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## **Governance & Resources Committee**

**Minutes of a Governance & Resources Committee meeting held at 6.00 pm on Thursday, 21st March, 2024 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Matlock, DE4 3NN.**

### **PRESENT**

Councillor Nick Wilton - In the Chair

Councillors: Geoff Bond, David Hughes, Stuart Lees, Lucy Peacock, Simon Ripton, Marilyn Franks, Joanne Linthwaite and Laura Mellstrom

Lucy Harrison (Democratic Services Assistant), Karen Henriksen (Director of Resources), Helen Mitchell (Director of Corporate and Customer Services (Monitoring Officer)), Suzanne Norton (Business Support Technical Supervisor), Jason Spencer (Electoral and Democratic Services Manager), Ashley Watts (Director of Community and Environmental Services) and Jenny Williams (Head of the Internal Audit Consortium)

### **Note:**

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### **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor(s): Neil Buttle, Steve Flitter and Roger Shelley

### **373/23 - APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

It was moved by Councillor Stuart Lees, seconded by Councillor Simon Ripton and

### **RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Governance and Resources Committee held on 15 February 2024 be approved as a correct record.

## Voting

**07 For**

**00 Against**

**02 Abstention**

The Chair declared the motion **CARRIED**.

## **374/23 - PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

### **Statement from Councillor Peter O'Brien regarding Item 6, Phase One Car Park Review – Consultation**

“Good evening colleagues

I am grateful for the opportunity to address you this evening, in relation to the Car Parking Report.

I should say at the outset that I full support the administration’s commitment to consultation before major policy changes are made. However I believe that it should always be clear what the objectives of any change in policy are, as this helps residents and businesses understand the logic behind the detail of what is being proposed.

I have several issues with the report before you, and it is a little disappointing that there has not been adequate opportunity to discuss it fully before it was published.

I do not think the proposal to move some car parks to PaybyPhone only has the support of many, or even a majority of Members. As the report states, 52% of payments are still made by cash, and this remains the preferred method for many people, particularly amongst the older generation. Removing this option is also likely to discriminate against those who do not have a mobile phone with them, or have not downloaded the PaybyPhone app. The widespread opposition, including by this Council, to the recent closure of the last bank in Bakewell indicates that we are far from being a digital economy locally.

The statement that in Hathersage there “is parking also available on-street for visitors to use” is completely at odds with reality. Residents in the village suffer continually from visitors parking outside their homes day and night, and for the last 4 years I have been working with County Councillor Alastair Sutton to address this issue, hopefully through some form of residents parking scheme as in Bakewell. This statement will undermine residents confidence in District Council, and I would urge the Committee to delete it from the report, and reassure residents of Hathersage that the Council fully understands the issues they face.

Similarly in Hathersage, the Oddfellows Road car park is also important for residents from nearby villages who wish to pop in to the Post Office, chemist, butchers, greengrocers, bakers, grocers and other local facilities. There are less than 20 on street, short term parking spaces available. To propose that residents from Grindleford, Abney, Bradwell, more distant parts of Hathersage and other Hope Valley villages should be faced with a 10% increase in parking fees when shopping for essential goods and services, whilst Matlock residents get to enjoy free parking is frankly absurd, and again would undermine

confidence in the Council. Please dismiss this idea out of hand, and look to consistency across all our communities.

Thank you for your understanding.”

### **375/23 - INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **376/23 - QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO RULE OF PROCEDURE NUMBER 15**

No questions were received.

### **377/23 - STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING POLICY**

The Business Support Technical Supervisor introduced a report outlining changes to the Council’s Street Naming and Numbering Policy to more fully reflect the national Street Naming and Numbering guidance and Code of Practice.

Members were informed that the Council adopted the 1925 Public Health Act in respect of street naming and numbering in 2012. Since then, there had been consultation at national level and a new Street Naming and Numbering Code of Practice had been established for all local authorities to follow.

The new policy, attached at Appendix 1, gave more detail and provided a guide for the relevant Street Naming and Numbering Officer to follow and provided information on why decisions were made on the naming and numbering of addresses and the reasons behind them.

It was moved by Councillor Simon Ripton, seconded by Marilyn Franks and

**RESOLVED** (unanimously)

That the Council adopts the new policy that closely follows the national Street Naming and Numbering Code of Practice.

The Chair declared the motion **CARRIED**.

### **378/23 - PHASE ONE CAR PARK REVIEW - CONSULTATION**

The Director of Community and Environmental Services introduced a report which sought approval to consult the public on the recommendation of Members of the Car Park Working Group and Officers as outlined in section 1.3.

