

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY 22ND NOVEMBER 2023, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors K.J. May (Leader), S. J. Baxter (Deputy Leader), S. R. Colella, C.A. Hotham, K. Taylor, S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

Observers: Councillor P. M. McDonald and Councillor S.T. Nock

Officers: Mrs. S. Hanley, Mr P. Carpenter, Mr. G. Revans, Ms. N Cummings, Ms. A. Delahunty, Mrs. J. Bayley-Hill and Mrs J. Gresham

46/23 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

47/23 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

48/23 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON 18TH OCTOBER 2023**

The minutes from the Cabinet meeting held on 18th October 2023 were submitted for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED that the minutes from the Cabinet meeting held on 18th October 2023 be approved as a true and accurate record.

49/23 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 16TH OCTOBER 2023**

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board provided a verbal update in respect of the Board meeting held on 16th October 2023; and in doing so explained that there were no recommendations to Cabinet made at that meeting. He did explain, however, that a Task Group to investigate the topic of Community Supermarket / Food Bank provision in the District had been established and was due to hold its first meeting in December 2023.

Cabinet welcomed the work that was being undertaken by the Board in this area. It was understood that a list of food banks had been provided to the Board in order to undertake the investigation. Members were informed that this had been provided by Officers and would be updated regularly by the Bromsgrove Partnership.

There was a brief discussion regarding the 'poor' rating that had recently been given to the Hillcrest Mental Health Ward. It was noted that there had been discussions regarding this at a recent Worcestershire County Council, Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, where an alternative provision was discussed. Further updates in respect of this would be available soon.

Following the verbal update, the Principal Democratic Services Officer presented the update report for the Governance Systems Review, which had been considered at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting on 20th November 2023. During the presentation the following was highlighted for Members' attention:

- The update highlighted the work undertaken at the Council to implement the recommendations made by the Governance Systems Task Group and approved at the Council meeting held on 20th September 2023.
- It had been agreed that the Constitution Review Working Group (CRWG) would meet on a monthly basis in order to ensure that all changes would be delivered by the start of the municipal year 2024/25. Thus far, the CRWG had discussed the draft Terms of Reference for Cabinet Advisory Groups (CAGs) and the draft Memorandum of Understanding for cross party working.
- It had been agreed that the term "Cabinet Advisory Groups" (CAGs) would be used instead of Cabinet Advisory Panels.
- That the CAGs were separate to the scrutiny function that was already in place at the Council and that these groups would not duplicate the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Board.
- That it would be up to the relevant Portfolio Holder to call a CAG meeting throughout the municipal year on a topic at an early stage of discussion.
- Included in the draft calendar of meetings for the 2024/25 municipal year were several dates for the CAG meetings which could be used if necessary. However, extra meetings could potentially be held on an ad hoc basis where required.

Members were informed that there had been general agreement from the Board at its meeting on 20th November 2023 in respect of the

recommendations included in the report. However, some slight amendments had been agreed. These were as follows:

- 1) The terms of reference for the Cabinet Advisory Groups be approved, subject to addition of Paragraph 12 which would read as follows: “Memorandum of Understanding also applies”; and
- 2) The proposed Memorandum of Understanding concerning cross party working be approved, subject to an amendment to point 5 of the Principles section to read as follows: “Recognise and respect that each individual Member can contribute to decisions that are taken and should be involved and able to provide their opinion before a decision is taken”.

Cabinet generally supported the amended recommendations that had been made. Two slight amendments were suggested as follows in italics below:

- 1) The terms of reference for the Cabinet Advisory Groups be approved, subject to addition of Paragraph 12 which would read as follows: “the Memorandum of Understanding also applies *when taking part in Cabinet Advisory Groups*”; and
- 2) The proposed Memorandum of Understanding concerning cross party working be approved, subject to an amendment to point 5 of the Principles section to read as follows: “Recognise and respect that each individual Member can contribute to decisions that are taken and *should be given the opportunity* to be involved and able to provide their opinion before a decision is taken”.

The Chairman of the Board stated that he was happy with the suggested amendments. He also noted that the meetings of CAGs would be at the request of the relevant Portfolio Holder and were not designed to undermine the role of the Portfolio Holder.

