

Meeting Date: 8th September 2020

Public/Private*: Public

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

The consideration of the Draft Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Investment Plan are of course 5-year Plans. With the Covid-19 affecting the local economy, and with it the work of the Council, the focus of discussion was very much related to the here and now, rather than the nuances of our intended position in 2024/5.

The Panel were appreciative of the verbal updates, assurances and candour as to the current financial position and the potential areas where Covid-19 will impact our budgets. At no time did I personally feel that the Council is at risk of financial turmoil similar to the occurrence in Northamptonshire, though as the current situation affects areas from car parking revenue to business rate income, it would be fair to use the aviation analogy of “fastening our seatbelts and putting our trays in the upright position” for yet another spell of unsettling turbulence on our financial budgeting.

If you were to look at my Report last year, though in fairness you've all got better things to do, you would note that a number of budget reporting changes were due to be brought in both at a national and local level at this time. It's fair to say that in the present situation the timetables have been readjusted to account for more immediate concerns.

In terms of the Employee Survey, it was heartening to see that most of the areas were positively up or remaining broadly in line with the previous survey. There were some areas of large swings in relation to the final question, which are being analysed for further, more detailed understanding.

We received the End of Year Performance Reports for 2019/20, which reflected a consistent performance in most area areas. There were signs of Covid-19 restrictions impacting performance in March, however in considering the Report, the wider issues of whether these Reports influence an improvement process or not is a moot point. Within the wider context of the LGA Report, there was mention of Reports being received for noting versus the need for the Panels to set their own agenda more. As a response to this, and the recent Chairman's and Vice-Chairman's Liaison Group, Cllr Birks, the Scrutiny Officer and myself will be assessing the workplan, hopefully with the support of

the Panel members, to try and change the emphasis of the upcoming meetings to better reflect the feedback from the LGA and members.

In considering the Corporate Project Report, there were no areas classed as having significant or overdue issues, with three areas having some relatively limited snagging areas.

The final item was a Part B Report on the asset management of Kingstown and Parkhouse. I would encourage members who are interested in receiving information in this area to request a copy of this Report.

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

Cllr James Bainbridge
Chairman