It was noted that in July 2022, a report was presented to the Governance and Resources Committee which outlined the objectives and scope of the Car Park Review. The following was approved:

- Structure and level of charges
- Concessions
- Provision
- Regulated and unregulated car parks

- Other Opportunities

It was further approved that a cross party Member Working Group would be formed to work with officers on options for consideration at a future committee. The Members of the Working Group and Officers had produced several recommendations which required input from the public. The recommendations were outlined in section 1.3 of the report with the proposed differential charges detailed in Appendix 1.

It was noted that the consultation on these proposals would take place between 25<sup>th</sup> March – 21<sup>st</sup> April 2024. Access to the consultation would be available via a QR code which would direct individuals to the Council's website and a link to be able to provide comments on the proposals. Those who do not have access to the internet would be able to call the Council and officers would be able to complete the form on behalf of the person calling.

Councillor David Hughes proposed an amendment to the recommendation, this was seconded by Councillor Simon Ripton and

**RESOLVED** (unanimously)

That this Committee notes the report of the Car Park Member Working Group and approves the recommendation to undertake a public consultation during spring. The purpose of the consultation is to provide Derbyshire Dales residents the opportunity to comment on the principles and aims of the review. That the car park working group be tasked to review and endorse all consultation materials prior to their issue.

The Chair declared the motion **CARRIED**.

### **379/23 - INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS UPDATE 2023/24**

The Head of the Internal Audit Consortium introduced a report presenting a progress update in respect of the 2023/24 Internal Audit Plan and provided assurance on the governance, risk and control arrangements in place. The report included a summary of internal audit reports issued since the last meeting of the committee and detailed of overall progress on the plan.

A summary of reports issued to date in respect of the 2023/24 financial year was attached at Appendix 1. The Appendix showed for each report the level of assurance given in respect of the audit area examined and the number of recommendations made / agreed where a full response had been received.

Attached at Appendix 2 was a summary of progress made on the 2023/24 internal audit plan overall. It was expected that most audit reviews planned for 2023/24 would be completed by the end of the financial year, with just a few audits being rolled forward to 2024/25.

It was moved by Councillor David Hughes, seconded by Councillor Lucy Peacock and

**RESOLVED** (unanimously)

That the report be received and noted.

The Chair declared the motion **CARRIED**.

### **380/23 - INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2024/25**

The Head of the Internal Audit Consortium introduced a report presenting the 2024/25 Internal Audit Plan for approval.

It was noted that the internal audit establishment consisted of a full time Senior Auditor and a full time Auditor with management support from the Head of the Internal Audit Consortium. The Internal Audit Section is currently fully staffed. The bulk of the 2023/24 Internal Audit plan had been completed with just a few audits being rolled forwards to 2024/25.

A summary of the internal audit plan was shown in 2.5 of the report and in detail at Appendix 1.

It was moved by Councillor Simon Ripton, seconded by Councillor Marilyn Franks and

**RESOLVED** (unanimously)

1. That the proposed internal audit plan for 2024/25 be agreed.
2. That it be noted that the plan is provisional and may need adjusting and prioritising in the light of any emerging risks/staff shortages etc.

The Chair declared the motion **CARRIED**.

### **381/23 - STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2023/24 - APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

The Director of Resources introduced a report which sought approval for the Accounting Policies to be used within Derbyshire Dales District Council's Statement of Accounts 2023/24, highlighting any changes from last year.

Officers had assessed the accounting policies that were deemed necessary to explain clearly and underpin the accounting treatment of transactions within the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2023/24. In undertaking this assessment, a review of all accounting policies previously agreed had been undertaken to check their relevance, clarity, legislative compliance and that they were in accordance with the latest version of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting and IFRS requirements.

With specific regard to the accounting policies proposed in respect of 2023/24, these were largely unchanged from previous years. A few small adjustments had been made to ensure the Accounting Policies were clear and accurately reflected the Council's current processes; these were made on the advice of the External Auditor as part of the 2022/23 audit.

It was moved by Councillor David Hughes, seconded by Councillor Joanne Linthwaite and

**RESOLVED** (unanimously)

That the 2023/24 Accounting Policies be approved for use within the Statement of Accounts.

The Chair declared the motion **CARRIED**.

### **382/23 - REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING FOR QUARTER 3 OF FINANCIAL YEAR 2023/24**

The Director of Resources introduced a report providing an update on the Council's revenue budget for 2023/24 and sought approval for virements and the revised budget for 2023/24.

On 2nd March 2023 Council set a net revenue budget of £13,667,041 for 2023/24. This was subsequently updated when the revised net revenue budget of £14,396,043 was approved by Council on the 14th December. After allowing for all transfers to and from earmarked reserves and all external funding, the forecast underspend at Quarter 2 was £795,579.

