

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board

9 March 2022

-: Present :-

Councillor Douglas-Dunbar (Chairwoman)

Councillors Atiya-Alla, Barrand, Brown, Bye (Vice-Chair), Mandy Darling, Foster, Kennedy and Loxton

(Also in attendance: Councillors Brooks, Cowell, Steve Darling and Long)

44. Opening

The meeting was opened with a minute's silence for a serving member of staff, Amanda Coote, who had sadly passed away.

45. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 9 February 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairwoman.

46. Review of Torbay's Housing Crisis

The Scrutiny Lead Member for Community and Corporate Services, Councillor Foster, presented the submitted draft report on the Review of the Torbay's Housing Crisis. Members thanked the Chairwoman, Councillor Foster, and the Torbay's Housing Crisis Review Panel for their work on the report.

Resolved (unanimously):

That the Report to the Cabinet on the Review of Torbay's Housing Crisis be approved subject to the following:

- Paragraph 2.10 - remove 32% and replace with 'a significant amount'; and
- Paragraph 2.11 being updated with the correct date for the Board considering the five different options for areas for housing growth to inform and update the Local Plan (13 April 2022).

47. Budget Monitoring Quarter 3 2021/22

The Board considered and noted the budget monitoring report which provided a high level budget summary of the Council's forecasted revenue and capital income

and expenditure for the financial year 2021/2022. The report was based on figures as at the end of Quarter 3.

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Cowell, advised that the Council had received clarification in terms of the current crisis and war in Ukraine which suggested that the Council would not have any direct exposure to risks in respect of our investments.

The Board asked questions in respect of the following which were responded to at the meeting by the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Cowell, and the Deputy Head of Finance, Sean Cremer:

- SWISCo remained under financial pressure what modelling was being undertaken to address this and what was the worst case scenario.
- Were drivers put under a contract when they were trained to ensure they would not be trained and then leave to join another company.
- Concern over the risks associated with the Council's wholly owned companies and the Planning Service and what was being done to mitigate the risks (this was also picked up through a recent Audit Committee meeting).
- If the data was based on cash or accruals.
- If the data could include a column to show what the opening budgets were and where they were now as some of the business units had changed.
- The impact of the £9 million deficit in the Higher Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant and what action was being taken to address this.
- The number of children in out of area placements had reduced but now there were 24 placements, what was the cause of this and what was being done to address this.
- Residential placements for cared for children had reduced to 291 through the Independent Fostering Agency were the other children with in-house foster carers.
- Was it intended for SWISCo to grow their commercial trading.
- What was the impact on the delay of the solar farms and what was being done to address this.
- There was concern over the budget for Torre Abbey and the forecast showed a £200,000 shortfall this year, how much of the shortfall related to the café (a breakdown of the shortfall would be circulated to the Board).
- What was the situation regarding Civil Enforcement Officers and what action was being taken to address this.

Resolved (unanimously):

That a review of the governance and risk around the Council's wholly owned companies be added to the Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme for 2022/2023.