

Cabinet
Wednesday 27 June 2018

Comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Commission
at its meeting on Monday 25 June 2018
OSC/270

1. Cabinet Agenda Item 5 – Treasury Management Outturn 2017-2018

Comments and Recommendations

The Commission considered report FIN/442 of the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits.

During the discussion, the following points were expressed:

- Investment decisions were based on the Treasury Management Strategy which used Treasury indicators for 2017/18. Councillors were subsequently updated on outcomes through the budget monitoring and mid-year review process, along with capital programme updates.
- Confirmation that investment funds were a mixture of fixed and variable rates.
- Recognition that the Council's financial regulations are in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management and the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.
- Explanation sought and obtained on the detailed holdings including ratings and maturity.
- Agreement that details of reserves could be included in future reports.
- It was noted that external advisors provided information and guidance.
- Recognition that the Council's policy was to invest accordingly whilst providing an appropriate balance between security, liquidity, yield and ethical considerations. Whilst the fourth criterion had been applied, it had not prevented any investment from being undertaken as a result of its consideration.
- It was noted that 68% of investments at year-end were with other local authorities. Whilst this was historically unusual, it is in line with other authorities and is due to the rates being similar or higher than rates offered by banks during 2017/18.

RESOLVED

That the Commission supported the recommendations to the Cabinet.

2. Cabinet Agenda Item 6 – Licensing Two Storey Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

The Commission considered report SHAP/75 of the Head of Strategic Housing and Planning Services.

Councillors made the following comments:

- Queries were raised over the options considered for staffing provision. Confirmation provided that detailed criteria and the selection process would ensure choice of the suitable candidate.
- It would be necessary to work in partnership with other council departments to assist in identifying HMOs, as well as enforcing and monitoring extended powers.
- Clarification was provided with regards to the proposed licence fees.
- Acknowledgement that landlords of HMOs with five or more occupants forming two or more households are required to apply for a licence prior to 1 October 2018. Landlords of licensable HMOs who have not applied for a licence by this date will be committing a criminal offence.
- Whilst parking concerns were raised, it was identified that these were not relevant under the legislation.
- Support for the change in working practices and in general favour of the extended powers.

RESOLVED

That the Commission agreed to support the recommendations to the Cabinet.

3. Cabinet Agenda Item 7 – Crawley Growth Programme Update

The Commission considered report PES/298 of the Head of Economic and Environmental Services.

During the discussion, the following points were expressed:

- Recognition that the Crawley Growth Programme combined various schemes under one budget header. Given the multiple stakeholders, concern was expressed regarding accountability and the complexity of the project. It was requested that an organisation chart be compiled documenting governance, reporting lines and key partners.
- Recognition that large scale projects brought an element of risk. However work was undertaken to ensure this was mitigated through robust programme management.
- Acknowledgement that the Section 106 funds would follow the agreed allocation process.
- Further work would continue in regenerating the town, including focusing on transport enhancements and infrastructure such as cycling improvement and bus shelter real time passenger information installations. It would be important to ensure information was available in real time in an accessible format.
- Recognition that the Programme provided a co-ordinated approach with each partner having its own approval process. The combined approach should result in maximising opportunities for the town.

RESOLVED

That the Commission supported the recommendations to the Cabinet.

Councillor Chris Cheshire
Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Commission
25 June 2018