



RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

BURNLEY TOWN HALL

DATE: 28/01/2014

PRESENT

MEMBERS

Councillor Stephen Large in the Chair

Councillors Margaret Brindle, Joanne Greenwood, David Heginbotham, Anne Kelly, Lian Pate and Andy Tatchell.

OFFICERS

Helen Seechurn - Director of Resources
Phil Moore - Head of Finance and Property Management
Caroline Lee - Head of Revenues and Benefits
Chris Gay - Policy and Performance Manager
Eric Dickinson - Democracy Officer

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor Mark Townsend - Executive Member for Resources and Performance Management

47.	Apologies
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Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Marcus Johnstone and Councillor Margaret Lishman.

48.	Minutes of Last Meeting
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The Minutes of the last meeting held on the 3rd December 2013 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

49.	Declarations of Interest
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Councillor Lian Pate declared a personal interest in the item relating to the Council's Property Portfolio Update.

50.

The Executive's Notice of Key Decisions and Private Meetings

Members considered the Executive Notice of Key Decisions and Private Meetings from 17th January 2014 as it related to the remit of this Committee.

Regarding the Housing Association Sites and Housing Growth Sites Members asked about the timing of the decisions in relation to the ongoing consultation about the Local Plan.
Councillor Mark Townsend indicated a linkage .

**IT WAS
AGREED**

That the report be noted.

51.

Council Tax Collection Rates Q3

Caroline Lee reported on the Council Tax collection rate for 2013/14.

She emphasised an increase of £2.3M of Council Tax to be collected following changes to Council Tax in 2013/14 and that, although Council Tax collection was down by 1.71% at the end of Quarter 3 compared to last year, £1.3M more had been collected so far this year compared to the same point last year.

Members made the following points;

- How many people were paying the 150% Council Tax rate?
Caroline Lee indicated that collection rates in other categories were lower than that for the 150% rate, and that collection rates for different category headings would be included in the Quarter 4 report.

**IT WAS
AGREED**

That the report be noted.

52.

Property Portfolio Update

Phil Moore outlined the position regarding the management of the Council's property assets as set out in the Council's Asset Register.

He emphasised that in 2012/13 the Council's investment assets produced a net income of £1.043 M, representing a yield of 7%.

He indicated that the Council actively managed its assets with a view to getting best value for money, particularly now as part of the transformational project to access government funding.

Members made the following points;

- Who carried out the Council's valuations?
Phil Moore stated that unless an external surveyor was being used exceptionally for a larger scheme, the Council would regularly revalue 20% of its portfolio each year and that it would take a pragmatic view on the need for revaluation of each category of the portfolio.
- Would valuation of the operational assets relating to the two Sports centres referred to and the Mechanics be affected by the Leisure Trust and lease arrangements?
Phil Moore stated that any changes to the two Sports Centres or the Mechanics operational assets status as a result of the Leisure Trust would be reflected on the Council's balance sheet.
- Where were the seven Community Centres referred to in the list of operational assets, what was their level of funding by the Council, and did they all have valid tenancy agreements?
Phil Moore indicated that he would confirm with Members the full list of seven Community Centres, that minimal funding from the Council went to Community Centres on issues such as upkeep to buildings but that there was not a consistent approach due to different levels of management involvement, and that there were ongoing discussions regarding leases and their evolution and the need for them to be fit for purpose and he would provide more precise information to Members.
- How much was Nicholas Street costing the Council in non domestic rates?
Phil Moore stated that the cost to the Council was virtually nil as the Council was receiving listed building relief on Nicholas Street.

That the report be noted.

**IT WAS
AGREED**

53. Local Government Pension Scheme
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Helen Seechurn reported on the outcome of the auto-enrolment process and the actions taken to promote membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

She indicated that from 41 employees who had been auto-enrolled, 24 subsequently opted out with most being on Grade 5 or below and most being under 40 years old.

She also highlighted that the LGPS was changing in April 2014 and introducing a 50/50 option to allow flexibility to pay half of contributions for half the pension whilst retaining the full ill health and life cover benefits.

Members made the following points;

- Could the Council promote the roadshow planned by the Lancashire Scheme provider scheduled for 27th February 2014, and could employees be provided with information about the Scheme before they were asked to decide about their pension status?
Helen Seechurn agreed to confirm with Members information about steps taken by the Council to inform employees about the LGPS.

IT WAS That the report be noted.
AGREED

54. Work Programme 2013/14

IT WAS That the draft Work Programme of Resources Scrutiny Committee for
AGREED 2013/14 be as set out below;

<u>DATE OF MEETING</u>	<u>AREAS TO BE CONSIDERED</u>
For Information Only BSP 4 th February 2014	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2013/14 Cycle 3 Capital Budget Monitoring 2013/14 Cycle 3
2 nd Meeting-Joint Services Legal Services Working Group - date tbc 25 th March 2014	Progress the Review of Legal Services Joint Working Apprentices Update Impact of Localism Agenda on Asset Management Sickness absence (Q3) Model of service delivery for Back Office Services
6 th May 2014	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2013/14(Q4) Capital Budget Monitoring 2013/14 (Q4) Treasury Management- 2013/14 Sickness absence (Q4) Council Tax Collection Rate (Q4)