

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Wednesday 4th November 2020
(Microsoft Live Teams meeting)

Present:

Councillors Jolley (in the chair), Bellamy, Brocklehurst, Burch, K. Garrido, King, Morris, Pevitt, Sharpe and Turner.

Lead Members:

Councillor Hinds Lead Member for Finance and Support Services

Officers:

Joanne Hardman	Chief Financial Officer
Chris Hesketh	Head of Financial Management
Tony Thompstone	Strategic Finance Manager
Mike Relph	Senior Democratic Services Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Nelson.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes

RESOLVED: THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2020 be approved as a correct record.

4. Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21 Mid-Year Review

The Lead Member for Finance and Support Services submitted a report providing a progress on the treasury management strategy for 2020/21 and an update on the prudential indicators.

Members raised issues, commented and noted them, as follows:

(a) Was it possible to invest the additional H.M. Government funding which had been provided during the Covid-19 Pandemic, prior to its distribution, if only for a brief time and in turn receive interest? Yes and the funding had been invested in this manner, generally on a short-term basis.

(b) Had monetary support been provided to local authorities to assist with the administration of the various H.M. Government financial support schemes set up during the Covid-19 Pandemic? Yes and such financial support to Salford City Council had been provided.

(c) As of 30th September 2020, Salford City Council had approximately £28m in investments, what were these? This figure represented a total amount rather than a single investment, with the money was invested in a variety of ways, often on a very short-term basis.

RESOLVED: THAT the report and its contents be noted, together with the update to the prudential indicators

5. Budget 2021/22 Proposals - Update

Councillor Hinds, Lead Member for Finance and Support Services and Joanne Hardman, Chief Financial Officer, provided an update on the development of the Salford City Council Budget 2021/22, together with the financial impact of the ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic.

The following key issues were identified, for which Members commented on and noted them, as follows:

(a) This would be the third successive year where the City Council would have to meet a £25m deficit.

(b) Since the last update £7.6m of emergency H.M Government funding to mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic had been received, with the fourth tranche of these the largest.

(c) The outcome of an application for H.M Government funding to mitigate the closure of Salford Community Leisure (SCL) facilities during the pandemic was awaited.

(d) During the pandemic, comprehensive monthly financial returns for the City Council were submitted to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

(e) "Compensation" claims had been submitted to H.M Government to recoup the "lost income" incurred by the City Council for such activities as car parking and planning fees.

(f) Salford City Council had received an additional £300k of H.M Government funding to support "test and trace" activities and ensure enforcement of social distancing regulations.

(g) A total of £22m had been allocated to local authorities in Greater Manchester from the Outbreak Management Fund.

(h) £400k had been distributed in Salford to qualifying residents, in the form of food and essential supplies, together with other support to vulnerable citizens.

(i) Business support grants totalling £46.7m had been distributed through the City Council in Salford.

(j) The process for developing the Salford City Council 2021/22 was advancing, as part of which it was anticipated the savings already identified would be achieved. Details of the final Local Government Finance Settlement 2021/22 was still awaited and was central to the process. The negative impact the Covid-19 pandemic on the collection of business rates and council tax remained a key concern.

(k) Details were provided of the allocation of £60m which had been provided to the ten Greater Manchester local authorities to support businesses and mitigate the impact of the Tier 3 Covid-19 Social distancing regulations which had been imposed on the region. The extension of the Job Retention (Furlough) Scheme beyond October 2020, was welcomed.

(l) It was noted that the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic was a constantly changing situation which, including the second national “lockdown”, made financial forecasting difficult.

RESOLVED: THAT the update and the information provided be noted.

6. Scrutiny Panels’ Work Programmes 2020/21 - Updates

The Chairs of each of Salford City Council’s scrutiny panels provided an update of their respective work programmes, current activities and future plans, including a specific overview of activities since July 2020 and the impact the Covid-19 pandemic, in which attention was drawn to the following:

- **Children’s** (Councillor Adrian Brocklehurst)
 - School re-openings and City Council’s response
 - Educational resources
 - Budget monitoring and identification and pressures
 - Corporate Parenting Panel
 - Route 29
 - Child obesity
 - Work programme and planned activities for early 2021 and beyond

Reference was made to transport costs for children with special needs. It was indicated this was an ongoing issue which the Panel continued to monitor and identify potential savings.

- **Community and Neighbourhoods** (Councillor Tanya Burch)
 - Place directorate - budget monitoring
 - Covid-19 impact and recovery planning
 - Greater Manchester Police (GMP) overview and update
 - Salford community Leisure (SCL) summer 2020 youth provision and activities
 - H.M Government’s Environment Bill 2020 - England’s Resource and Waste Strategy - overview and implications
 - Renewal of Dog Control of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs)
- **Health and Social Care** (Councillor Margaret Morris)
 - Covid-19 Pandemic - response and action plan

- Mental health
- Establishment of three Covid-19 themed task groups:
 - Care Homes and GP Support
 - Communications
 - GP Access and Support
- **Growth and Prosperity** (Councillor Robert Sharpe)
 - Vicars Hall Lane, Boothstown - consideration of call-in
 - Greater Manchester Mayor's Cycling and Walking Challenge Fund - Salford initiatives
 - Bridgewater Canal - National Lottery funding
 - Salford Crescent Masterplan
 - Transfer of Urban Vision staff and activities to Salford City Council

Reference was made to the responsibility for the long-term maintenance of the Barton Lifting Bridge which formed part of the Western Gateway Infrastructure. It was indicated this was an issue the panel could incorporate into its work programme.

RESOLVED: THAT the respective activities of the four scrutiny panels as summarised above, be noted.

7. Work Programme 2020/21

Consideration was given to the Board's Work Programme for 2020/21.

RESOLVED: THAT the Board's Work Programme for 2020/21, be noted.

8. Date of Next Meeting

RESOLVED: THAT the next meeting of the Board will be held on Wednesday, 2nd December 2020 at 2.00 pm, preceded by a briefing for members only at 1.30 pm, be noted.