

DORSET COUNCIL - AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 22 FEBRUARY 2021

Present: Cllrs Matthew Hall (Chairman), Richard Biggs (Vice-Chairman), Susan Cocking, Rod Adkins, Barry Goringe, Mike Parkes, Bill Pipe, Clare Sutton and Bill Trite

Apologies: Cllr Janet Dover

Also present: Ian Howse (Deloitte)

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

Aidan Dunn (Executive Director - Corporate Development S151), Jonathan Mair (Corporate Director - Legal & Democratic Service Monitoring Officer), Susan Dallison (Democratic Services Team Leader), Heather Lappin (Head of Strategic Finance), Tony Meadows (Head of Commissioning), Sian White (Service Manager, Finance), David Wilkes (Service Manager for Treasury and Investments) and Andrew Billany (Corporate Director of Housing, Dorset Council)

The recording of the meeting can be viewed here:

[click here](#)

53. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th January 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.

54. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made at the meeting.

55. Public Participation

There were no questions or statements from members of the public.

56. Update on the accounts from the External Auditor

Aidan Dunn, Executive Director, Corporate Development provided an update on the latest position regarding the completion of the 2019/20 accounts. Members were advised that the valuation of fixed assets had not been finalised which was holding up the completion of the accounts; Deloitte were working hard with the Finance Team to finalise the accounts and the committee was assured that this had no impact upon the council tax or the budget.

57. **Quarter 3 Financial Management Report**

The Executive Director, Corporate Development, introduced the report which covered the capital and revenue position for the quarter 3 period April to December 2020. The financial management report was predicting a forecast overspend of £18.6m for 2020/21. The Covid-19 pandemic had had a significant impact on income and expenditure levels and there was a £13m shortfall on council tax and business rates collection, it had also been a very challenging time for adult social care services.

The members of the committee asked a number of questions and discussed the following topics:

What action was being taken to recover council tax and business rates;

The funding or the correct elements of disability and health care and the utilisation of all areas of support, for example hospital discharge;

High needs block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and the political avenues being progressed to address the important financial issue of the DSG;

In respect of a question on the usual collection rates for business rates and council tax, the Executive Director, Corporate Development agreed that a written response would be provided to the committee.

58. **Councillor Code of Conduct Arrangements**

Jonathan Mair, Corporate Director of Legal & Democratic presented a report on proposals to adopt the new Local Government Association Model Councillor Code of Conduct and new arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct complaints against councillors. The committee was supportive of all of the recommendations and the Corporate Director agreed to look at the most suitable meeting date for submitting the annual monitoring report to the committee as there was no scheduled meeting in May.

Recommendation to Full Council

1. That the Local Government Association Model Councillor Code of Conduct including those provisions of the Model Code relating to other registrable interests be adopted;
2. That Dorset's Town and Parish Councils be invited to consider adopting the LGA Model Code;
3. That the proposed new arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct complaints against councillors be adopted.

Decision

That the committee be updated at each of its meetings about code of conduct Complaints received and that an annual monitoring report should be presented to the committee each year.

59. Review of the Council's borrowing

David Wilkes, Service Manager for Treasury and Investments presented his report which reviewed the council's borrowing position and activity in accordance with the requirement to ensure that money and resources were used wisely.

Cllr M Parkes thanked David Wilkes for providing an informative and comprehensive report on the council's borrowing activity.

60. Forward Plan

The committee noted the Forward Plan.

61. Urgent items

There were not urgent items.

62. Exempt Business

There were no items of exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 10.00 - 11.22 am

Chairman

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