

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

DECISION SHEET

Meeting of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee held virtually
on Monday, 15th June, 2020 at 7.30 pm

1 WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed everyone to this virtual Finance, Audit and Risk Committee meeting that was being conducted with Members and Officers at various locations, communicating via audio/video and online and advised that there was the opportunity for the public and press to listen and view proceedings.

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer gave advice regarding the following:

- Attendance;
- Virtual Meeting;
- Noise Interference;
- Rules of Debate;
- Voting.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence received.

3 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business notified.

4 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (1) The Chair welcomed those present at the meeting;
- (2) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be audio recorded and live streamed onto the Council's YouTube channel;
- (3) The Chair drew attention to the item on the agenda front pages regarding Declarations of Interest and reminded Members that, in line with the Code of Conduct, any Declarations of Interest needed to be declared immediately prior to the item in question.

5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

6 UPDATE TO THE 2019/20 AUDIT PLAN

RESOLVED: That the Update to the 2019/20 Audit Plan be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: To update the Committee on the 2019/20 Audit Plan.

7 2019/20 ANNUAL ASSURANCE STATEMENT AND INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Annual Assurance Statement and Internal Audit Annual Report be noted;
- (2) That the results of the self-assessment required by the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme (QAIP) be noted;
- (3) That the SIAS Audit Charter be accepted;
- (4) That the assurance provided by the Service Director: Resources that the scope and resources for internal audit were not subject to inappropriate limitations in 2019/20 be noted.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: To update the Committee on the 2019/20 Annual Assurance Statement and Internal Audit Annual Report.

8 SIAS PROGRESS REPORT

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Internal Audit Progress Report for the period 18 May 2020 be noted;
- (2) That the implementation status of High priority recommendations be noted.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: To update the Committee on the Audit Committee Progress Report.

9 FINANCE, AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

RESOLVED: That the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report 2019/20 be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: To present the Annual Report and inform the Committee of its work and achievements over a 12 month period to March 2020.

10 REVENUE BUDGET OUTTURN 2019/20

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That a decrease of £129k in the 2019/20 net General Fund expenditure, as identified in table 3 and paragraph 8.1, to a total of £14.692 million be approved;
- (3) That the changes to the 2020/21 General Fund budget, as identified in table 3 and paragraph 8.2, a total £344k increase in net expenditure, be approved;
- (4) That the transfer, as referred to in paragraph 8.3, of £59k from the underspend on the General Fund to the strategic Priority fund to enable the Leadership Team to undertake invest to save and/or continuous improvement projects be approved.

That Cabinet recommend to Council:

- (1) The net transfer to earmarked reserves of £2.161million be approved.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

- (1) Members are able to monitor, make adjustments within the overall budgetary framework and request appropriate action of Services who do not meet the budget targets set as part of the Corporate Business Planning process.
- (2) Changes to the Council's balances are monitored and approved.

11 INVESTMENT STRATEGY (CAPITAL AND TREASURY) END OF YEAR REVIEW 2019/20

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:

- (1) That the expenditure of £1.473million on 2019/20 on the capital programme, paragraph 8.3 refers, and in particular the changes detailed in table 3 which resulted in a net decrease on the working estimate of £0.055million, be noted;
- (2) That the adjustments to the capital programme for 2020/21 as a result of the revised timetable of schemes detailed in table 2, increasing the estimated spend in 2020/21 by £0.277million (re-profiled from 2019/20), be approved;
- (3) That the position of the availability of capital resources, as detailed in table 4 paragraph 8.6 and the requirement to keep the capital programme under review for affordability, be noted;
- (4) That the application of £0.639million of capital receipts towards the 2019/20 capital programme and the drawdown of £0.397million from set aside receipts, paragraph 8.6 refers, be approved;
- (5) That the position of Treasure Management activity as at the end of March 2020 be noted.

Cabinet recommend to Council:

- (1) That the actual 2019/20 prudential and treasury indicators be approved;
- (2) That the annual Treasury Report for 2019/20 be noted.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

- (1) Cabinet is required to approve adjustments to the capital programme and ensure the capital programme is fully funded;
- (2) To ensure the Council's continued compliance with CIPFA's code of practice on Treasury Management and the Local Government Act 2003 and that the Council manages its exposure to interest and capital risk.

12 POSSIBLE AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

The Chair requested that, should any Members have any suggestions for agenda items for future meetings, they advise herself, officers or the Committee Clerk.

The following items were suggested for a future meeting:

- (1) A presentation from the Commercial Directorate on the return of investment;
- (2) The spend on investigating the benefits of IT Cloud computing; and
- (3) A recovery plan following the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost implications.

In response to those suggestions, the Chair advised that she would raise all the requests with the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to prevent the overlapping of reports.

The Service Director – Resources informed the Committee that there would be various phases of recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic as well as adjusting to a ‘new normal’ which would include looking at the way the District Council Offices were used.