

**STRATEGY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

12 July 2021  
5.00 - 6.21 pm

**Present:** Councillors Robertson (Chair), H. Davies (Vice-Chair), Bick, Dalzell, Healy and S. Smith

Executive Councillors: Davey (Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources)

**Officers:**

Head of Corporate Strategy: Andrew Limb

Head of Finance: Caroline Ryba

Committee Manager: Sarah Steed

**FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**

**21/20/SR Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillor Herbert.

**21/21/SR Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

**21/22/SR Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2021 and 27 May 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**21/23/SR Public Questions**

There were no public questions.

**21/24/SR Combined Authority Update**

**Matter for Decision**

The report provided an update on the activities of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) since the 8 February 2021 meeting of Strategy & Resources Scrutiny Committee.

**Decision of Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources**

- i. Noted the update on issues considered at the meetings of the Combined Authority held on 24 March (reconvened on 26 March), 2 and 30 June 2021.

**Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

**Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

**Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Head of Corporate Strategy presented by the Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources in the absence of the Executive Councillor for Strategy and External Partnerships.

The Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources made the following comments:

- i. Confirmed changes to Lead Councillors in the Combined Authority:
  - a. Councillor Herbert was now the lead councillor for Housing,
  - b. Councillor Nethsingha was the lead councillor for Skills and
  - c. Councillor Dupre was the lead councillor for Overview and Scrutiny.
- ii. Highlighted the appointment of the new Chief Executive and advised it was anticipated that they would be in post by late autumn.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. Asked whether the new Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority Mayor had confirmed their intention to discontinue the CAM Metro project.

The Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Confirmed he thought that the CAM Metro project had been stopped but he wasn't sure what project may replace it.

The Committee resolved to note the report.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

**Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

**21/25/SR 3Cs Legal and ICT Services and Greater Cambridge - Internal Audit Shared Service - 2020/21 Annual Reports****Matter for Decision**

The Officer's report summarised the performance for the 3Cs ICT, Legal Shared Services and the Greater Cambridge Shared Internal Audit Service during 2020/21.

**Decision of Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources**

i. Noted the content of the report.

**Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

**Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

**Scrutiny Considerations**

This item was not requested for pre-scrutiny and the committee made no comments in response to the report.

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

**Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

**21/26/SR Annual Complaints Report 20/21****Matter for Decision**

The report provided an analysis of the complaints and compliments received by the Council during 2020/21 under the Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments procedure.

**Decision of Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources**

- i. Approved the draft Annual Complaints Report for 2020/21 (Appendix A of the officer's report) and approved the report could be published on the Council's website.
- ii. Noted the revisions to the Council's Persistent Complainant policy (Appendix B of the officer's report).

**Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

**Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

**Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Head of Corporate Strategy and the Business and Development Manager.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. Acknowledged the high number of positive comments.
- ii. Noted the Council took complaints seriously and their commitment to service improvement. Asked for further focus on the Council's learning and actions in the next report.
- iii. Noted the report was for an atypical year and some services had received compliments and some had received complaints. Felt it was constructive to see the report presented in the way it was with root causes identified and actions which needed to be taken.
- iv. Asked how councillors would be involved with the implementation of the Persistent Complainant Policy (Appendix B of the officer's report). Asked if Ward Councillors would be made aware when the policy was applied. Asked how often the policy had been applied.
- v. Questioned how the policy would be applied, as a person could be a persistent complainant but be making a valid point which the council could learn from.
- vi. Welcomed the report, felt there was a lot of positivity in the light of the difficult year everyone had experienced.

The Head of Corporate Strategy said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. The Council would record how often the Persistent Complainant Policy was applied and this would be included in the report next year. The Policy was applied infrequently. Would check to see if there were any confidentiality or data protection issues in sharing the information with Ward Councillors.
- ii. The Persistent Complainant Policy was drawn from the Local Government Ombudsman's version. There were safeguards in place before the policy was applied for example the Council's Monitoring Officer was involved in the process.

The Committee resolved by 4 votes to 0 to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

### **Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

### **21/27/SR Update on City Business Support and Recovery**

#### **Matter for Decision**

The report provided an update on the ongoing work that the council had undertaken during the pandemic to respond to the needs of the City following a motion to Council in February 2021.

#### **Decision of Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources**

- i. Noted the update on progress across the programme and next steps.

#### **Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

#### **Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

#### **Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Strategic Director. The Head of Corporate Strategy attended to answer questions.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. Commented that it was a helpful report and thanked officers for their work on the report. Commented that recovery was only one part of the exercise and that the report was silent on the question of renewal in the city centre. Renewal was different to recovery and both were needed. Commented that the Council was not doing anything about renewal, the pandemic had accelerated changes in the high street. Referred to the Grafton Centre as an example and stated that the public were concerned about what would happen with the space since the owners had put the building up for sale.
- ii. Concerned to make sure that businesses in neighbourhood areas would also be supported in their recovery as well as the city centre.

- iii. Commented that the new Joint Local Plan was where the high-level strategic thinking should be undertaken and that a separate strategy outside of that process would be duplicating work.
- iv. Looking to the future, asked what support would be given to younger people.
- v. Asked what the Capitalised Future Vision was on p133 of the agenda point 4.