On being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED that

- 1) The terms of reference for the Cabinet Advisory Groups be approved, subject to addition of Paragraph 12 which would read

as follows: “Memorandum of Understanding also applied *when taking part in a Cabinet Advisory Group*”; and

RECOMMENDED that

- 2) The proposed Memorandum of Understanding concerning cross party working be approved, subject to an amendment to point 5 of the Principles section to read as follows: “Recognise and respect that each individual Member can contribute to decisions that are taken and *should be given the opportunity* to be involved and able to provide their opinion before a decision be taken”.

50/23

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION GRANT AND DOMESTIC ABUSE GRANT

The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing and Strategic Housing presented the Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant for Members’ consideration.

In doing so the following was highlighted:

- This was an annual report that provided Members with information regarding the allocation of the Homelessness Prevention and Domestic Abuse Grant available in 2024/25. In total there was £339,261 available to allocate to organisations to provide a package of support and services to prevent homelessness and support those who became homeless. Included in this allocation was a £35,000 Domestic Abuse Grant. The report was being considered earlier than usual by Members. This was due to the increased costs incurred by the organisations carrying out support work in this area and the cost of living crisis.
- During the funding round a bid from BEAM had been received for £20,000 to support individuals into the private rented sector. However, the Council had considered that rentals in the private sector to households on benefits were out of range due to the Local Housing Allowance Rate being frozen at 2020 levels and landlords increasing rents significantly when re-letting due to the cost of living crisis and having to meet increased mortgage repayments. The BEAM scheme was seen as a duplication of a service already provided by the Council and BDHT Housing Options team and therefore the bid had not been selected for the municipal year 2024/25.

- A bid from CCP for a Rough Sleeper Outreach Service was still under consideration whilst a potential different way of delivering the service was being explored.

Following the presentation of the report, the Strategic Housing Manager explained that there had been a slight amendment to the report regarding the current challenges being faced by voluntary organisations. The amendment was noted as follows:

“These are voluntary organisations and without this funding it was unlikely this support would be offered or available which in turn would lead to increase direct revenue costs for the Council. Their prevention role was crucial in helping people remain in their existing accommodation wherever possible. This was even more relevant due to affordability issues in the private rented sector and mortgages for first time buyers being more difficult to access due to the increase in interest rates, in addition there had been less churn in social housing, so few properties were becoming available and social housing options were very limited”.

Cabinet was further informed that St Basil’s had been unsuccessful in their supported housing procurement. This would look to be resolved by them in six to twelve months’ time and Worcestershire County Council (WCC) were working with them to resolve this issue. It was confirmed that Worcestershire Childrens’ First were providing the support in this area.

Members queried the anticipated underspend of £23,500 that had been noted in the report. Officers explained that these monies were anticipated to be received as a result of the housing benefits that were received back to the Council through the use of the ‘Crash Pad’ service.

In terms of the allocation of £35,000 for those who suffered domestic abuse some Members queried whether this allocation was enough, particularly in light of the need to remove those who suffered domestic abuse from their property to ensure safety.

It was clarified that due to the implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 the preference was to keep those who suffered domestic abuse in their own property and remove those who perpetrated the abuse. Extra funding had been allocated at a County level in order to do this.

Officers provided information regarding the current pressures experienced on service providers due to a lack of accommodation for

homeless and rough sleepers. In particular it was noted that BDHT were working hard with young people and looking for alternative ways to provide help due to the change in needs that were currently being experienced, this included engaging with rough sleepers in more rural areas.

It was confirmed that last year there were zero rough sleepers within the District. It was thought that this would be the case following this year's rough sleeper count. Officers explained that if it were more than zero this year it would not be significantly higher.

Following the consideration of the report the Strategic Housing Manager was thanked for all of her hard work in this area and particularly in the strong partnership work she and the team undertook.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the initiatives in the table below be approved to receive allocation of funding 2024/25.

