

Finance and Assets Policy Development Advisory Group
8 NOVEMBER 2021

Present: Councillors: Richard Landeryou (Chairman), Matthew Allen, Tony Bevis, Michael Croker, Ray Dawe, Brian Donnelly, Nigel Jupp and Stuart Ritchie

Apologies: Councillors: Paul Clarke, Frances Haigh and James Wright
Absent: Councillors:

Also Present:

5 **NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes of the meeting held on 13 September 2021 were received

6 **UPDATE ON THE COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL POSITION AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY**

The Head of Finance & Performance updated the meeting on developments since the draft Cabinet report discussed at the previous meeting. It was noted that there were few substantial changes at this point and that further indications would be available only after the December Settlement is announced. Overall the expectation is for little significant change though there are some expecting risk pressures arising from inflation

Key areas discussed by the PDAG included:

- The Council Tax Base is showing an above average growth of around 900 Band D equivalents. There is a risk that the current water neutrality issue may dampen planning applications in future years in the Medium-Term Financial Plan. Government expect councils to apply a 2% increase in the Council-tax rate levied in 2022/23.
- Business rates. These have not fully recovered from the impact of Covid. The Council is expecting to re-join the Business Rates Pool in 2022-23, which shares growth across the member authorities, having elected not to do so in the current year due to the risks associated with Covid-19. It was noted that a number of businesses remain in default on Business rents and there was some discussion of the measures available to the Council for recovery of arrears

7 **FORWARD PLAN EXTRACT FOR THE FINANCE AND ASSETS PORTFOLIO**

The Forward Plan extract was noted

8 **OTHER BUSINESS**

- The meeting was advised that the cost of internal audit was under review and options for joining a framework agreement with other authorities were being examined with a view to a reduction in current costs
- Noted that Asset discussions had not been featured prominently in recent meetings, with a suggestion for a standing item going forward
- The Chairman will invite the Head of Property and Facilities to present to the next meeting

The meeting closed at 6.30 pm having commenced at 5.35 pm

CHAIRMAN