

Meeting Date: 4th January 2022

Public/Private*: Public

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

The main item of business was consideration of the budget proposals for the forthcoming financial year. As always, an overview was professionally undertaken by the SMT Officers present. The Panel endorsed the view of Economic Growth relating to Talkin Tarn car parking charging and is to formally request that consideration of a Council Tax freeze is given to the Executive. Members will be aware that this is the first stage of consultation, which will cumulate in the February Council meeting.

After the surprisingly good staff absence figures of the previous year, to quote that noted Chanteuse, Alanis Morissette, the latest figures were like a “black fly in your Chardonnay”, having seemingly unwound to a position worse than occurred during a global pandemic. Additionally, members were concerned over the fall in return-to-work interviews. As you will see from the minutes, assurance was given that these issues were both receiving attention, and that potentially we would see an improving trend in the next tranche of figures. The promise of an improvement is perhaps a “transparent dangling carrot” at this time, one which we can only hope visualises as intended.

Performance figures reflected some Covid-19 impacts on Housing Benefit claims, but with an assurance that the trend was returning to the previous consistent levels of performance. Likewise corporate complaints showed a blip in performance, however the reasons behind these were accountable and, in my view, don't give cause for concern.

Following on from the meeting there have been a couple of changes to the Forward Plan. I have received a request to take out the 6th of January Local Governance Reform (LGR). On reflection I have agreed to this. My reasoning is that as Councillors we have had several emails, updates and Teams meetings on the subject of LGR, in addition the LGR working group has met on at least two occasions since LGR was confirmed. With that in mind, and in the hope that this will continue, I feel at this meeting a LGR report may add little to the process. Additionally, there is also an LGR related item on the Agenda for 31st of March.

Joining the Panel worklist in February will be the Chancerygate Annual KPI report. Members will be aware of significant interest in Chancerygate over the years from the Panel. It is as easy, and probably better, to have Chancerygate matters codified into an agenda item which can be discussed and questioned in the setting of a formal Panel meeting than to have a series of written responses.

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

Cllr James Bainbridge
Chairman