

<b>Governance &amp; Resources Scrutiny Commission</b> 22 <sup>nd</sup> February 2016 <b>Cabinet Question Time</b>	Item No <b>6</b>
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### **Outline**

In the municipal year the Commission holds question time sessions with the Cabinet and Senior Officers to ask questions about performance and decision-making within the Council related to their portfolio areas.

#### Invited guest

Cllr Taylor has lead responsibility for revenues and benefits, audit, procurement, pensions and customer services.

The Commission submitted in advance the following questions:

#### **Council Finance**

1. What is the prospect for the Council's finances in light of a more positive local government grant settlement for 2016/17? Has the council's finances reached crisis point? Do difficult decisions need to be made about service provision or radical service change?
2. What are the recent trends in council tax and debt collection rates and how is the council balancing the need to collect with the need to support those who are struggling to pay, particularly in light of welfare reform and other pressures?
3. Does the Council have a good understanding of the future risks and opportunities presented by changes in land values to the capital programme and the council's overall financial position?
4. In relation to the Discretionary Housing Payment budget and the financial pressure being placed on the Council by Temporary Accommodation - how sustainable is this, what more we can do, and what is the potential impact on other services?

#### **Ethical investment - in particular pension investment (consistent with the Council being a fair trade borough)**

5. In relation to the Council's pension investments, the Commission wishes to understand how much latitude the Pensions Committee has in directing the focus of its investment considering its fiduciary duty to pension fund members? The Commission enquires if the Council's fair

trade status is at odds with its pension fund investments and has it considered divesting from non-fair trade investments?

### **Procurement**

6. How does the Council ensure its procurement process supports local small businesses?

### **Action**

The Commission to hold a Q&A session with Cllr Taylor about services and decisions within his portfolio.