

Extract of notes of Informal meeting of the Place and Resources Overview Committee on 10 November 2021

The future of revenues and benefits services at Dorset Council

The Chairman noted that there were two exempt appendices associated with the report and that the committee would need to resolve to move into exempt business if councillors wished to discuss these.

The Executive Director of Corporate Development introduced a report which set out proposals for the future provision of revenues and benefits services for Dorset Council. The report recommended the creation of a single revenues and benefits service for Dorset Council, to provide a better level of customer service for residents, with a single process and contact details, making it easier, clearer and more accessible for people to pay council tax and make benefits claims. A short film was shown to the committee to set out the vision for future customer service.

Consideration was given to the issues arising from the report and during discussion the following points were raised:

- Opportunities to integrate council services
- Discussion around potential timescale for operation on single customer accounts – work was ongoing and timescales would be managed through the transformation programme
- A request was made for a councillor webinar on this area of work
- A point was noted that Overview should keep a watch on debt recovery issues in the council
- Arrangements for scrutiny of the revenues and benefits service moving forward. Recommendation 3 in the report recognised the role of the Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee in this area and it was noted that performance could be incorporated into recommendation 3
- The movement of the eastern and northern areas onto the new system would be carefully managed
- Further discussions would need to be held, including around financial implications, once the report had been through the democratic processes.

It was proposed by V Potheary seconded by C Jones

It was noted that the additional words 'and performance' would be included in recommendation 3.

'Minded to' Recommendation to Cabinet

1. Agree that Dorset Council makes the necessary arrangements to leave the Stour Valley & Poole Partnership (SVPP) and brings these services in-house to be delivered by an expanded Dorset Council Revenues & Benefits Team as set out in the business case attached to the report at appendix 3;

Appendix A

2. Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Corporate Development, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy, to implement recommendation 1, including authority to give notice to terminate the Council's involvement in the Stour Valley and Poole Partnership;

3. Request that the Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee oversee the future Service's integration into Dorset Council, where it can support further transformation, insight, strategic service development and performance, as set out in the business case.

The Executive Director of Corporate Development, having heard the debate, confirmed the 'minded to' Recommendation to Cabinet, under delegated powers on behalf of the informal meeting of the Place and Resources Overview Committee.