

EXECUTIVE BOARD

4 November 2020

Present

Elected Members	Councillors Warrington (In the Chair), Bray, Cooney, Fairfoull, Feeley, Gwynne, Kitchen, Ryan and Wills
Chief Executive	Steven Pleasant
Borough Solicitor	Sandra Stewart
Section 151 Officer	Kathy Roe

Also In Attendance: **Steph Butterworth, Richard Hancock, Dr Ashwin Ramachandra, Ian Saxon, Paul Smith, Jeff Upton, Sarah Threlfall, Jayne Traverse, Debbie Watson, Tom Wilkinson and Jess Williams**

132 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

133 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Executive Board meeting on the 14 October 2020 and 21 October 2020 were approved as a correct record.

134 MONTH 6 FINANCE REPORT

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member of Finance and Economic Growth / Lead Clinical GP / Director of Finance which detailed that in the context of the on-going Covid-19 pandemic, the forecasts for the rest of the financial year and future year modelling had been prepared using the best information available but was based on a number of assumptions. Forecasts were inevitably likely to be subject to change over the course of the year as more information becomes available, and there was greater certainty over assumptions.

The Council was forecasting an overspend against the budget of £3.678m. Whilst this forecast included some COVID-19 related pressures, £2.830m of pressure was not related to COVID-19 but reflected underlying financial issues that the Council would be facing regardless of the current pandemic. This included significant financial pressures in Children's Social Care, budget pressures in Adults services and income shortfalls in the Growth Directorate, and in Capital and Financing due to the loss of income from Manchester Airport.

It was reported that Council Tax collection rates had slowly improved since April, but remained 1% below target. If this trend continued then the forecast deficit on Council Tax collection by the end of March 2021 was £1.090m of which the Council's share was £0.912m.

Business Rates collection improved between April and July. This improvement was not sustained in August, with a deterioration in September and overall collection was still significantly below target. If this trend continued then the forecast deficit on Business Rates by the end of March 2021 was £3.299m. There remained a risk that economic conditions, and Tier 3 restrictions, could have a significant negative impact on the sustainability of some businesses, resulting in increased non-payment with minimal opportunity for recovery.

The Director of Finance highlighted that the Council was facing significant pressures on High Needs funding and started the 2020/21 financial year with an overall deficit on the DSG reserve of

£0.557m. The projected in-year deficit on the high needs block was expected to be £3.543m due to the significant increases in the number of pupils requiring support.

With regards to the Capital Programme, assuming that the planned disposals proceeded there was a forecast balance of £8m of capital receipts to fund future capital schemes not reflected in the fully approved programme. Earmarked schemes currently included on the capital programme totalled £44.9m, with a forecast £33.2m of corporate funding needed to finance these schemes compared to a forecast balance of £8m surplus capital receipts.

AGREED

That the Executive Cabinet be recommended to:

- (i) Note the forecast outturn position and associated risks for 2020/21 as set out in Appendix 1.**
- (ii) Note the significant pressures facing budgets, and the progress with savings delivery, as set out in Appendix 2.**
- (iii) Approve the reserve transfers set out on page 24 of Appendix 2.**
- (iv) Note the collection rates for Council Tax and Business Rates as set out in Appendix 3.**
- (v) Approve the budget virements as set out in Appendix 4.**
- (vi) Note the forecast position in respect of Dedicated Schools Grant as set out in Appendix 5.**
- (vii) Approve the write-off of irrecoverable debts for the period 1 July to 30 September 2020 as set out in Appendix 6.**
- (viii) Note the funding position of the approved Capital Programme as set out in Appendix 7. Members are asked to approve the removal of all remaining earmarked schemes and approve a full review and re-prioritisation of the future Capital Programme, to be concluded alongside the Growth Directorate's review of the estate and identification of further surplus assets for disposal.**

135 PLANNING WHITE PAPER CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member of Housing, Planning and Employment / Interim Assistant Director, Planning and Transport which stated that the Government's consultation on the White Paper Planning for the Future sought views on each part of a package of proposals. The White Paper sought reform of the planning system in England to streamline and modernise the planning process, improve outcomes on design and sustainability, reform developer contributions and ensure more land was available for development where it was needed.

The paper covered plan-making, development management, developer contributions and other related policy proposals. Through a series of focused questions, it gave the opportunity for comments to be provided by 29 October 2020 and the proposed responses from the Council were set out in the attached **Appendix 1**.

AGREED

That the Executive Member of Housing, Planning and Employment be recommended to receive and note the responses contained in Appendix 1 as the Councils' response to the Government's Planning White Paper consultation.

136 FORWARD PLAN

AGREED

That the forward plan of items for Board be noted.

CHAIR