

Chair - Councillor R P Cooke

Present (for all or part of the meeting):-

Councillors:

A R G Brown

B M Cross

M G Dodson

A T A Godfrey

A S Harp

M V Holmes

R A James

R Kenney

J A Nixon

Cabinet Member - Councillor R M Smith - Resources Portfolio

Cabinet Member - Councillor J K Price - Environment Portfolio

Cabinet Member - Councillor C V Trowbridge - Leisure Portfolio

Officers in attendance:-

Mr B Kean - Head of Finance

Mr I Curran - Interim Head of Law and Administration

Mr N Raby - Head of Human Resources

Mr R Simpson - Interim Head of Operations

Mr P Gammon - Neighbourhood Services Group Manager

Mr R Wolfe - Revenues and Benefits Manager

Mrs S Pote - Customer Services Manager

Mr A Bailey - Scrutiny Officer

#### RSC14 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 20 August 2019, published in Digest No 259, were submitted and signed.

#### RSC15 **Apologies**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor P Roycroft (Substitute B M Cross).

#### RSC16 **Members Item**

Councillor A T A Godfrey had submitted the following item in accordance with Paragraph 2.8 of the Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules:-

“Can the Cabinet Member for Resources reassure the Committee that all departments in the Council are fully staffed, and that no one is working to cover for a vacant position.

If staff are covering for vacant positions, can the Cabinet Member please inform the Committee where these vacancies are, and how he intends to fill these positions?

Also can he confirm that any savings made while a post is vacant will be put back into staffing budgets and not go to the general fund.”

In response, the Cabinet Member (Resources Portfolio) made the following comments:-

- The Council was a complex organisation with different staffing requirements, for example, Legal Services, Elections and Streetscene
- The annual budget for staffing was set each year
- Vacancies naturally occurred and replacements were often made at a lower grade as internal promotions were made
- 2.5% of the Council’s budget were comprised of staffing costs
- 100% staffing levels were never achieved
- It was not the Executive’s role to manage day to day staffing levels - this was the role of the Council’s managers
- The current vacancies were as follows:-
  - Corporate Business and Partnerships - 1
  - Development - 8
  - Law and Administration - 4
  - Operations - 5
  - Technology - 2

During the discussion that ensued, the Committee made the following comments:-

- Concern that staff were put under pressure by having to cover jobs
- Confirmation that staffing budgets were fully funded and that it was the responsibility of managers to manage staffing requirements
- Any money saved from staffing vacancies should be reinvested to fill those vacancies
- Ring fencing staffing budgets could lead to confusion, inefficiencies and in-fighting

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the Members Item be noted.

## RSC17 **Recycling and Waste Collection - Future Service Options**

The following report was considered by Cabinet at its meeting held on 7 November 2019 and was submitted to this Committee for consultation.

The Committee considered the report of the Interim Head of Operations (V1 8/11/19) in relation to the potential changes to the Recycling and Waste Collection service over the next eighteen months.

The Committee discussed the following aspects of the report with the Cabinet Member (Environment Portfolio), the Interim Head of Operations and the Neighbourhood Services Group Manager:-

- Clarification that the proposed new blue bag was waterproof
- The removal of the caddy from the blue bin would create more room
- Concern that the bags when full would be heavy to lift
- Clarification that assistance with the blue bags would be available as it currently was with wheeled bins
- Concern at the additional costs and revenue implications
- Clarification that the proposed system had been introduced in other parts of the country, the closest being in Shropshire and many of the problems identified were unfounded
- Confirmation that empty blue bags would not be left at the bottom of the blue bin upon collection
- The introduction of a chargeable garden waste collection service would encourage more home composting
- Concerns that a chargeable service could encourage fly tipping
- Confirmation that there was no evidence of increased fly tipping where this had been introduced in other parts of the country
- Clarification that used Christmas trees could be taken to civic amenity sites
- Agreement that a letter of thanks be sent to Veolia for hosting the Scrutiny Committee's site visit on 11 November 2019
- Clarification that there was very little landfill generated by the whole of Staffordshire

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee:-

- (a) the decision of the Cabinet, as set out in Minute No CAB50/19, related to the Recycling and Waste Collection - Future Service Options, be noted;
- (b) a letter of thanks be send to Veolia for hosting the Scrutiny Committee's site visit on 11 November 2019.