The Executive Councillor said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Work was already being undertaken by the Assistant Director (Strategy and Economy) and Head of Property Services and would be supported by the new Economic Development Manager.
- ii. Felt it was still too early to see the full impact of the Covid pandemic on the city centre. There was a lot of new retail businesses coming into the city centre as well as business leaving. There needed to be a long term strategy based on evidence. Neighbourhood areas, such as Mill Road were being supported.
- iii. Had been in discussions with the owners of the Grafton Centre, there were a lot of tenancies in place.
- iv. Work was being undertaken with South Cambridgeshire District Council, the Greater Cambridge Partnership and the Combined Authority regarding opportunities for younger people.
- v. Confirmed that the Capitalised Future Vision was the work being undertaken by the Strategic Director and Head of Property Services.

Councillor Bick proposed the following amendment:

- i. Add second bullet to recommendation at 2.0 on page 125 of the agenda
  - Commission an exercise to define a place-based renewal strategy for the city centre to recognise the structural changes in the 'high street' which the pandemic has accelerated and to which recovery is only a partial answer.

The Executive Councillor said in response that the amendment was not required as the work was already underway.

On a show of hands, the amendment was lost by 2 votes to 4.

The Committee resolved to note the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor noted the recommendations.

**Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

**21/28/SR Annual Treasury Management Outturn Report 2020/21****Matter for Decision**

The Council was required by regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003, to produce an annual treasury report reviewing treasury management activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for each financial year.

This report meets the requirements of both the CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2017 (the Code) and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities 2017 (the Prudential Code) in respect of 2020/21.

During the 2020/21 the minimum requirements were that Council should receive:

- An annual strategy in advance of the year
- A mid-year treasury update report and;
- An annual review following the end of the year describing the activity compared to the strategy.

In line with the Code of Practice on Treasury Management all treasury management reports have been presented to Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and to Full Council.

**Decision of Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources to recommend to Council to:**

- i. Approve the report with the Council's actual Prudential and Treasury Indicators for 2020/21

**Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

**Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

**Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Head of Finance.

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendation.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

### **Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

### **21/29/SR 2020/21 General Fund Revenue and Capital Outturn, Carry Forwards and Significant Variances**

#### **Matter for Decision**

The outturn report presented reflects the Executive Portfolios for which budgets were originally approved (which may have changed since, for example for any changes in Portfolio responsibilities). Therefore, members of all committees were asked to consider proposals to carry forward budgets and make their views known to the Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources, for consideration at Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee prior to recommendations to Council.

#### **Decision of Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources to recommend to council to:**

- i. Approve carry forward requests totalling £658,670 of revenue funding from 2020/21 to 2021/22, as detailed in Appendix C of the officer's report.
- ii. Approve carry forward requests of £49,211,000 of capital resources from 2020/21 to 2021/22 to fund rephased net capital spending, as detailed in Appendix D of the officer's report.
- iii. Approve the addition of £85,000 capital funding in 2021/22 to undertake works to the Council Chamber/Committee Rooms to stream meetings/enable hybrid meetings.

#### **Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

#### **Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

#### **Scrutiny Considerations**



The Committee received a report from the Head of Finance. The Head of Finance referred to a budget proposal which had been published in advance of the meeting regarding additional expenditure to upgrade the Council Chamber and Committee Rooms with equipment to enable livestreaming and hybrid meetings. This proposed as an additional recommendation (c).

Additional recommendation (c):

The Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources is requested to recommend to Council the addition of £85,000 capital funding in 2021/22 to undertaken works to the Council Chamber/Committee Rooms to stream meetings/enable hybrid meetings.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. Asked whether the decision to reduce car parking charges affected the Council's ability to reclaim this funding back from the Covid Pandemic funding from Central Government. Noted that the capital spending proposed was a lot of money and queried whether the programme could be delivered.
- ii. Commented that the decision to reduce car parking charges allowed key workers not to have to travel on buses during the pandemic.
- iii. Asked how big the existing capital programme for 2021/22 was in comparison with the requested carry forward of £49m

The Head of Finance said the following in response to Members' questions:

- iv. The decision to reduce car parking charges did affect the funding the Council was able to claim back from Central Government. Confirmed following the meeting that the total car parking charges the Council reclaimed back was £4.1 million of the £5.9 million sales, fees and charges and that the Council was not able to claim back £1.1million due to the decision to reduce car parking charges.
- v. A large proportion of the capital programme involved lending funding (£20 million) to the Cambridge Investment Partnership (CIP). Or involved projects that were already in progress, for example Park Street development (£9 million), which were being managed by external companies.
- vi. The capital plan total for 2021/22 in the Budget Setting Report approved in February was £40.9m.
- vii. There were processes in place to ensure that capital projects moved forward as quickly as possible.
- viii. Confirmed that the income compensation the Council applied for was calculated via a Government formula.

The Committee resolved by 4 votes to 0 to endorse the following recommendations.

- i) Approve carry forward requests totalling £658,670 of revenue funding from 2020/21 to 2021/22, as detailed in Appendix C of the officer's report.
- ii) Approve carry forward requests of £49,211,000 of capital resources from 2020/21 to 2021/22 to fund rephased net capital spending, as detailed in Appendix D of the officer's report.

The Committee resolved unanimously to endorse the following recommendation.

- iii) Approve the addition of £85,000 capital funding in 2021/22 to undertaken works to the Council Chamber/Committee Rooms to stream meetings/enable hybrid meetings.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

**Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

The meeting ended at 6.21 pm

**CHAIR**