

MINUTES of a meeting of THE LEICESTERSHIRE PARTNERSHIP REVENUES AND BENEFITS JOINT COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville, LE67 4JU on THURSDAY, 20 JANUARY 2022

Present: Councillor D Bill (Hinckley and Bosworth) (Chairman)

Councillors R Ashman (North West Leicestershire), R D Bayliss (North West Leicestershire), P Dann (Harborough), J Hallam (Harborough) and K Lynch (Hinckley & Bosworth)

Officers: Mrs S O'Hanlon (Leicestershire Partnership - Revenues & Benefits), Mr A Wilson (HBBC), Mrs J Kenny (HBBC), Mr A Barton (NWLDC), Mr C Mason (HDC) and Mrs C Hammond

In attendance:

19. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no interests declared

21. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2021.

By affirmation of the meeting, it was

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2021 be agreed and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

22. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

Ashley Wilson, Section 151 Officer, presented the report which set out the findings of the internal audit of the financial support payments paid under the Test and Trace Isolation Support Payment Scheme.

It was reported that there were no issues or concerns which were required to be brought to t There were no interests declared he meeting's attention.

By affirmation of the meeting, it was

RESOLVED THAT:

The report on the internal audit of the financial support payments paid under the Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme be received and noted.

23. 2022/23 PROPOSED BUDGET

Ashley Wilson, Section 151 Officer, presented the report on the draft budget for 2022/23.

He referred to the pressures on payroll, the contributions from reserves and the significant pressures on the budget.

Clarification was sought and received on the vacancy factor referred to in the report.

Chairman's initials

In answer to a question about the timing of the report and whether it could be adjusted to take account of the timing of the draft budgets of respective authorities, it was noted that there was an understanding that this report would be considered at the January meeting each year to allow time for the details to be factored in. Whilst it may be possible to bring it to an earlier meeting, that would come with its own risk of not including all relevant information. It was also confirmed that the timing of the budget was a constitutional matter so there would need to be a review of the constitution to make a change. Julie Kenny, Monitoring Officer agreed to commence discussions with the Management Board in the first instance with a view to agreeing to a full review of the constitution given that it is five years since it was last looked at. On discussing the constitution, a question was raised regarding the timing and location of future meetings to minimise the impact on attendance through traffic issues and to enable other local authorities to have an opportunity to host the meetings. It was agreed that this would be looked at, but regard does need to be had to the ability to enable dialling in remotely.

By affirmation of the meeting, it was

RESOLVED THAT:

The report on the draft budget for 2022/23 be received and noted.

24. SERVICE PLAN 2022/23

Sally O'Hanlon, Head of Partnership, presented the report on the Service Plan for 2022/23. The Plan detailed the objectives of each of the local authorities and all the key projects which are being proposed, many of which were in relation to business cases given the ongoing work around budgets. An issue which is quite high on the agenda is that of extending the Partnership, which has the full support of the respective Chief Executives, as too is looking at a single employer for the three authorities given the challenges faced, particularly through the pandemic, by having three separate employers.

In answer to a question on the increase in business rates income, it was reported that this was a result of an increase in growth together with an increase in the rates payable; and linked to this is the methodology used by Section 151 Officers to project the returns from Government. It was asked whether an overview could be provided to quantify the impact the growth of warehouses has on the budget.

By affirmation of the meeting, it was

RESOLVED THAT:

The report on the Service Plan for 2022/23 be received and noted.

25. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE TO DECEMBER 2021

Ashley Wilson, Section 151 Officer, presented the report on the financial performance of the Partnership for the period April to December 2021.

It was reported that there were no issues or concerns which were required to be brought to the meeting's attention.

By affirmation of the meeting, it was

RESOLVED THAT:

Chairman's initials

The report on the financial performance of the Partnership for the period April to December 2021 be received and noted.

26. PERFORMANCE SUMMARY REPORT DECEMBER 2021

Sally O'Hanlon, Head of Partnership, presented the report on the performance as of December 2021 and took members through the detail, including the raft of Grant Schemes. Circulated at the meeting was a position summary prior to the pandemic, as comparing with the position twelve months ago was not deemed appropriate given the circumstances. It was noted that the pre-pandemic figures would be included in future reporting to help provide a more accurate comparison.

In response to a question on the likely position of non-domestic rates at the end of the financial year, it was noted that this was extremely difficult to forecast given that we don't know what may happen with businesses on the high street between now and the end of the financial year. It was noted that some businesses are still struggling with payments and that, whilst the outturn cannot be predicted, it won't be without attempts being made towards recovery whilst being sympathetic towards business owners.

By affirmation of the meeting, it was

RESOLVED THAT:

The Performance Summary report to December 2021 be received and noted.

27. FORWARD PLAN

Consideration was given to the committee's work plan.

By affirmation of the meeting, it was

RESOLVED THAT:

The Joint Committee Forward Plan be received and noted.

28. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The committee noted the date of the next meeting being Thursday 21 April to be held at Harborough, the start time of which would be negotiated.

The meeting commenced at 4.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 5.01 pm

Chairman's initials