

The Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy approved in February 2024 that the minimum level of General Fund Reserves should be maintained at £4m to protect the council against future financial risk, at 31 March 2024, the General Fund balance was £4.092m.

Councillor Bradley noted that many Lancashire Districts were also experiencing financial challenges, with some debts being one off in nature, and being required to be dealt with in the accounts.

Following a query it was noted that one instance related to a tenant, but as the matter was confidential and commercial in nature it was not appropriate to go into the detail.

Resolved:

- 1. To note the 2023/24 provisional outturn for revenue and reserves, based on the position at 31 March 2024.**
- 2. To note the virements made to and from the revenue budget during the period, as detailed in Appendix 2.**

Reasons for recommendation

To ensure the Council's budgetary targets are achieved.

Other options considered and rejected

None, it is a requirement to report quarterly on the Revenue Budgeting monitoring and Reserves.

5 Capital and Balance Sheet Outturn 2023-24

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources, presented the report of the Director of Finance which set out to report the outturn financial position of the council in respect of the capital programme at 31 March 2024, while key issues were highlighted and key variances explained, in addition to an overview of various elements contained within the Council's balance sheet at 31 March 2024.

In summary, the Capital Budget for 2023/24 was set at £21.103 by the Council in February 2023. This was increased due to the approval of the 2022/23 outturn to £22.998m, then amended in the Quarter 1, Quarter 2 and Quarter 3 Capital Monitoring Reports, which covered the first 9 months of the year to £15.882m as approved by the Executive Cabinet in February 2024.

Resolved:

- 1. To approve the revised capital programme, attached at Appendix A, which includes an amendment to the programme of £3.989m, as detailed at point 12 of this report.**
- 2. To note the variations to the programme (which are detailed by scheme at Appendix B and referenced within the body of the report).**
- 3. To note the position in the Balance Sheet monitoring section of the report, in respect of cash, investment and loan balances, and debtors, as at 31st March 2024.**

Reasons for recommendations

To ensure the Council's Capital Programme is monitored effectively.

Other options considered and rejected

None, it is a requirement to report quarterly on the Capital and Balance sheet budget monitoring.

6 Chorley Quarter Four Performance Monitoring Report 2023/24

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources, presented the report of the Director of Change and Delivery which set out the performance against delivery of the Corporate Strategy during the fourth quarter of 2023/24, covered 1 January 2024 to March 2024.

Overall performance of the Corporate Strategy projects was good, with 84% (916) projects rated green and were progressing according to schedule. 16% (3) projects were rated Amber which was a warning of potential delays.

Councillor Alistair Morwood, Executive Member for Planning and Development, reported a correction to the report in that the % of major planning applications decided in 13 weeks was, in fact, 88%. This was within the target of 80%.

Members discussed the resident satisfaction scores and acknowledged that these were lower than previously, but still higher than the national average. Results from the LGA mirrored the results also.

The issue of fuel poverty was considered. This was due to a number of factors, including high utility bills, but also residents living in large, older properties or terraces which were not necessarily as insulated as other properties.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

Reasons for recommendations

To ensure the effective performance monitoring of the Corporate Strategy and safeguard the delivery across 2023/24.

Other options considered and rejected

No other options have been considered or rejected. This is because the report does not present any items for decision.

7 Key Contracts and Partnerships Framework Refresh

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources, presented the report of the Director of Change and Delivery which presented the refreshed Key Contracts and Partnerships Framework.

The report set out monitoring arrangements for contracts and partnerships whose significant justified additional scrutiny, this could be due to the combination of monetary value, length of the commitment, their impact on the council's strategic objectives or the level of associated risk.

The framework currently monitored 14 contracts and partnerships, 10 of which were also monitored by South Ribble's Key Contract and Partnership Framework. The framework refresh proposed to create a shared framework with South Ribble Borough

Council, to support aligned ways of working for shared services staff while ensuring the framework remained fit for purpose.

Resolved:

To approve the refreshed Key Contracts and Partnerships Framework.

Reasons for recommendations

To ensure that the framework remains fit for purpose and supports aligned ways of working within shared services.

Other options considered and rejected

To not refresh the framework, which would result in the identified improvements not being implemented. This was rejected as it would not ensure the framework remained fit for purpose.

To not share the updated framework with South Ribble Borough Council. This would mean that shared officers would adhere to different framework criteria, in cases for contracts monitored by both councils. This was rejected as it would not support aligned ways of working.

8 Merchant Acquiring Services Tender

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources, presented the report of the Director of Finance which set out agreement to enter a joint procurement exercise with South Ribble Borough Council and Preston City Council, supported by an external specialist consultant in the area to procure Merchant Acquiring Services.

Merchant Acquiring services were the means by which the council processed credit and debit card payments from customers. They allowed card transactions to be processed securely and ensure that customers were offered a choice of payment channels for council services. Council income collected via credit/debit cards equated to approximately £5.5m per year, and over 45,000 transactions.

