

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held remotely on Tuesday, 6 April 2021

Commenced 10.30 am
Concluded 11.10 am

Members of the Executive – Councillors

LABOUR
Hinchcliffe
I Khan
Ross-Shaw
Ferriby
Jabar
Farley

Observers: Councillor Pollard

Councillor Hinchcliffe in the Chair

225. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No disclosures of interest in matters under consideration were received.

226. MINUTES

Resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 and 16 February and 2 March 2021 be signed as a correct record (previously circulated).

227. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

There were no appeals submitted to review restricted documents.

228. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE

There were no recommendations to the Executive.

229. QTR.4 FINANCE POSITION STATEMENT FOR 2020-21

The Director of Finance submitted a report (**Document “DS”**) which provided Members with an update on the forecast financial position of the Council for 2020-21.

It examined the latest spend against revenue and capital budgets and forecasted the financial position at the year end. It stated the Council’s current balances and reserves and forecasted school balances for the year.

The Director of Finance stated that despite the pandemic, the Council had mitigated its impacts and the budget was on target for 2020/21, with a projected underspend of £0.2m, however, there were overspends reported within Children’s Services, primarily as a consequence of the use of additional agency staff and an increase in the numbers of looked after children, and in the Department of Place as a result of the increased costs in waste services.

A significant loss was reported as a result of the Council’s inability to generate income during the pandemic, however, Government support had covered the Council’s deficit overall.

The Leader welcomed that the Council’s finances would come in on budget, despite the challenges over the past year, however, this Council along with many others were already in a weakened state prior to the pandemic, as a consequence of the Government’s austerity measures. In this context Bradford had taken the step to ensure that economic recovery would be a key area of focus and activity post pandemic, and resources would be deployed accordingly.

A Councillor representing the main opposition group was present at the meeting and stated that additional Government funding had been crucial in making the Council’s books balance, and this should be welcomed. In the context of the budget deficit faced by Hanson School, he suggested that notwithstanding the complexities facing the School, a radical approach was now required by the Council in order to salvage the situation.

In response the Education and Skills Portfolio Holder stressed that there were a whole host of reasons for the financial position the School found itself in, however, the main area of focus was around raising educational standards and putting measures in place to turn the School around. To this end the Head and Governing Body had done some sterling work, despite the pressures facing the School and he was hopeful that this improvement journey would continue, as well as inroads being made to reduce the deficit.

The Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder stated that in the area of Adult Social Care we were still awaiting the Green Paper on the future funding of this sector, and that without this matter being resolved, issues in this sector would remain.

In the area of Children’s Social Care, the Portfolio Holder explained that the increased use of agency staff was crucial in maintaining service provision and ensuring children were safeguarded. The increase in the numbers of Looked After Children, a situation mirrored nationally, had resulted in a huge funding gap, which the Local Government Association had identified to Government. He went

on to thank staff for their sterling efforts in ensuring children in our District were kept safe.

The Leader acknowledged the structural funding issues in both the Adult and Children's social care sector and that Government would be lobbied accordingly.

Resolved -

- (1) That the report be noted.**
- (2) In light of there being no scheduled meetings of the Executive until June, authority be delegated to the Director of Finance in consultation with the Leader to allocate additional sums of money in relation to containing the outbreak as circumstances require. Funding to derive from Covid related Grants.**
- (3) Request that Officers be asked to present proposals for utilising any un-committed Covid Grant funding to invest in the recovery of the District at the next Executive.**
- (4) Approve the following capital expenditure schemes as outlined in section 16.7 to Document "DS":**
 - £3.25m for the removal of a dilapidated box culvert from a section of Bradford Beck. The scheme is to be funded by ERDF grant and Council match funding from the use of a budget already in the Capital Plan, CS0306a. (Strategic Transport Infrastructure Priorities) pending potential receipt of WYCA Grant funding.**
 - £0.19m for Thornton Road / Toller Lane Junction Improvements. The scheme requires temporary short term funding to secure the purchase of properties that can be successfully acquired by agreement in advance of full scheme funding through the West Yorkshire Transport Fund.**

ACTION: Director of Finance.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Corporate

230. SCHOOL ADMISSION APPEALS PANEL MEMBERS

The City Solicitor submitted a report (**Document "DT"**) which asked the Executive to consider whether to compensate School Admission Appeals Panel members for the time and expense involved in undertaking this function and if compensation is to be provided, the type and amount of compensation to be provided.

In providing a context on how appeals were administered by the Council, the City Solicitor stressed that since the pandemic no expenses had been paid to Independent Panel Members whilst undertaking their duties, and that this report provided a rationale on how panel members could be remunerated, following the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

The Education and Skills Portfolio Holder expressed his thanks to the IRP for their diligent consideration of the matter, as well as acknowledging the work Independent Appeal Panel Members had undertaken during the course of the pandemic, in ensuring that appeals were heard, and it was therefore only right that they should be remunerated accordingly

The Leader in echoing the above comments expressed her gratitude to the Independent Appeal Panel Members for their work, and suggested that the voucher scheme should be backdated to September 2020, if Panel Members wished to make a claim, and it was therefore:

Resolved –

- (1) That the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel set out in paragraph 3.9 to Document “DT” be adopted with the exception of number 4 owing to the administrative difficulties involved in its implementation. In its place, the following be approved- if any Panel Member wishes to make a claim for vouchers for the current round of appeals, which commenced in September 2020 (on the basis of the Independent Remuneration Panel’s recommendation 1), that they be allowed to do so.**
- (2) That the members of the School Admissions Appeals Panel be thanked for all the work they have undertaken particularly with the added difficulties caused by changes to the process as a consequence of the pandemic restrictions.**
- (3) That the Academy Trusts and Governing Bodies of Voluntary Aided Schools whose appeals the Council administers be advised of the provisions of the Scheme the Council has adopted, with a view either to their adopting the same or other suitable arrangements being made with them.**
- (4) That authority be delegated to the City Solicitor in consultation with the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Education, Employment and Skills the implementation of the Executive decision.**

ACTION: City Solicitor

Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Corporate

231. MINUTES OF THE WEST YORKSHIRE COMBINED AUTHORITY

The minutes of the meeting(s) of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (10 December 2020) were received.

Chair