

CABINET – 29 APRIL 2020

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS PURSUANT TO REVISED CABINET PROCEDURE RULE 11.1

AGENDA ITEM 8 – UPDATE ON FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

No questions were submitted in advance of the meeting in line with the revised meeting Procedure Rules.

Councillor Gunner requested and the Cabinet permitted him to ask the following question.

Q1 From Councillor Gunner to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Dr Walsh

Q1 With regard to the increased costs to the Council and we are aware of these and reduced income, where are we seeing reduced expenditure and are there any areas where we are looking in terms of saving some money to improve Council resilience?

A1 We continue to provide services and look to mitigate losses and it is possible that there will be revised budget being presented later in year to cope with the fallout from this emergency. There will also be significant changes into next year's budget depending upon on what further financial support will be coming through from Central Government who are well aware of efforts on local government nationally.

The Chief Executive added to this response. There would be some savings made but in the bigger picture the Council would suffer huge losses to the tune of £2.4m. Printing costs will be down, and travel expenses will be down these are some savings but are small in comparison to the big picture. The main issue is the budget going forward. We had a budget signed off by the Council in February 2020, which now has very little common sense going forward given the position we are now in. The Group Head of Corporate Support and his team are looking at the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and will be revising this and we will need to bring some revised issues back to Cabinet in the Autumn before we prepare the next budget. The Council's Finance Team have also had to juggle the pressures of Covid 19 whilst at the same time working with the Council's External Auditors in closing down last year's accounts and so have been working flat out on two things happening at the same time.

The Group Head of Corporate Support added that savings related to 'pennies' in comparison to what the Council's losses would be. These were really significant and the whole budget this year would depend upon Central Government support and contributions and what the length of the lock down period would be.