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AT A MEETING of the Policy and Resources Select Committee of HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held at The Castle, Winchester on Thursday, 27th October, 2022

Chairman:

* Councillor Jonathan Glen

- * Councillor Rod Cooper
- * Councillor Graham Burgess
- * Councillor Adrian Collett
- * Councillor Alex Crawford
- * Councillor Tim Davies
- * Councillor Zoe Huggins
- * Councillor Wayne Irish
- * Councillor Peter Latham
- * Councillor Derek Mellor
- * Councillor Rob Mocatta
- * Councillor Neville Penman
- * Councillor Jackie Porter
- * Councillor Bill Withers Lt Col (Retd)

*Present

Also present with the agreement of the Chairman: Councillor Rob Humby, Leader of the Council, Councillor Steve Forster, Executive Member for Commercial Strategy, Estates and Property and Councillor Stephen Philpott.

61. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

All Members were present.

62. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter considered at the meeting they must declare that interest at the time of the relevant debate and, having regard to the circumstances described in Part 3, Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Non-Pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 2 of the Code, considered whether it was appropriate to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

63. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the last meeting were reviewed and agreed.

Matters arising:

Minute 57 – Broadband Update. The Committee requested that it be kept informed on Broadband matters when timely.

64. DEPUTATIONS

No deputations were received for this meeting.

65. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed Councillors Rob Humby, Steve Forster and Stephen Philpott to the meeting.

66. 2021/22 - END OF YEAR FINANCIAL REPORT

The Committee received a report of the Director of Corporate Operations on the 2021/22 – End of Year Financial Report (Item 6 in the Minute Book).

The Director highlighted the main points of the report and in doing so drew Members' attention to continued strong financial stewardship and the early achievement of SP23 savings by departments. The County Council's work with the NHS had led to them funding in the region of £15m for the hospital discharge programme in this financial year and the announcement by the Government of £500m nationally to continue funding this programme over the winter months was welcomed. The County Council's scale, capacity and its reserves had enabled it to cope with the Covid bill of circa £72m and the Committee extended their thanks to officers for their hard work during the pandemic.

Members concerns regarding inflation and the impact this might have on the County Council's reserves were expressed. The Leader and Executive Member both advised that prudent budgeting had enabled the release of circa £15m at year end to fund some important one-off initiatives and add to the Budget Bridging Reserve (BBR).

RESOLVED:

That the Policy and Resources Select Committee notes the content of the 2021/22 – End of Year Financial Report.

67. DEVELOPING A MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Operations on developing a Medium Term Financial Strategy (Item 7 in the Minute Book).

The Director highlighted the main points of the report and drew Members attention to the severe financial position the County Council faced.

During the debate, the Executive Member highlighted that the County Council was in the strong position it was in now due to prudent financial management, building up its reserves and the careful use of them.

The Leader commented that the financial position was the result of a Local Government funding system that was no longer fit for purpose, particularly in the face of ever-growing social care costs. He advised that the County Council was stepping up its lobbying and will engage with Government to push for fundamental changes to secure its future financial sustainability.

Members acknowledged the difficulty of the Council's position and noted with concern the contents of this report. They thanked officers for their hard work and due diligence to make the savings so far, particularly during the pandemic.

RESOLVED:

That the Policy and Resources Select Committee notes with concern the contents of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 2025/26 report.

68. **SCRUTINY PROTOCOL, PLANNING AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION**

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive seeking approval of a scrutiny protocol and the allocation of available resources to each Select Committee (Item 8 in the Minute Book).

Members were given details of the proposal to establish a protocol, which would provide a framework for the operation of Select Committees, including guidance on selecting topics for scrutiny, the operation of working groups and the operation of call-In powers. It would also contribute to the good governance of the County Council and aid future agenda planning.

During discussion, the Committee was broadly in agreement of the protocol but asked for minor changes to be made to the identified topics suitable for scrutiny. It was agreed that suggested changes be brought to the attention of the Head of Legal Services and a revised report would be brought to the next meeting.

RESOLVED:

That this item be deferred to enable minor revisions to be made to the protocol and a report be brought back for consideration at the next meeting.

69. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee received the current work programme for review and approval (Item 9 in the Minute Book).

The Committee were content with the work programme and no amendments were suggested.

RESOLVED:

That the current work programme be agreed.

Chairman,