Homelessness Grant Allocation	2024/25 £ (up to £303,963)
Housing Agency Agreement Top Up	52,475
Young Persons Pathway Worker – support to prevent homelessness for under 25's and Crash Pad to provide a unit of emergency accommodation for young people.	53,512
Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership Co-ordinator – contribution towards county-wide development and delivery of housing initiatives in partnership with other agencies	9,500
Single Person and Childless Couples Homelessness Prevention Service	18,347
NewStarts - Provide Furniture and Volunteering Opportunities for Ex-Offenders – supports tenancy sustainment and provides future employment opportunities/reduces risk of reoffending	10,000
GreenSquare Accord Housing Related Support – helping ex-offenders remain housed/seek employment	25,320
St Basils Foyer – provides stable accommodation/support for young people - 14 units – fully occupied during last financial year	10,492
Rough Sleeper outreach and prevention service targeting rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping.	29,941
North Worcestershire Basement Project - Support for young people at risk of homelessness	26,667
Step Up – Private Tenancy Scheme	23,000
Sunrise Project intensive support	44,667
Total committed expenditure	303,921
Underspend	£ 42

- 2) That delegated authority be granted to the Head of Community and Housing Services following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing to use any unallocated Grant during the year or make further adjustments as necessary to ensure full utilisation of the Grants for 2024/25 in support of existing or new schemes.

51/23

TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY HALF YEARLY REPORT

The Interim Director of Finance presented the Treasury Management Strategy Half Yearly Report for Cabinet's consideration.

Members were informed that the report set out the state of the economic climate as advised by the Council's Treasury advisor Arlingclose.

The Council currently had no long term debt, predominantly due to the previous transfer of housing assets to BDHT. It was also confirmed that there was no short term borrowing. Officers confirmed that debt was quite expensive now and that a 20 year £5m debt would cost £530,000 per annum.

In terms of investments, it was explained that short term investments were made using amounts from the Council Tax and Business rates cash flow. It was clarified that all investments that were made were ethical.

Cabinet was informed that difficult decisions would need to be made as interest rates moved back to 'normal'.

Following the consideration of the report, Members expressed an interest in how the Council considered investment management organisations to manage its investments. The Interim Director of Finance explained that this was discussed with Arlingclose and that there were a range of investment management organisations that were used. It was confirmed that investments were not currently made outside of the UK.

RECOMMENDED that

Council note the position in relation to the Council's Prudential indicators.

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN - TRANCHE 1 BUDGET UPDATE INCLUDING FEES AND CHARGES

The Interim Director of Finance presented the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) - Tranche 1 Budget Update including Fees and Charges. During the presentation the following was highlighted for Members' consideration:

- The Council's budget would be set in two tranches for the 2023/24 financial year as it had been in 2022/23. The final Council Tax Resolution would be approved by Council in February 2024. It was noted that the process would be more difficult in the 2023/24 financial year due to several factors including:
 1. the £637,000 overall deficit across the three years of the 2023/24 MTFP.
 2. The Council still needed to close its Accounts for the 2020/21 financial year.
 3. The loss of key staff.
 4. The cost of living crisis.

Some wider factors included:

1. The war in Ukraine and the impact of inflationary increases.
2. Climate Emergencies and associated costs to implement policies linked to these declarations.

Clarification was provided on some of these factors including the national shortage of audit resources to complete the closure of Local Authority accounts. It was estimated that currently there were 900 outstanding audits still to be carried out across the UK between the 2015-16 and 22-23 financial years.

It was anticipated that Central Government would have to look at Local Government funding in a different way going forward, potentially being more prescriptive, in light of the number of Local Councils who had issued S114 Statements as a result of being in significant financial difficulties.

Members were informed that there would be no service related savings during this tranche of the budget. These would be looked at more closely

once the Local Government Settlement had been confirmed on 19th December 2023 (the present expected date).

A number of assumptions had been made within the report: the increase of Council Tax by 2 per cent, no increase in Business Rates, an increase in properties as a result of the Local Plan of 150k houses (year 1), 200 (year 2) and 150 (year 3), no New Home Bonus funding pending any announcement within the Local Government Settlement, other Government Grants and pension fund assumptions are as previous years allocations.

Further assumptions were reported to Members, and it was detailed that the Staff Pay Award costs were approximately £770,000 more and that it was prudent to increase the Councils 2024/5 pay award impact from 2 per cent to 3 per cent given the significant increases that have been offered by the Employers during 2022/3 and 2023/4. The 2025/6 and 2026/7 pay awards were assumed to be 2 per cent.

In terms of inflation, it was explained that it was also prudent to include a 5 per cent budget for inflationary increases to contracts.

