

CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES

RECORD OF DECISIONS taken by the Cabinet Member for Resources, Councillor Frank Jonas BEM, at his meeting held on Thursday, 12 October 2017 at 10.00 am in The Executive Meeting Room - Third Floor, The Guildhall

Present

Councillor Frank Jonas BEM (in the chair)

Councillor Colin Galloway
Councillor Hugh Mason
Councillor Yahiya Chowdhury

Officers Present

Louise Wilders, Director of Community and Communication
Stewart Agland, Local Democracy Manager
Lorraine Porter, Superintendent Registrar
Sue Page, Finance Manager

12. Apologies for Absence (AI 1)

There were no apologies for absence.

13. Declaration of Members' Interests (AI 2)

There were no declarations of Members' interests.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and said that Louise Wilders , Director of Customer and Communication, had asked to provide members with a brief update about Universal Credit. Basically the changes that were expected to be brought in from June 2018 would not affect existing claimants - only new claimants. Existing claimants would not be impacted until 2022 at the earliest. The Director asked whether in view of the expected changes it would be helpful to provide regular update reports to this portfolio.

The Cabinet Member for Resources agreed to receive regular reports on Universal Credit.

14. Report on Broadcasting Council Meetings (AI 3)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The Director of Customer and Communication and the Local Democracy Manager introduced the report which had been brought in response to a Notice of Motion request about recording council meetings.

Assuming that Council approves the recommendations in the report it is envisaged that all decision meetings will be web streamed from either the Executive Meeting Room or the Council Chamber in the Guildhall with effect from 1st November. In respect of the Executive Meeting Room, it will involve utilising the existing equipment previously used in the Council Chamber, until more permanent web streaming equipment has been installed.

In response to questions it was confirmed

- That a 7 year maintenance agreement was in place in respect of the second-hand equipment being installed in the Executive Meeting Room, The Guildhall.
- That the life expectancy of the equipment that had been installed in the Chamber was expected to be at least 10 years
- That the intention was to gather experience from the first phase of broadcasting meetings before considering extending it further
- That the final review reports and response reports from themed scrutiny panels go to Cabinet for decision and would therefore be broadcast at that stage.

With regard to promoting the council chamber to produce income streams, this was not being looked at yet as the systems needed to be fully tested first.

DECISION:

The Cabinet Member for Resources Recommended to Full Council

- (1) That the broadcasting of Cabinet/Portfolio and Full committee decision meetings, together with the Scrutiny Management Panel, be web streamed with effect from 1st November 2017, thus allowing the necessary notices and meeting room changes to be made after the Full Council decision**
- (2) That the web-streaming of themed scrutiny panel meetings be referred to Scrutiny Management Panel to assess and determine for the reasons given in paragraph 3.6 of the report**
- (3) That it notes the Cabinet Member for Resources will keep the arrangements under review, including whether any refinements are needed in due course**

15. Portsmouth and South East Hampshire Coroners Update (AI 4)

(TAKE IN INFORMATION ONLY REPORT)

Lorraine Porter, Superintendent Registrar, introduced the report which updated the Cabinet Member on the service improvements undertaken to address the recommendations agreed in the Resources Cabinet report of 21st January 2016 and to outline further developments planned for the coroner's service enabled by the relocation to the civic offices.

Ms Porter advised that the new location has provided a number of benefits for the public and there had also been an improvement in service delivery

as detailed in section 3.1 of the report. Basically the new accommodation has provided a modern environment for a more responsive and user-friendly service to the public.

Ms Porter said that the introduction of new technology has had many benefits as set out in 3.2 of the report. In particular the new secure video link enables involvement in the process via the link rather than having to attend and this has already been used for relatives and professional witnesses as far away as Australia and India.

Ms Porter drew attention to section 3.3 of the report and said that despite the smallness of the area, its demographic make-up results in the workload exceeding that of some counties such as Berkshire or Worcestershire. Following the transfer of the service from Hampshire County Council (HCC) to PCC management, significant improvements in overall timeliness have been achieved as shown in 3.3.3.

In response to queries, the following matters were clarified

- Members welcomed the savings that had been achieved with regard to the toxicology contract and noted that other contracts were being reviewed. Ms Porter advised that Pathology is the highest cost but nationwide, there is a shortage of pathologists so not much can be done about this. Contracts are kept under review and the service is constantly looking at ways to reduce costs - including considering shared services and ways of generating income.
- With regard to the number of deaths reported to the Coroner being significant - over 3000 annually - this was because the Queen Alexandra Hospital took patients from a wide area - not just Portsmouth, but the deaths were all reported to the Portsmouth Coroner.

The Cabinet Member for Resources thanked Ms Porter for her report which he noted.

16. Monitoring of the First Quarter 2017/18 Revenue Cash Limits and Capital Programme (AI 5)

(TAKE IN INFORMATION ONLY REPORT)

Sue Page, Finance Manager introduced the report, which informs the Cabinet Member and Opposition Spokespersons of

- The forecast revenue expenditure for the year compared with the cash limited budget and
- The forecast capital expenditure against the revised capital programme for the Resources portfolio.

With regard to revenue expenditure, Sue Page said that the provisional forecast outturn for the portfolio compared to the cash limit indicates a net underspend of £333,500. The main reasons for this are set out in section 5 of the report and the less significant under and overspendings are contained in Appendix A of the report. 6.2 of the report explains how the reserve can be used.

With regard to the Capital Programme, the forecast outturn for the portfolio capital programme compared to the approved budget is a net breakeven

position. However this will be refreshed and updated and brought to the next meeting.

In response to queries, the following matters were clarified

- Some posts that are held vacant are deleted, but some are recruited to after a delay
- The agreement with Microsoft is re-negotiated every three years and has come in over budget this time. However, the Head of IT is confident that the overspend will be balanced out by the end of the quarter
- With regard to the uncommitted reserve, it was confirmed that this was to be used in accordance with 6.2 of the report and the Finance Manager was not aware of it being earmarked for anything in particular at the moment.
- With regard to capital monitoring appendix B, item 11 IT Road Map, members asked about the timescale for a decision to be taken about Cloud Storage and whether the Resources portfolio holder would be taking that decision at a meeting. Sue Page said that the Head of IT would be best placed to answer that and would find out and advise members.
- There appeared to be two items on photovoltaic cells - Photovoltaic Cell Investment Fund and Investment in Solar PV Cells. Sue Page said these could probably be merged.
- A comment was made about hoping that the contractor concerned was suitably contrite in relation to the overspend on Brunel Wing that was largely due to unexpected costs of the door entry system falling on to this scheme and Sue Page was asked to pass this on.
- A query was raised about whether the crane lease included maintenance and repair costs and Sue Page said she would try to find out.

The Cabinet Member for Resources thanked everyone for their attendance at the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 11.00 am.

Councillor Frank Jonas BEM
Cabinet Member for Resources