

Chairman - Councillor R P Cooke

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

Councillors:

A R G Brown	R A James
B M Cross	R Kenney
M G Dodson	G P K Pardesi
A T A Godfrey	M K Winnington
A S Harp	

Cabinet Member - Councillor R M Smith - Resources Portfolio
Cabinet Member - Councillor J K Price - Environment Portfolio
Cabinet Member – Councillor C V Trowbridge - Leisure Portfolio

Also in Attendance:- - Councillors J Hood and W J Kemp

Officers in attendance:-

Mr T Clegg	- Chief Executive
Mr I Curran	- Head of Law and Administration
Mrs J Aupers	- Head of Governance
Mr T Willis	- Interim Head of Finance
Mrs E Fullagar	- Chief Accountant
Mrs W Jennings	- Group Human Resources and Payroll Manager
Mr L Booth	- Neighbourhood Services Group Manager
Mr J Dean	- Democratic Services Office
Mr A Bailey	- Scrutiny Officer

RSC22 Minutes

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 11 November 2021, as published on the Council's website, were submitted and signed.

RSC23 Apologies

An Apology for absence was received from Councillors J A Nixon (Substitute M J Winnington) and P Roycroft (Substitute B M Cross).

RSC24 Members Items

Councillor A T A Godfrey had submitted the following item under Paragraph 2.8 of the Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules;

“After consulting with the Chairman of the Resources Scrutiny Committee, I would like to put forward a Members’ Item asking for an update on Stafford Borough Council’s procurement policies and procedures.”

In response, the Head of Governance made the following comments:-

- The Procurement Regulations were last reviewed in 2016 and were due to be updated in the near future
- The Council was waiting for updated Procurement Regulations from the Government following the UK’s withdrawal from the European Union
- The Procurement Regulations would be updated once the new Regulations had been received from the Government

The Committee then discussed the following aspects of the Members’ Item:-

- There were benefits in reviewing the Procurement Regulations ahead of the proposed revisions
- It would be of little value to commence reviewing the Procurement Regulations before Summer 2022
- There was currently a Government Green Paper updating the Procurement Regulations
- It would be sensible to place the Procurement Task and Finish Review as a future item in the Committee’s Work Programme

The Committee subsequently agreed to place the Procurement Task and Finish Review as a future item in the Committee’s Work Programme.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the Procurement Task and Finish Review as a future item in the Committee’s Work Programme.

RSC25 General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2022-25

This matter had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting held on 13 January 2022 and was submitted to this Committee for consultation.

Considered the report of the Interim Head of Finance (V1 07/01/2022) regarding the General Fund Revenue Budget for 2022-23, the updated Capital Programme 2022-23 and indicative budgets for 2023-24 to 2024-25.

The report set out the current position on the General Fund Revenue Budget for 2022-23 and indicative budgets for 2023-24 to 2024-25. It also set out the position on the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2022-23, New Homes Bonus Grant allocation, the position on the Council’s Collection Fund, the Council’s Tax Base for 2022-23 and the consequential Council Tax for 2022-23.

The budget for 2022-23 was based on the indicative budget set last year, which had been updated to reflect known changes and estimates.

Indicative budgets had been set out for 2023-24 and 2024-25 which included the key issues which was anticipated would have a potential impact on the Council's finances. However it should be noted that a new funding regime for local government was to be introduced, potentially for 2023-24, but there was no further information at the current time.

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

- Clarification of the indicative budgets
- The General Fund £1.0 million working balance
- The 3% parameter set for fees and charges
- Concern that CPI would rise above 2%
- Warmer Homes initiative £16k and the need to also consider rural fuel poverty
- Provision for 10% increase in utility costs
- Provision of 2% pay award for 2021-22 and throughout the planning period
- Net income from green waste
- £559k reduced parking income and the need for a £247k transfer from Resources to cover the shortfall
- New Homes Bonus allocations
- Lower Tier Services Grant
- The impact of Covid 19
- The Council Tax Base
- The need to find savings for delivery in 2023-24
- Development Management Outturn
- Off Street Parking Services income

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the decision of the Cabinet as set out in Minute No CAB42/22, regarding the General Fund Revenue Budget 2022-23 and Capital Programme 2022-23, be noted.

RSC26 Gender Pay Reporting

The Committee considered the report of the Human Resources (V1 23/12/2021) that compared the Council's Gender Pay Reports for 31 March 2020 and 31 March 2021.

The Committee discussed the following aspects of the report with the Group Human Resources and Payroll Manager:-

- The importance of the Council employing the best candidate for the job

- Proportion of male and female colleagues by working pattern – clarification that hybrid working was available to all staff and the Council had never refused a request for part-time working
- Confirmation that the Council would be collating information on gender neutral staff

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

RSC27 Work Programme - Resources Scrutiny Committee

Considered the report of the Head of Law and Administration (V1 07/01/2022), which presented the Resources Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme for the forthcoming meetings up to February 2022.

A motion was moved by Councillor A T A Godfrey, seconded by Councillor R A James that the Procurement Task and Finish Review be included as a future item in the Committee's Work Programme.

The motion was subsequently carried.

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

- (a) a Procurement Task and Finish Review be included as a future item in the Work Programme;
- (b) the Work Programme be approved, subject to the amendments made at the meeting.

CHAIR