had been taken back in house.

In response to a question from Councillor Furse, the Cabinet Member explained that the Directors are accountable to the Shareholders (he referred Panel members to the report on Governance that they received at their meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018).

Councillor Furse asked about the increase in assets shown in the papers. The Cabinet Member explained that this referred to the improvements to the property.

Councillor O'Brien asked about the creditor's debt (page 43). The officer explained that he would report back with more information on this but thought this was related to an office move.

## **43 BUDGET AND FINANCIAL PLANS**

Councillor Charles Gerrish - Cabinet Member for Finance and Efficiency and David Trethewey - Director of Partnership and Corporate Services, gave a presentation to the Panel on 'Working Together on our budget, our plans and our communities' which covered the following points (*A copy of the presentation slides are attached to the agenda papers for this item*):

- Overview
- Feedback from last year (Key feedback from last year's sessions)
- This year's finances 2018/19
- Where each £1 raised from your Council Tax goes in 2018/19
- Where the money comes from to pay for all the services in 2018/19 - £332m
- What we have achieved
- A special thank you: together, we:
- The year ahead – 2019/20
- The national context
- Our budget 2019/20
- Our Plan
- Looking further ahead – prioritising
- More of this please – protecting and caring for our most vulnerable
- More of this please – Nurturing residents' health, safety and wellbeing
- More of this please – Providing ways for everyone in the community to reach their potential
- We need to be clearer about...
- Protecting and caring for our most vulnerable – Key messages
- Nurturing residents' health and wellbeing – Key messages
- Providing ways for everyone in the community to reach their potential – Key message
- Questions – What would a Bath & North East Somerset deal look like?
- Next steps and looking ahead.

David Trethewey - Director of Partnership and Corporate Services explained that the aim is to be realistic in the aims of the organisational plan about what can be achieved with the community.

Panel members asked the following questions and made the following points:

Councillor Furse asked if it was more common for children to get taken into care now (since some high profile cases) and did this account for the higher numbers. The Cabinet Member explained that service officers could give a response on this but that he understood that the authority works hard to keep children with their families and sometimes where a care order is sought, the courts turn it down. He added that the increase may be partly explained by population growth. Councillor Sally Davis explained that this issue had been fully explored by the Early Years PDS Panel.

There was some discussion around children who are fostered or put in a specialist care placement outside of BANES. It was noted that sometimes it was in the child's interest to be placed further away from the family home. Councillor Sally Davis referred Panel members to the Corporate Parenting meeting which covered these issues.

Councillor Rayment referred to the 'Wigan Deal' idea and stated his concerns that residents may resent their part of the deal if they perceive the Council to be spending money on major plans that are then abandoned. The Cabinet Member stated that there is a difference between capital and revenue costs but he acknowledged that residents may not have this information. The Cabinet Member stated that all members have the responsibility not to blur the distinction between capital and revenue and to be clear with residents about the challenges faced in light of the reduction of grants and cost of adult care and children's services.

#### **44 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE**

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Efficiency, Councillor Charles Gerrish had updated the Panel at items 8, 9 and 10 and had nothing to add.

#### **45 PANEL WORKPLAN**

The Panel noted the workplan and also noted Councillor Rayment's request that the March 2019 meeting be moved to a date before the purdah period.

The meeting ended at 6.15 pm

Chair(person) .....

Date Confirmed and Signed .....

**Prepared by Democratic Services**