Officers informed Cabinet that some of these pressures could be partially mitigated as currently only 60 per cent of the additional Utilities budget was being utilised.

Fees and Charges were discussed, and it was highlighted that the proposed Fees and Charges increase for 2024/25 would be 7 per cent (in line with inflation) returning to 2 per cent for the financial years 2025/23 and 2026/27.

The Departmental Pressures were summarised for Members and in doing so they were informed that a target of £500,000 for reclamation of benefit payments had previously been set. However, due to more accurate information and improved processes the need for recovery had decreased.

In addition to this, it was highlighted that there was still no Government guidance on waste delivery in the future. This presented a potentially huge cost to the Council as it would possibly need to move to an electric or hydrogen fleet or increased use of Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil (HVO) to fuel the fleet vehicles. It was confirmed that this form of fuel was more expensive than diesel. This and other 'Green' targets would certainly put pressure on future budgets.

Further Departmental Pressures included:

- Formalising the present pilot scheme on planning enforcement being delivered by Worcester Regulatory Services (WRS) within the Budget. This would equate to an ongoing cost of £72k a year.
- An increase of £93,000 a year to continue the Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the Council and Wychavon District Council (WDC) for the management and enforcement of on and off street parking increases.
- The result of a review of allocation of resources within the North Worcestershire Water Management (NWWM) SLA with Redditch and Wyre Forest would result in an increase from £66,000 per annum to £100,000 per annum.

Tranche 2 of the Budget would look to identify and fill any gaps within the Budget. This could include looking at the Commercial fees and charges, parking fees and new allowable increases in Planning fees. In order to meet the Strategic Priorities of the Council more funding was certainly required. It was reported that the following priorities would also be looked at in Tranche 2:

- Recharges.
- Debt costs – given the slippage in the Capital Programme.
- Business Rates Re-baselining.

It was noted that the Capital Programme, as agreed at Council in February 2023, had been included in an appendix to the report. It included the information on Play and Parks improvement works. Members were informed that the £1.597m requirements for the Barnt Green Millenium Park Toilets had also been included. Officers explained that this was incorrect as the works had been completed and the costs should have been removed.

Following the presentation of the report the areas highlighted below were also discussed:

- The contents of the Chancellor's Autumn Statement which had been released on the day of the meeting.
- The use of Task and Finish contracts within the Council's operations and the potential risk to the Council. Although it was noted that refuse collectors operated a task and finish model of working this question had been raised at a meeting of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee and had been addressed by Officers and a full response provided at that time. It was noted

that the External Auditors had also raised this with relevant Officers previously. Officers undertook to look at this further if necessary.

- The complicated and idiosyncratic way Local Government Budget were presented. These were explained to Members for future reference. Officers confirmed that there would be a detailed glossary and explanation of terms included in the Tranche 2 Budget papers.
- The consultation period for Tranche 2 of the Budget – this was noted as February 2024. It was confirmed that Parish Councils would be able to take part in the consultation prior to the finalisation of Tranche 2.
- Leisure requirements – it was queried where the Play Area cost and requirement information had been gathered. It was confirmed that this had been provided by Officers following work undertaken as a result of several Questions and Motions considered at Full Council meetings. However, it was clarified that some of these improvements would be funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF) received previously.

The Leader invited Councillor P. McDonald to speak in his role as Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board. Members were informed that this report had been considered the previous evening by the Finance and Budget Working Group (FBWG) on behalf of the main Board. During this meeting there had been several detailed discussions regarding the Planning Enforcement proposal, and the proposed increase in costs in respect of NWWM and the Parking SLA with WDC.

Councillor McDonald stated that he and other Members were not aware that WRS had been carrying out enforcement duties on behalf of the Council's Planning Department. It was raised that this should be a Planning function and therefore carried out in-house.

Officers explained that there was a national shortage of Planning Officers and Members were assured that numerous methods had been utilised to try to recruit and retain Planning Officers. This included apprenticeships, career graded roles, training and agile and remote working provision. However, the problem of retention and recruitment still remained partly due to the higher salaries available in the private sector.

Some Members felt that given the current situation in shortage of Planning Officers the formalisation of utilising WRS was the best way forward. They were not a third party provider and offered expertise in a

complex area. The WRS Officers were able to triage enforcement matters to ensure the most expedient resolution to Planning enforcement matters resulting in a better and cost efficient service for residents. It was requested that the date the initial use of WRS Officers for Planning Enforcement had been agreed be provided to Members. Officers undertook to provide this information.