Since the revised budget was formally approved, there had been one minor virement approved under delegated authority which had impacted directorate totals. This additional approved budget change was summarised in Appendix 1 and had the overall effect of increasing the budget by £7,000.

The forecast out-turn position at Quarter 3 for the Council was an underspend of £1,830,920. This was based on estimates at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023; updated forecasts would be reported throughout the financial year. Appendix 3 detailed the current forecast position and revised budget. A breakdown of the key variances was detailed in section 1.3.

It was moved by Councillor Geoff Bond, seconded by Councillor Simon Ripton and

#### **RESOLVED** (unanimously)

1. That the forecast underspending of £1,830,920 for 2023/24 be received and agreed.
2. That Council be requested to approve the updated revised revenue budget for 2023/24, including the virements as identified in paragraphs 1.2 to 1.3 of the report.
3. That Council be requested to approve that any underspend at out-turn for 2023/24 be transferred to reserves as detailed in paragraph 1.17 of the report.

The Chair declared the motion **CARRIED**.

### **383/23 - REVIEW OF DERBYSHIRE DALES SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

The Director of Community and Environmental Services introduced a report providing an overview for the proposed implementation of a revised Safeguarding Policy and sought approval and adoption of the revised policy.

It was noted that the Council had a legal responsibility and a duty of care under S11 of the Children's Act 1989 and the Care Act 2014 to protect children and adults at risk from harm and abuse. The Council already had an existing Safeguarding Policy which detailed what safeguarding was; identified the types of harm and abuse; made it explicit that safeguarding was everyone's responsibility; detailed the council's response and the procedures that must be followed when reports of safeguarding issues were received.

There was a requirement that the Council must work in partnership with its upper tier authority, in this case, Derbyshire County Council who was the authority responsible for adult and children's care services.

The existing Safeguarding Policy came into effect in September 2019 and was due to be reviewed in September 2022. As a result of the development of the new county wide community safety structures and the Safeguarding Thematic Boards this review had been delayed. The revised Safeguarding Policy was attached at Appendix 1.

It was moved by Councillor Geoff Bond, seconded by Councillor Stuart Lees and

**RESOLVED** (unanimously)

1. That the Governance and Resources Committee adopts the revised Safeguarding Policy 2024-27 as outlined in Appendix 1.
2. That authority be delegated to the Director of Community and Environmental Services and the cross departmental Corporate Safeguarding Leads to review and make minor amendments to the Safeguarding Policy to reflect changes in legislation or statutory guidance when introduced.

The Chair declared the motion **CARRIED**.

### **384/23 - PUBLIC SECTOR DECARBONISATION SCHEME 3C - ENERGY EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENTS AT NORTHWOOD DEPOT**

The Director of Resources introduced a report which sought Member approval for one new bid for a capital project to be referred to Council for inclusion in the District Council's Capital Programme 2024/25.

The Council had received a grant offer from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) phase 3c of £51,380 with a requirement to provide match funding of £101,757 for energy efficiency improvements to Northwood Depot.

The PSDS provided grants for public sector bodies to fund heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency measures, putting the public sector at the forefront of decarbonising buildings in the UK and in a leadership role to create exemplar projects in our communities that pave the way to help the UK meet its Carbon Budgets and Net Zero commitments.

The Councils approved Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan set out a pathway to reducing emissions from Council operations to achieve net zero by 2030.

It was moved by Councillor Laura Mellstrom, seconded by Councillor Joanne Linthwaite and

**RESOLVED** (unanimously)

1. That the Committee approves the new bid.
2. That Council be requested to include £153,137 in the capital programme for 2024/25 for Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme 3c energy efficiency improvements to Northwood Depot, with £51,380 being financed by grant and £101,757 of match funding being financed from Capital Receipts.

The Chair declared the motion **CARRIED**.

### **385/23 - ARREARS FOR WRITE OFF 2023/24**

The Director of Resources introduced a report providing information about debtor write offs authorised by the Director of Resources under delegated authority in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations and sought approval for the write off of individual debts of £10,000 or more in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations.

This report for 2023/24 covered arrears relating to council tax, non-domestic rates, housing benefit overpayments and sundry debts.

The position as at 26 February 2023 was summarised in table 1. There was one proposed write off for £10,000 or more that required the committee's approval on this occasion.

It was moved by Councillor Joanne Linthwaite, seconded by Councillor Marilyn Franks and

**RESOLVED** (unanimously)

That the individual amounts of £10,000 or more listed in Appendix 1 totalling £12,171.81 be written off.

The Chair declared the motion **CARRIED**.

**Meeting Closed: 7.14 pm**

**Chair**