

Review Committee – 30 November 2021

Minutes of the meeting of the **Review Committee** held on **30 November** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr S A Wilson
Vice-Chairman: Cllr Mrs J E McPherson

Cllr R P Constable	Cllr G W Myers
Cllr R R Dray	Cllr J E Newport
Cllr I A Foster	Cllr Mrs L Shaw
Cllr Mrs E P Gadsdon	Cllr P J Shaw
Cllr J N Gooding	Cllr M G Wilkinson
Cllr B T Hazlewood	
Cllr Mrs C M Mason	

VISITING MEMBERS

Cllr S E Wootton
Cllr S P Smith

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mrs C A Pavelin.

OFFICERS PRESENT

A Law	- Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic
N Lucas	- Assistant Director, Resources
S Worthington	- Principal Democratic and Corporate Services Officer
W Szyszka	- Democratic Services Officer

178 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2021 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

179 2021/22 MID YEAR TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW

Members considered the report of the Assistant Director, Resources providing an update of the Council's treasury management activity for the period 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2021 in accordance with the Council's Treasury Management Policy and recommending the contents of the report to Council.

In response to a Member query relating to the drop in the capital finance reserve set out in paragraph 5.1, page 6.4 of the Report officers clarified that they were not the total balances of reserves, but the planned usage of those in the year. The capital finance reserve was used as a pool of monies to fund any type of capital expenditure.

Responding to a question regarding the New Homes bonuses, officers advised that a consultation was held earlier in the financial year which closed in February 2021. Further details of the scheme were expected to be confirmed in December 2021.

In response to a question relating to Section 106 monies, officers advised that a report providing details on S106 monies was provided to the Executive on 2 July 2021 and was available on the Council's website via CMIS. It was likely that such updates would be provided to the Executive on a biannual basis.

Another Member raised a question around the Council's investments to clarify what the Council invests in.

In response to a further Member question as to what types of investments were made by the Council, officers confirmed that the Council holds cash balances which do not reflect available balances as the Council has statutory financial obligations it must meet. Investment decisions were made based on what was available and what counterparties were available to meet with the Council's agreed investment strategy that aimed to deliver the best return possible.

In response to a Member query related to Hard/Soft Infrastructure reserve, officers advised that this was set aside to fund the Asset Delivery Programme (ADP). Accordingly, the figure cited was inclusive of the ADP funding, but the expenditure had not been incurred, hence the variation in the spending. The Portfolio Holder for Financial Services commented that Treasury Management Training was provided to Members annually. This provided an opportunity for Members to learn wider details of treasury management including an insight how investment decisions are taken on a day-by-day basis.

Cllr S A Wilson moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr M G Wilkinson, that the recommendation set out at paragraph 9 of the Report be approved.

Recommends to Council

To note the contents of this Treasury Management Mid Year Report. (ADR)

(This was unanimously agreed.)

180 CENTRE FOR GOVERNANCE AND SCRUTINY – SCRUTINY IMPROVEMENT REVIEW

Members considered the report of the Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic providing Members with the contents of the final report letter, dated November 2021, of the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) Improvement Review and recommending that a Member Working Group of the Review Committee be set up to develop an action plan to deliver the recommendations of the CfGS.

The Chairman stated that the purpose of the review was to improve the operation of the Review Committee to benefit residents and emphasised that one of the main objectives of the Review Committee was to prioritise the needs

of the community and hold the Executive to account. Members endorsed the recommendations set out in the CfGS letter and agreed to work on the recommendations to strengthen the integrity of the Review Committee to fulfil its obligations in the interest of the Council and its residents.

Cllr S E Wootton expressed his support for strengthening the relationship between the Executive and the Review Committee to provide continuous improvement and to bring reports forward in advance of the formal governance process to review and to challenge and provide scrutiny. Implementing these recommendations should enable Members to receive more robust and more timely reports resulting in challenge throughout the process, thus minimising the amount of significant questions raised at Committee meetings. The Leader welcomed and endorsed the approach set out in CfGS letter.

S A Wilson moved a Motion seconded by Cllr R R Dray that the recommendations set out at paragraph 8 of the report be approved.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the final report letter, dated November 2021, by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) Improvement Review be noted, as set out in Appendix 1 of this Report.
- (2) That a Member Working Group of the Review Committee be set up to develop an action plan to deliver the recommendations of the CfGS. (ADLD)

(This was agreed unanimously.)

The membership of the CfGS Working Group to comprise:-

Cllrs S A Wilson; Mrs J E McPherson; R R Dray; M Hoy; G W Myers; Mrs E P Gadsdon; Mrs J R Gooding; and Mrs C M Mason.

181 KEY DECISIONS DOCUMENT

Members considered and noted the contents of the Key Decisions document.

A Member queried Item 13/21, South Essex Parking Partnership and highlighted that no update has been received regarding this item. A further question was asked if the Committee would be consulted ahead of the decision being made or whether this decision would be decided upon automatically.

Officers confirmed that a report was due to be considered the Executive in January. The Portfolio Holder would provide details of this in writing to Members.

182 WORK PLAN

The Strategic Director suggested that a report setting out the arrangements for the proposed partnership between Rochford District Council and Brentwood

Review Committee – 30 November 2021

Borough Council be brought to this Committee on 11 January 2022 ahead of any decision by Full Council.

The meeting closed at 8:16 pm.

Chairman

Date

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