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Meeting	Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee
Date	7 December 2020
Present	Councillors Crawshaw (Chair), Fenton (Vice-Chair), Hunter, Hollyer, Rowley, Musson, Pearson, Daubeney (Substitute for Mason) and K Taylor (Substitute for Kilbane)
Apologies	Councillors Kilbane, Mason

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#### **54. Declarations of interest**

Members were invited to declare at this point in the meeting any personal or prejudicial interests they might have in the business on the agenda. None were declared.

#### **55. Exclusion of press and public**

Resolved: That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Annex 2 to Minute No. 61 below (new Stadium Leisure Complex proposal on restaurant units) as it contained exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of particular person(s) as defined in paragraph 3 under Schedule 12A to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006.

#### **56. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9 November 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair on its behalf.

## **57. Public participation**

The Chair reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme,

## **58. Public health update**

The Director of Public Health gave a presentation and update on public health in York relating to the Covid 19 pandemic, details of which had been circulated to Members and which covered:

- Incident rates per 100,000, with York peaking earlier but falling faster than national and regional rates;
- New cases in those over 60+, with York's rate remaining lower than regional and national ones;
- Positivity rates (Pillar 2 only), with York's being just over 2% and contributing to the overall lower rate in York;
- Pillar 2 tests for Covid, showing an increase due to university students tests;
- Contact of people with symptoms, being variable according to peaks and troughs;
- Covid patients in York hospital, with numbers presently falling to 34 in December compared with 68 during November 2020;
- Covid & Excess deaths, being fewer currently than those compared across 2014-18, although there had been an increase in those dying from Covid in recent weeks, that was expected to decrease in measure with the falling no of cases generally in York at the moment;
- Age brackets of cases reported;
- Rates decreasing across all age groups;
- Cases in care homes and schools, being well controlled in York care homes and with no school closures to report;
- Cases falling in local universities;
- Number of cases in the various Medium Super Output Areas of York (MSOA); and
- Local contact tracing, compared to the national test & trace.

Members then questioned the Director on the statistical information provided in relation to auditing deaths retrospectively to determine actual causes during this time, arrangements for students returning after Christmas, the impact of self-isolation in York, lateral flow tests, the rollout of the vaccine and re-enforcing preventative measures during the relaxation of lockdown over the festive break.

Resolved: that the director of public health be thanked for her thorough update and for the presentation provided.

## **59. Finance update and budget setting**

Members considered a report setting out the Council's current financial in general and in relation to the Covid 19 pandemic, as at the Quarter 2 corporate report considered by the Executive on 26 November 2020. The report also set out in some detail the process for setting the Council's budget, giving timelines where possible.

Firstly, the Council's Section 151 Officer then responded to a range of questions from Members regarding the financial position, covering:

Mitigations in place for overspends in Adult Social Care, which was a continuing national trend;  
The Chancellors Spending Review Update and any potential gain for York;  
The potential use of reserves to minimise the impact of any proposed savings at this time on residents;  
the current status of rent arrears;

Further to that debate, Members were minded and agreed to make two referrals to other Scrutiny Committees to look in more detail at specific financial situations identified in the report, as follows:

1. Childrens, Education & Communities Scrutiny Committee to receive further information on the schools grant scenario, which, again, was a national funding problem and which was the subject of national lobbying;
2. Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee to be kept informed of the ongoing peer review work due to

report in January 2021 in relation to admissions to care, reducing the length of hospital stays and improving reablement potential.

Leading into the debate on the Council's budget setting process, the Chair outlined forthcoming proposed Executive Member Sessions specifically convened to initially consider the budget proposals for 21/22 and beyond. At this point, some Members pointed referenced the motion carried at Council on 29 October 2020, which asked Officers to provide all Members with initial budget outline proposals by mid December 2020. The Section 151 Officer undertook to make further enquiries and respond to the Chair outside the meeting.

Resolved: That the report and information be noted and the Section 151 Officer report back to the Chair in relation to outline budget proposals and the motion referred to above.

#### **60. Work plan 2020/21**

The Chair referred to the corporate scrutiny work planning process and to the outline business for forthcoming meetings across the scrutiny function. He gave details of January and February meetings, in general, and specifically advised Members of this Committee of the agreed business for its meetings on 4 January and in February 2021.

Resolved: That the Chair's update be noted.

#### **61. New stadium leisure complex commercial proposal on restaurant units**

After a longer than usual adjournment, Members considered a report setting out the background context to a report being determined by the Executive on 15 December 2020 in relation to the above. They also received a presentation at the meeting more specifically on the options before the Executive in relation to the commercial land deal associated with the complex and proposed restaurant units. At this point, the Chair expressed his frustration, on behalf of the Committee, that the actual report to be considered by the Executive on those options had not been made available to Members of this Committee until the day of this meeting once published with the Executive meeting agenda.

Not only did that undermine the purpose and value of pre-decision scrutiny but it allowed Members no time to prepare and consider the issues in advance of the meeting. As a result, he had provided Members with a longer adjournment to read that report in advance of the presentation and debate.

The Executive Member for Finance & Performance attended the meeting specifically for this item, as responsible portfolio holder and added that the views of scrutiny were being sought on the options and their wider context in terms of social value to the city, prior to consideration by the Executive on 15 December 2020. Annex 2 to the 'Executive' report, circulated earlier in the day to Members, contained the exempt financial modelling.

A general debate on the options then took place with Officers and the Executive Member responded to various questions covering potential risks and costs.

At this point, the meeting went into exempt session as agreed under minute no. above, to receive detailed figures and costings which may contribute to determining the Committee's preferred option..

The Committee then returned to public session, in order to consider and propose its preferred option.

Resolved:            That the Executive Member be thanked for consulting this Committee, pre-decision, on the options associated with the proposals and that the Executive be advised that the Committee broadly supported the proposed recommended Option 1 in the report to the Executive (at its meeting on 15 December 2020), in view of the lower risk profile.

Councillor J Crawshaw, Chair  
[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 8.23 pm].