There was a very detailed discussion regarding the Parking SLA and Members had raised concerns. Councillor McDonald felt that some of the financial information included within the report should have been considered on confidential papers due to commercial sensitivity. Although this concern was noted it was clarified that none of the figures were confirmed at this point as this was part of the Budget building process. It was further reiterated by Officers that full details of any changes to the SLA could not be given at this time, as these were Departmental Pressures that had not yet been agreed. There would be a detailed report presented to Members later in the year once further discussion had been carried out and the information within that detailed report would be presented accordingly.

The Interim Executive Director provided Members with a detailed overview of Parking Enforcement within the District. Highlighting the following areas:

- The £242,000 costs for under the SLA had not been increased for a number of years. Therefore, any increase was in line with inflationary costs.
- If there were not the full number of Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) available to carry out parking enforcement, then costs were not paid in full by the Council. Recruitment of new CEOs was currently underway to and due to the increase in grade following a job evaluation process it was hoped that the recruitment round would be successful.
- Bromsgrove District Council carried out On-Street Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) enforcement under an agency agreement with WCC.
- WDC carried out on and off street enforcement and ticketing within the Districts car parks. Car park income generated approximately £1m per annum and income from Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) generated approximately £100,000. All income generated from PCNs was used for enforcement costs. This income, however, did not cover the full cost of enforcement. Discussions were ongoing with Senior Officers at WCC to see if there was the potential for WCC to bridge at least some of the

financial gap between the income of PCNs and the cost of enforcing TROs for the Council.

- Notice periods for the cessation of the agency contract with WCC was two years and one year for the WDC. Although there was some discussion regarding the contractual obligations it was felt that nothing could be actioned at the current time.
- Alternative providers could be approached to provide an enforcement service for the Council; however, this could lead to more targeted enforcement to gather income in a more commercial manner. It was noted that the relationship between WDC had been good over a ten year period and that they had provided the back office software needed for parking enforcement.

Some Members expressed that they felt that enforcement was not carried out efficiently, with CEOs driving long distances between areas within the District to carry out enforcement. Although it was stated that sometimes CEOs did not even get to the outer areas within the District. It was agreed that a review was certainly needed to look at the operating model for the future.

Members stated that the perception of residents within the District was that the enforcement service provided by the Council was below standard even though some of the enforcement tasks were undertaken on behalf of WCC.

Following the robust discussion, it was requested that a report be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Board to investigate this matter in more detail. This would provide an opportunity for Board Members to look at a breakdown of data including costs paid to WDC if not all CEOs were available to carry out duties and the cost of enforcement for both on and off street parking. It was suggested that information on specific areas within the District that had been enforced and the last time fees were increased should also be investigated.

This would be a time critical investigation with extremely tight deadlines due to the contract end date in March 2024.

Members then revisited the issues that had been highlighted earlier in the meeting regarding NWWM. Members were in agreement that NWWM provided a service that benefitted the District, particularly in more recent years. Members stated that it was hard to disagree with the increase in costs if the allocation of resources had been reviewed and it had been determined that NWWM were spending more time within the

District than in previous years. Members queried how often the allocation data was reviewed and Officers confirmed that it would be reviewed on a two yearly basis going forward, to better understand resource needed across Bromsgrove. A more detailed appendix to the MTFP would be provided in respect of this matter for Members' consideration when the Tranche 2 budget was considered in February 2024.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan as at the start of October, and the associated risks and opportunities be endorsed.
- 2) These inputs had been used, along with the 2023/24-25/26 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) agreed by Council in February 2023, to project an initial "gap" to be closed.
- 3) An initial Tranche of savings proposals, as set out in Section 3.12 - 3.25 and the associated Savings Proposal Document in Appendix A, would be published on 14th November 2023 and any feedback be considered by Cabinet in January 2023 prior to seeking approval at Council in January 2024.
- 4) Tranche 2 of this process would add further information such as the Local Government Settlement to give a final financial position for the Council.

RECOMMENDED that

- 5) That the Play capital works for 2023/4 as set out in the report be approved and added to the Capital Programme.

