

**Policy Development Advisory Group (Finance and Resources & Performance,  
Customer Service and Communications)**  
**20 MAY 2024**

Present: Councillors: Mark Baynham (Co-Chair), Anthony Frankland (Co-Chair), Tony Bevis, Paul Clarke, Mike Croker, Joy Dennis, Len Ellis-Brown, Warwick Hellowell, Dennis Livingstone, Roger Noel and Jonathan Taylor

Apologies: Councillors: Nigel Emery, Richard Landeryou, Jon Olson and Claire Vickers

Also Present: Councillors: Tony Hogben and Belinda Walters

1 **NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes of the previous meeting of the Finance and Resources PDAG held on the 15 January were received.

2 **MICROSOFT LICENSING PARTNER RESELLER - CONTRACT TENDER PROCESS**

Members received a presentation from the Technology Platforms Manager regarding seeking approval to proceed with the contract tender process for the Microsoft Licencing Partner Reseller. The current contract is due to expire in August 2024.

Members unanimously agreed that this process should be continued.

3 **COMMUNITY EVENT PARKING POLICY**

The Parking Manager presented the proposed draft Community Event Parking Policy to Members.

The report set out a proposal for the PDAG to consider, where the objective was to provide a framework to ensure consistency and fairness when considering requests by event organisers for the use of Horsham District Council car parks.

The proposed policy included an introduction, objectives, criteria for free parking, application process, evaluation for approval, conditions for free parking and monitoring and reviewing.

Members gained further information on the application process, applicants evidencing public liability insurance for events and free parking criteria for community events. The scope of the policy also includes organisers advertising alternative transport means to their event with a view to encourage more environmentally friendly methods.

Following the PDAG, the report would be considered at Cabinet in June.

#### 4 **TRANSFORMATION FUND & PRODUCTIVITY PLAN 2024/25**

The Director of Resources gave a presentation on how Horsham District Council aims to address the questions set out by the Minister for Local Government regarding productivity.

He detailed the actions taken previously under the transformation fund to decrease costs and increase productivity, a previous example of this was the change to fortnightly rubbish collection.

Future plans include a review of some of the Council's service delivery, and potentially replacing the cash receipting system to a more financially efficient option.

The Director of Resources informed Members that a recommendation would be made to Cabinet in June regarding the productivity plan and transformation fund.

Members discussed how productivity and key performance indicators can be measured and monitored across the Council in the future.

Further information would be discussed at a future PDAG.

#### 5 **ANNUAL PLAN 2023/2024 OUTTURN**

The Head of Finance and Performance made a presentation on the 2023/2024 outturn which detailed the items that were met and those not met.

Results would be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny committee on the 12 June. There would also be subsequent updates in November 2024 and the final outturn in June 2025. Shorter summaries would also be provided to Members in quarter one and quarter three of the year.

Members were informed by the Cabinet Member for Performance, Customer Service and Communications that work will commence in September 2024 on the 2025/2026 Annual Plan with a view for it to be approved at Cabinet in January 2025 and at Council in February 2025.

Members discussed some of the items that were not met in the 2023/2024 outturn and how those would be progressed.

Members also requested when the outturn for 2023/2024 would be publicly available and published. Details were planned to be published on the Horsham District Council website following the outturn report to Overview and Scrutiny committee in June.

Further discussion included the Procurement matrix and how this is used by officers during the procurement process to ensure that quality and value for money are both considered when approaching contracts and services.

## 6 **BUSINESS RATES DISCRETIONARY CHARITABLE RELIEF 2025/26**

The Director of Resources gave a presentation on the Discretionary Charitable Relief Scheme for 2025/2026.

Members were reminded that all discretionary schemes require annual approval and that reviewing this at the PDAG provided time for consultation. Information was provided on the current scheme and their recommendation.

Members discussed the inclusion of not-for-profit organisations being included in the scheme. Additionally, Members queried the inclusion of larger charitable organisations in the scheme.

Members unanimously agreed to continue with the scheme as it is currently structured, and agreed with the recommendation.

## 7 **HOUSING BENEFITS MODIFIED SCHEME 2025/26**

The Director of Resources gave a presentation on the Housing Benefits Modified Scheme for 2025/2026.

Members were advised that all discretionary schemes require annual approval and by currently reviewing at the PDAG, enabled time for consultation. Details of the current scheme were provided and recommendations.

Members unanimously agreed to continue with the scheme as it is currently structured and agreed with the recommendations.

## 8 **COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2025/26**

The Director of Resources gave an overview on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2025/2026.

Information was provided on the current scheme and recommendations. Further detail was provided on ways that the scheme could be reviewed and the impact this review could have on council productivity and on those residents currently benefiting from the scheme.

Members discussed the criteria of the scheme and felt that the level of savings affecting eligibility should be in line with the DWP benefits. Additionally, Members discussed working collaboratively with the other precept authorities or scaling back the scheme.

Members unanimously agreed with the recommendation to review the scheme.

Further updates would be provided at future PDAGs.

9 **ADDITIONAL DISCRETIONARY CTRS PAYMENTS IN 2025/26**

Following an overview provided by the Director of Resources, Members unanimously agreed with the recommendation to review the scheme.

10 **FORWARD PLAN EXTRACT FOR THE FINANCE AND RESOURCES PORTFOLIO**

The Forward Plan extract for the Finance & Resources & Performance, Customer Service and Communications portfolio was noted.

*The meeting closed at 7.00 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm*

CHAIRMAN