

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

24 July 2019

COUNCILLOR ERIC SEWARD - CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, REVENUES & BENEFITS

For the period June to July 2019

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Final Accounts – as per my last update the finance team have now completed the 2018/19 draft accounts and these are available on the council's website via the 'accounts' page which can be accessed [here](#).

The Governance, Risk and Audit Committee (GRAC) and indeed wider Members received training on the accounts on the 9 July which was well attended prior to the review meeting scheduled for 23 July.

However while the external audit process commenced at the start of July as planned, the capacity issues previously flagged regarding Ernst and Young are now going to impact on the final sign off of the accounts.

At the present time it is anticipated that the GRAC will review the accounts and draft audit findings but the final sign off of the accounts will be done under delegation subject to a satisfactory final audit report.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Spending Review, Fair Funding Review and the Local Retention of Business Rates – further to the detailed update back in June there is nothing further to add at the current time in relation to these ongoing reviews.

Business rates – a preliminary hearing date of the 4 November 2019 has been set to start to consider the High Court challenge which has been launched by 14 NHS Trusts. Officers will continue to monitor the position and provide updates as the case progresses. It is incredibly difficult at the present stage to try and assess the financial impact this would have on the Council due to the countywide business rate pooling arrangements. The pool does contain a £1m 'volatility fund' and the Council also has the Business rates Reserve which holds a further £2.4m to help mitigate against any financial impact should the case be won by the NHS. Further details can be found within the following article accessed [here](#).

2019/20 Business Rates Pilot – the monitoring of the business rates pilot is due to commence from August and this will enable us to see how the pilot is progressing. However as indicated within previous reports this additional one off income will only be taken account of once the final year end position is established.

Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) – The MTFS will be presented to Members later in the autumn and will consider the financial challenges facing the Council over the next 4 years. This work will be used to inform the budget preparation for 2020/21.

Budget training – the finance team are looking to schedule in some further training sessions for Members on the budget process later in the year following the success of the sessions provided last autumn.

3 Meetings attended

Nothing further to report.