

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

2 December 2021

COUNCILLOR ANGIE DICKINSON - CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE

For the period 15 October 2021 to 2 December 2021

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

I continue to make progress on a number of core issues. Major projects in the approved capital programme continue to be reviewed. The Terms of Reference for the Member Major Projects Board have now been reviewed and approved by Cabinet, and will be put into practice at the next meeting on 3 December.

The council's finances continue to be under scrutiny and I have started to look at a number of areas such as Business Rates Pooling, the Council Tax Base and a review of fees and charges and commercial property rents.

The Finance Team continues to be challenged by a number of issues, recruitment to some posts is proving difficult and in the meantime the Council's external auditors are in to conduct their audit of prior years' accounts. Some issues have already been raised that impact on the amount the Council will need to draw down from its balances, although the audit is not yet complete. Our auditors came in on the date scheduled but it is currently doubtful that they will complete the audit on time, which impacts on the work of the Finance Team just as its work programme expands to cover the budget process.

A major feature of my portfolio work has been on the insurance tender, which is quite a complex process. This will culminate in a report to a special meeting of Cabinet on 14 December.

I received the Independent Remuneration Panel's report and looked at a number of options for consideration. This work took second place to the insurance tender.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

With work on insurance concluded I will resume work on the findings of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

I expect to receive the next budget monitoring report imminently. The S.151 Officer is striving to bring budget monitoring reports for consideration on a more frequent basis. We are also considering different ways of presenting this

report so that it is more meaningful to Members and is easier to see a continuing picture throughout the year.

The budget process is gathering momentum. It will conclude when the Financial Plan is presented to Cabinet and Council in February but I expect a lot of options will need to be considered in order to improve the overall revenue position to the end of the 4 year plan. Cabinet will be required to consider a variety of options in order that services are maintained at existing levels whilst complying with constraints on increasing Council Tax, which are not yet concrete. The Chancellor made reference to a maximum 2% increase in his autumn budget but the finite cap of £5 is as yet not certain.

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

6 Oct – Business Rates Pooling
12 Oct – Audit Committee
13 Oct – Town walkabout with Assistant Director – Property
13 Oct – Cabinet Briefing
14 Oct – Council
15 Oct – Insurance Tender Opening
15 Oct – Budget Monitoring
15 Oct – Fly Tipping proposal
15 Oct – West Winch joint member briefing
18 Oct – Assistant Director Personnel re PRP
19 Oct – Portfolio briefing
20 Oct – Cabinet Briefing
21 Oct – Procurement Team update
21 Oct – Portfolio Briefing x 2
21 Oct – CSG training
22 Oct – Review of Major Projects list
27 Oct – Cabinet Briefing
1 Nov – Insurance Tender Evaluation
2 Nov – Insurance Tender Evaluation
3 Nov – Financial Planning
3 Nov – Council Tax Base review
3 Nov – Fees & Charges review
5 Nov – Leader re IRP
5 Nov – Portfolio briefing
10 Nov – Cabinet Briefing
11 Nov – KLACC
12 Nov – LGA Webinar – sustainable finances
17 Nov – Cabinet Briefing
19 Nov – Portfolio briefing
19 Nov – Commercial Rents overview
22 Nov – Treasury Management training
22 Nov – Audit Committee
24 Nov – Portfolio briefing
29 Nov – QEH Covid briefing
1 Dec – Member engagement – Community Hub

1 Dec – Cabinet Briefing