#### RSC18 **Financial Plan 2019-20 - 2022-23**

This matter had been considered by Cabinet meeting at its meeting on 7 November 2019 and was submitted to this Committee for consultation.

Considered the report of the Head of Finance (V1 8/11/19) which presented an updated financial forecast for the Council for the next three years together with a forecast outturn for 2019-20.

The Committee discussed the following aspects of the report with the Cabinet Member (Resources Portfolio) and the Head of Finance:-

- Finance staff be congratulated for developing the Council's three year financial forecast when the new funding regimes were not yet known
- Clarification of off-street car parking variations
- Clarification of stone Leisure Strategy Phase 2

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee:- the decision of the Cabinet as set out in Minute no CAB45/19, regarding the Financial Plan 2019-20 - 2022-23, be noted.

#### RSC19 **Fees and Charges Review 2020**

This matter had been submitted to the Cabinet at its meeting held on 7 November 2019 and was submitted to this Committee for consultation.

Considered the report of the Head of Finance (V1 1/11/19) which proposed to the Council the Fees and Charges for 2020.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the decision of the Cabinet as set out in Minute no CAB48/19, regarding the proposed Fees and Charges Review for 2020, be noted.

#### RSC20 **Fees and Charges Review 2020 - Leisure Contractor**

This matter had been submitted to the Cabinet at its meeting held on 7 November 2019 and was submitted to this Committee for consultation.

Considered the report of the Head of Finance (V2 8/11/19) which proposed to the Council the Fees and Charges for Freedom Leisure for 2020.

The Committee discussed the following aspects of the report with the Cabinet Member (Resources Portfolio), the Cabinet Member (Leisure Portfolio) and the Interim Head of Operations:-

- Clarification that the report referred to increases above CPI plus 2 percentage points
- Concern over the proposed increase in the Gatehouse Theatre booking fee per ticket from £0.50 to £2.00 per ticket
- Clarification that Freedom Leisure had not increased any prices last year
- The original £0.50 booking fee was very low
- London venues could charge a booking fee of up to £5
- £2.00 booking fee was at the upper level of comparable local and regional venues

- Last year's proposed increase from £0.50 to £1.00 was deferred, which would have costed £30,000
- The additional income raised would contribute towards investment in the box office system
- The need to scrutinise the Annual report from Freedom Leisure at the next scheduled meeting

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the decision of the Cabinet as set out in Minute no CAB49/19, regarding the proposed Fees and Charges Review for Freedom Leisure for 2020, be noted.

#### RSC21 **Performance Reporting 2019-20**

The Committee considered the performance and financial management details for those areas within the remit of the Committee for the quarter 2 period up to 30 September 2019.

The Committee discussed the following indicators contained within the report with the Head of Human Resources, the Head of Technology, the Interim Head of Operations and the Revenues and Benefits Manager:-

- LBV12 - Sickness rates (cumulative)
- 3.1.4 - Enable those residents who need to contact the Revenue and Benefits Services to be able to do so on-line
- 3.2.3 - Procure and implement a new telephony system jointly with CCDC
- 3.3.3 - Develop a contract management and procurement training package

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the performance and financial management data relating to areas of activity within this Committee's remit be noted.

#### RSC22 **Review of the Constitution**

Considered the report of the Interim Head of Law and Administration (V2 8/11/19) relating to the need to review the Council's present Constitution and a mechanism with which to undertake such a review.

The Committee confirmed the following the following dates and times of the meetings in which to undertake the Review of the Constitution:-

- 5.30 pm on Monday 27 January 2020
- 5.30 pm on Monday 3 February 2020
- 5.30 pm on Thursday 20 February 2020 (Followed by the scheduled Resources Scrutiny Committee on that evening to confirm the amendments)

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, a Task and Finish Review Working Group be established in order to undertake a review of the Council's Constitution.

**RSC23 Work Programme - Resources Scrutiny Committee**

Considered the report of the Interim Head of Law and Administration, which presented the Resources Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme (V1 8/11/19) for the forthcoming meetings up to February 2020.

The Committee noted that the Annual Report from Freedom Leisure was due to be considered at the next meeting and that all Members of the Council would be invited for this item.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the Work Programme (8/11/19) be approved.

CHAIR