53/23

TO CONSIDER ANY URGENT BUSINESS, DETAILS OF WHICH HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED TO THE HEAD OF LEGAL, DEMOCRATIC AND PROPERTY SERVICES PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE MEETING AND WHICH THE CHAIRMAN, BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, CONSIDERS TO BE OF SO URGENT A NATURE THAT IT CANNOT WAIT UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING

There was no urgent business on this occasion.

54/23

FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT QUARTER 2 2023/24 (REPORT TO FOLLOW)

The Interim Director of Finance presented the Finance and Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 2 2023/24 for Members' consideration.

Included in the report were details of the full year revenue budget of £13.8m which was approved by Full Council in February 2023. It was confirmed that training for budget managers had been undertaken.

Currently the Council was forecasting a revenue overspend of £815,000, which would be mitigated in part by the application of the £351,000 from the Utilities Reserve approved at Quarter 1. This resulted in a £464,000 overspend. Members were informed that the overspend had predominantly been as a result of additional pressures including the staff pay award, fuel and fleet costs and the increased cost of temporary accommodation.

In terms of the Capital Programme, Members were reminded that a £10.9m programme had been approved in March 2023 and that many of the schemes were in partial delivery in the 2022/23 financial year.

Some updates were provided to Members regarding some of the Capital projects including Windsor Street. It was explained that there had been some additional levels of pollution identified at this site which needed to be assessed under new Environment Agency (EA) rules. The Council was currently holding discussions with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) to resolve these issues in terms of time and cost. However, it was noted that the EA were carrying out countrywide investigations as a result of the change in rules which might impact on the timing of the Windsor Street site.

Cabinet was informed that there were some proposed changes to the Capital Programme included in the report that required approval. These included the proposal to bring forward £50,000 of the £177,500 capital bid for an ICT server replacement to this municipal year. It was explained that this was an important project for the Council as the cyber security linked tape drive replacements would improve cyber security and help to prevent impacts of any future cyber security attack. An increase to the Capital Programme of £410k in 2023/24 also required approval to ensure the continuation of the Civica OpenRevenues system for the administration of Council Tax, Business Rates and Housing Benefits. A decrease in cost for year 3 of the Barnt Green toilet works as highlighted in the MTFP report also required approval.

Cabinet was informed that the Energy Efficiency Strategy continued to be progressed across the property portfolio and that Housing Property Services had carried out a desktop study to rule out any presence of

Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in Council properties. It was noted that so far, no RAAC had been identified.

It was reported that work had been undertaken in order to get The Artrix in a position to open for use by a theatre provider.

The procurement pipeline which included Capital and Revenue procurements over £50,000 was briefly discussed and the Interim Director of Finance explained that he was currently in the process of organising an all-Member session to clarify the procurement process. Further details regarding this session would be available shortly.

Following the presentation of the report, Members thanked the Interim Director of Finance and the Head of Finance and Customer Services for all their hard work pulling this comprehensive report together.

Following consideration of the report there were some comments and questions from Members. The Cabinet Member for Planning, Licensing and WRS stated that he had arranged to meet with the Assistant Chief Fire Officer to discuss the issues identified at the Windsor Street site. It was stated that this meeting and any information needed to be shared with relevant Members and partners as soon as possible.

Some queries were raised in respect of the Performance Indicators contained within Appendix E of the report. However, it was decided that as there was currently a review of performance measures underway a discussion regarding these would be more appropriate during the review process.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The current overspend position in relation to Revenue and Capital Budgets for the period April to September and the full year revenue overspend position of £464,000 after applying £351,000 from the Utilities Reserve as approved at Quarter 1 be noted.
- 2) The present status of the Asset Strategy.
- 3) There was no change to the procurements over £200,000 due to be delivered during 2023/4 from those listed in Quarter 1.
- 4) The Quarter 2 Performance data for the Period April to September 2023 be noted.
- 5) The application of £50,000 from the General Fund for Enforcement Action to be taken at a site in Alvechurch.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) Changes to the Capital Programme in relation to ICT be actioned, bringing forward Cyber Security linked Tape Drive replacements forward from 2024/5 into 2023/4, and increasing the budget in 2023/4 to ensure the continuation of the Civica OpenRevenues system for the administration of council tax, business rates and housing benefits.

The meeting closed at 20:36

Chairman