Members discussed the criteria, noting the quality, social value and price for the contract.

Resolved:

- 1. To approve the procurement strategy as outlined in the report.**
- 2. To approve the proposed evaluation criteria for the contract.**
- 3. To delegate authority to the Executive Member (Resources) to enter into a contract with the successful bidder identified through the procurement process.**

Reasons for recommendations

The nature of the service to be procured is specialised so the advice and input of an expert, who can undertake the necessary research and analysis of bids is considered prudent.

A joint procurement with two other councils should present an attractive proposition to potential suppliers and should secure a competitive price and value for money.

The current cost to Chorley Council for these services is approximately £65,000 per year, and the contract proposed is for three years, plus an option to extend for a

further two years. It is anticipated that the savings can be secured through the procurement exercise.

The proposal is for BRC Consulting Services Limited (BRC) to manage a full market tender on behalf of the three councils. The tender will be undertaken as a joint exercise with a view to selecting one merchant acquirer who will deliver the same core service model to each Council but with separate contracts recognising that there will also be specific differences in requirements. Core service requirements, as well as service requirements specific to each council, will be incorporated into a single tender document.

Other options considered and rejected

An alternative option would be for the Council to enter a procurement exercise as a single organisation, and without external support. However, as a joint procurement exercise, the council should benefit from more competitive prices, and through the advice and expertise of a specialist, will be able to undertake a more effective evaluation of the bids submitted.

9 Closure of Council Charities

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources, presented the report of the Director of Finance which set out the proposal to wind up and close four small charities and/or providing an administrative service, and to ensure proper use of any resulting funds.

The outlined charities no longer met their intended purpose in any meaningful way. As only minimal amounts of interest were generated, there was little that they could practically achieve. There were also no current trustees to conduct business of the charities.

The Charities were, 'Edward McKnight Memorial Fund', 'William Cocker Charity', 'H T Parke's Baths Fund', and 'W B Park's Charity'. The purpose of each of the charities was set out in the report.

Resolved:

- 1. That the William Cocker Charity, the WB Parks Charity, the HT Parkes Baths Fund and the McKnight Memorial Fund are closed, and that approval given to distribute any monies to similar charities or causes.**
- 2. That the determination of the recipients of the balance on each fund is delegated to the Chair of the Governance Committee and the Executive Member for Resources, the outcome of which to be reported to a future Governance Committee meeting.**

Reasons for recommendations

The charities no longer operate or meet the purpose they were initially set up to achieve. As well as placing an administrative burden upon the council in producing the accounts each year and managing the bank accounts, as the accounts have remained dormant, the funds have not been applied as intended.

Other options considered and rejected

The alternative option would be to keep the charities as they are now, and this has been rejected as of being no practical advantage and creating unnecessary work.

10 Exclusion of the Public and Press

Resolved: that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraph 3 of Part 1 of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

11 All Seasons Gym Refurbishment - Procurement Strategy

Councillor Bev Murray, Executive Member for Early Intervention, presented the report of the Director of Communities which set out to approve the procurement strategy to undertake the All Seasons Leisure Centre Improvements.

All Seasons Leisure Centre was the largest of the three venues and offered both wet and dry facilities. The centre consisted of a 47-station gym, a 25m pool, a teaching pool, four courts and two court sport halls. Group exercise and group cycle studios, and two squash courts.

The Leisure Centre historically faced underinvestment while outsourced. However, since the council took back control, a significant opportunity presented itself to revitalise and enhance the services provided.

Members supported the investment into All Seasons.

Resolved:

1. To approve the procurement strategy for the refurbishment of the gym at All Seasons leisure centre.
2. To approve the inclusion in the procurement exercise for the installation of photovoltaic (PV) panels and additional metering and monitoring software at All Seasons Leisure centre. Funding for the works has been awarded from Sport England's Swimming Pool Support Fund, this approval is subject to Council decision to confirm the acceptance of the funds.
3. To approve a full public consultation on the family facilities in the pool and authority to award a direct contract following the completion of the consultation and to delegate the contract award to the Executive Member of Early Intervention to approve.
4. To approve the direct contract award to Lyndhurst Precision Ltd for the manufacture of a pool walkway.
5. To delegate the contract award for the main contractor to the Executive Member of Early Intervention for sign off.
6. To note, following the completion of a condition survey further works maybe included in the refurbishment package to limit disruption, costs will be quantified at the second stage.
7. To note, further reports will come forward as part of the wider leisure improvements.

Reasons for recommendations

To continue the delivery of the Leisure Facility improvements across the borough.

To provide the opportunity for Chorley Leisure to benefit from the latent demand in Chorley with the potential of attracting over 1000 new members, which would significantly increase income

Other options considered and rejected

Not to undertake the improvement works – this was discounted due to the current limited fitness offer provided, the opportunity to take advantage of the available latent demand and the opportunity to significantly increase the swimming offer.

Chair

Date