

Thurrock Borough Council

Finance Recovery Board

Minutes – Tuesday 6 December 2022

Attendees

Nicole Wood – Essex County Council Commissioner (Chair)

Cllr Mark Coxshall – Leader, Thurrock Council

Cllr John Kent – Opposition Group Leader, Thurrock Council

Ian Wake – Acting Head of Paid Service, Thurrock Council

Jonathan Wilson – Acting Section 151 Officer, Thurrock Council

Mark Bradbury – Interim Director of Place, Thurrock Council

Debbie Knopp – Director of Transformation, Essex County Council

Patrick McDermott – Chief of Staff to the Commissioners, DLUHC

Andy Allsopp – Head of Profession Communications, Essex County Council

Apologies

Gavin Jones – Essex County Council Commissioner

Cllr Graham Snell – Cabinet Member for Finance, Thurrock Council

1. Welcome and Introductions

- 1.1. Nicole Wood welcomed the Board. All attendees had received papers.

2. Minutes and actions of the last meeting

- 2.1. The Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.
- 2.2. In the discussion that followed about outstanding actions, Jonathan Wilson provided a verbal update on the procurement of external advisors and Nicole Wood raised that the development of a timeline for Cabinet and Scrutiny engagement on all aspects of the budget was now urgently required to ensure an effective budget process.

Action: Timetable to be agreed for engagement on the budget with Cabinet and Scrutiny members.

Action: Timetable to be agreed for engagement on the capital programme with Cabinet and Scrutiny members.

3. Workstreams Update

- 3.1. Jonathan Wilson provided an update on the financial workstreams.
- 3.2. There was a discussion around increased capacity on capital that would further develop this work.
- 3.3. The Board discussed the importance of the development of the multiyear model for understanding of the scale of the issues and discussions with DLUHC. Nicole Wood noted in particular that it is important that FRB members own the assumptions made in that model, with particular regard to asset sales, divestments and council tax.
- 3.4. The Board reflected that Commissioners need to meet BDO as a priority to discuss the MRP policy and the workstreams should reflect this.

Action: Meeting to be arranged to take members through the finance model ahead of the meeting with DLUHC to ensure understanding and ownership of the assumptions.

Action: Meeting with BDO to be scheduled on MRP policy.

4. DRA

- 4.1. Jonathan Wilson provided an update on the DRA.
- 4.2. 84 percent of savings are delivered or on target.

5. Savings

- 5.1. Jonathan Wilson provided an update on savings. Savings have been reassessed and further have been identified.
- 5.2. In the discussion that followed, Nicole Wood highlighted the need for both Commissioner and member review of these savings and there was a further discussion about how these savings link to the wider transformation agenda across Thurrock Council.

Action: Commissioners and members to review savings as part of the budget process.

Action: FRB to refer the discussion on the wider transformation programme to IRB for further consideration.

6. Draft s114

6.1. The Board consider the draft report of the s114 notice ahead of publication.

7. Assets update

7.1. Mark Bradbury provided an update to the Board on the work on the Council's assets.

7.2. In the discussion that followed it was noted that there is further work required to develop the approach to disposals and the importance of the link to the financial model was raised.

8. Decisions taken

8.1. There were no decisions to note since the last meeting.

9. Any other business

9.1. There being no other business, the meeting closed.