

Meeting Date: 3rd November 2020

Public/Private*: Public

Title: **Business & Transformation Scrutiny Panel Chairman's Report –
Councillor James Bainbridge**

Business and Transformation Panel meeting on the 3rd September 2020

With the meeting came the Budget Overview and Monitoring Reports for the first financial quarter, covering as they do the initial impact of Covid-19 on to the finances of the Council. Members were particularly interested in the inter-linking and passage of financial support to Councils through the various grant mechanisms, and how they were used to underpin, not just the City Council's financial position, but also that of the business and residential population. As members will appreciate the impact of Covid-19 is a feature that will progress through the budgets over the next series quarterly reports, and not just end after one reporting quarter. Likewise, there is at present an underspend on the capital budget mainly due to lockdown impacting upon our schemes. Of particular note to members, will be how this translates into the flow of financial resources held by ourselves for Disabled Facility Grant projects, and the Panel has requested more information on how this is to proceed with given that Covid-19 and its restrictions will adversely impact on the residential section of the population who rely disproportionately more on DFG's.

We also considered the Sickness Absence Report, which covered 2019/20 and due to the delay in meetings also held additional information on the first quarter of 2020/21. I would encourage members to read the Report which highlights that in this first quarter there has been a considerable and measurable impact on sickness and absence during the period when most (but by no means all) have been working from home. Home working often presents itself in the media as a bit of a 'jape' where you can combine work from home with excessive tea drinking, shortbread eating and easy listening. The Report and particularly the questioning rightly recognises that home working has its downsides, it isn't much fun when you're trying to chase one bar of wifi whilst stuck in a one room bedsit, or trying to work proactively (as one meeting attendee said recently) on a work desk designed for a 7 year old girl.

In addition, we also considered the Risk Register, but made no further references onwards other than noting the contents. Likewise, similar to Health and Wellbeing at their recent

meeting in considering Performance Reports we would like to have more influence over the targets we consider when receiving the information.

Business and Transformation Panel meeting on the 17th September

The Panel held a Special Meeting to discuss the Part B agenda item regarding the Sands Centre Redevelopment Project, where the final contract sum and Covid-19 implications were outlined.

As the item will have already been fully considered by the Council on the meeting of the 13th October, events have overtaken the submission of this Report. Suffice to say though, that I feel the Panel were grateful for the extensive level of detail provided, and I am grateful to the Panel for their detailed consideration of the issue, constructive analysis and questioning.

Full details of the discussions are to be found within the Minute Book

Cllr James Bainbridge
Chairman