

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET 5 NOVEMBER 2024 FROM THE CORPORATE PERFORMANCE PANEL MEETING HELD ON 16 OCTOBER 2024

CP52: Council Tax Support: Final Scheme for Working Age People for 2025/2026

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The Revenues and Benefits Manager presented the report which presented the results of the Council Tax Support scheme consultation for working age people and the proposed scheme for 2025/2026.

It was noted that there were no changes proposed to the current scheme and it was a statutory requirement to carry out the consultation.

The Chair thanked the Revenues and Benefits Manager for her report and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

Councillor Osborne commented that the consultation responses were as to be expected. He felt that a lot of people had been helped by the scheme and it should be supported.

The Chair commented that as there were no changes proposed to the scheme this year, the implication on budgets had already been factored in and embedded into the Council tax bases and Council finances. He recommended that the scheme continue to be supported.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor Morley commented that this was a significant benefit offered by the Council and outlined the additional benefits that residents received.

RESOLVED: That the Corporate Performance Panel supports the recommendations to Cabinet, as set out below.

Cabinet is asked to note the consultation responses and to recommend to Council that the draft CTS scheme for 2025/2026 is implemented as the final working age CTS Scheme for 2025/2026. This must be agreed by full Council by 31 January 2025 ready for the start of the financial year on 1 April 2025.

CP53: Quarter 1 Corporate Performance Management Report

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The Corporate Performance Officer presented the report which updated on progress against the Council's Corporate Strategy and Key Performance Indicators. Information was presented on progress made up to 30 June 2024. It was noted that project monitoring had now been included in the monitoring report. The projects that were carried out by the Council included RAG ratings within the report and it was noted that those that were carried out in conjunction with partners did not have RAG ratings included.

The Panel was informed that trend arrows had also been included for relevant projects and Key Performance Indicators.

A suite of 'monitor only' indicators were also included and had been reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team.

The Corporate Performance Officer highlighted that the request which had been made by the Panel previously to include indicators on temporary staff had now been incorporated.

The Chair thanked the Corporate Performance Officer for the report and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

In response to a question from Councillor Ryves, attention was drawn to indicators 4.1 to 4.4 which dealt with homelessness, including the numbers using and spend on Bed and Breakfast accommodation.

Councillor Ryves referred to indicator 3.6 which was to decrease revenue spend by 5%. The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor Morley explained that work was ongoing throughout the organisation to reduce spend where possible and a cost management reduction strategy had been created.

The Chair, Councillor Long asked if the target to reduce revenue spend included salaries and it was confirmed that it did not, however the Council did have a process in place for managing vacancies.

Councillor Collingham referred to the targets for delivering new homes and raised concern that due to the increase in new homes required by Government this would be challenging. The Corporate Performance Officer explained that the target for delivery of new homes through Council schemes was performing well, however the target for delivery of new homes across the Borough was out of the control of the Council.

The Leader of the Council reiterated that the Council could not control the delivery of housing from private developers but noted the Council's good track record in delivering new homes. He agreed that the increase in housing needing to be delivered was a concern and the point needed to be made to Government that if there was an expectation to deliver additional housing, there ought to be Government support and funding available to enable delivery.

Councillor Kunes agreed that Central Government support was required and referred to the amount of planning permissions that had been granted, but development had not yet taken place. He commented that developers were often worried that units would not sell, so development had stalled. Councillor Kunes commented that it needed to be made easier for more people to get Mortgages.

The Vice Chair, Councillor Blunt outlined the implications of not meeting the Governments requirements on delivery of housing which included the Council losing the right to making decisions on planning applications.

Councillor Sayers referred to the indicators relating to food waste and recycling and asked why the targets had been elevated for this year. The Corporate Governance Manager explained that targets had been agreed by the Senior Leadership Team, Service Managers and the Portfolio Holder were aimed to be challenging yet achievable.

Councillor Nash referred to indicator 2.10 and explained that the targets were set in tonnes, however it would be more meaningful if percentages of the overall amount of waste collected was included, then broken down by type. The Panel agreed with this as they felt it would provide a better indication of the rate of recycling. The Corporate Governance Manager agreed to liaise with the Waste and Recycling Manager to ensure meaningful targets were included going forward.

Councillor Sayers reminded the Panel that this week was Recycling Week and he had spoken to the Waste and Recycling Manager about ways to increase recycling rates in areas of the Borough where rates were low. The Chair commented that rates had increased when the range of recyclable material accepted had broadened and he suggested that the

Environment and Community Panel may wish to conduct a review on what else could be done to increase recycling rates. The Chair agreed to raise this issue with the Chair of the Environment and Community Panel.

Councillor Osborne asked how the Council engaged with Secondary Schools. The Assistant Director explained that methods of engagement had changed since the Pandemic, however the Council did get involved with Careers Fairs and Work experience opportunities.

Councillor Collingham raised concern at the amount of staff on long term sickness absence and asked what was being done to support staff. The Assistant Director explained that there was a wide range of reasons for long term absences and the Council did proactively manage and engage with staff to offer support such as referrals and ways to help facilitate a return to work.

The Chair referred to a new project that had been added relating to the upgrading of Street Lighting and Council Assets with energy efficient lighting. He was aware that the refit project had been ongoing for quite some time and asked what further work was still left to do. The Portfolio Holder for Biodiversity and Climate Change agreed to provide further detail and statistics to the Panel in writing. The Executive Director explained that with regard to Street Lighting, when columns needed replacing it was ensured that this was carried out in the most efficient way. The Council was also looking at a maintenance schedule, which would include upgrades as required.

Councillor Ryves referred to indicator 1.9 relating to Small and Medium Enterprises (SME's) and the Corporate Governance Manager agreed to provide further information on the amount and value of contracts that were awarded to SME's. The Portfolio Holder for Finance explained that the new Procurement Rules would provide more emphasis on encouraging SME's to apply for contracts so the indicator would become more meaningful once the new rules were in place.

The Leader of the Council agreed that it would be helpful for a breakdown to be provided on the contacts and value of contracts that SME's could benefit from, but noted that there were some larger contracts that could never be fulfilled by SME's.

It was noted that procurement rules and tender exercises would still be required when awarding contracts and the benefits of awarding contracts to SME's included supporting the local economy and providing local jobs.

Councillor Osborne referred to indicators 1.17 and 1.18 relating to car parking tickets sold and asked why the target had been reduced from the previous year. The Corporate Governance Manager agreed to find out and report back to the Panel.

RESOLVED: 1. That the Corporate Performance Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet in that they review the Performance Management Report and comment on the delivery against the Corporate Strategy.

2. The Corporate Performance Panel recommend that Cabinet consider inclusion of the points raised by the Panel in future reports as set out below:

- Note the Panel's concern on the targets relating to the delivery of homes.
- Future reports to include a breakdown of waste and recycling collected, including percentages.
- Future reports to include narrative on the value and amount of contracts awarded to SME's.