

Decisions of the Budget and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee

25 October 2012

Members Present:-

Councillor Brian Coleman (Chairman)
Councillor Joan Scannell (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Geof Cooke	Councillor Hugh Rayner
Councillor John Marshall	Councillor Alan Schneiderman
Councillor Arjun Mitra	Councillor Reuben Thompstone
Councillor Alison Moore	Councillor Andrew Strongolou (Present as substitute for Councillor Brian Gordon)

Also in attendance

Councillor Robert Rams – Cabinet Member for Customer Access and Partnerships
Councillor Dean Cohen – Cabinet Member for Environment

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Brian Gordon

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved that:

That the minutes of the meeting of the 19th September 2012 be approved.

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Brian Gordon who was substituted by Cllr Andrew Strongolou

3. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

None.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (IF ANY)

None.

5. QUARTER 1 CORPORATE FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE 2012/13

The Committee received the 2012/13 Quarter One Corporate Finance and Performance Report with Cabinet Members Cllr Robert Rams [Cabinet Member for Customer Access and Partnerships] and Cllr Dean Cohen [Cabinet Member for Environment] in attendance to respond to questions raised in advance of the meeting by the Committee.

Also present to respond to questions were Stephen Evans, Assistant Director Strategy; John Hooton, Assistant Director Strategic Finance; and Pam Wharfe, Interim Director Environment, Planning and Regeneration.

The Committee considered the responses provided by Cabinet Members and received further clarifications on the following issues:

Libraries – The committee sought clarification as to why the saving of £100,000 which had been delivered as a result of the closure of Friern Barnet was listed as a risk in the Q1 report.

In response Cllr Rams reaffirmed that the savings had been delivered. Cllr Rams also informed the Committee that the funding for the temporary library at the Arts Depot had been carried over from last years library budget after permission had been given to the service to carry over an underspend.

The Committee were informed that risk to savings associated with Hampstead Garden Suburb would be removed for quarter two following the establishment of a successful community run library.

Environment, Planning and Regeneration - The Committee were informed that the projected overspend for Environment, Planning and Regeneration for Quarter Two would be reduced to approximately £1 million from the Quarter One overspend of £1.68 million.

- **Street lighting** – In addition to the answer provided in advance of the meeting in relation to the £200,000 saving identified against street lighting the Committee were informed that further contingencies were in place including holding a number of vacancies in the Directorate so that savings could be achieved from other sources if required.
- **Parking** - The Cabinet Member for Environment provided the Committee with an overview of the status of the four streams of parking income.
- The Committee were informed that the variance for the Special Parking Account in Quarter Two had been reduced to £372,000. The reduced variance was supported through work undertaken to improve the recovery of parking income.
- The Committee received guidance that in terms of achieving expected revenue it was not possible to set the provider a target for issuing PCNs with effective contract management required to ensure the delivery of an efficient service.

Actions –

- **Cllr Cooke to be provided the opportunity to review the NSL Contract**
- **Cllr Schneiderman to be provided the opportunity to review the Parking Recovery Plan including sections that may be subject to exemption restrictions**
- **Cllr Moore to be provided with details of how many challenges to PCNs relate to Signs and Lines**

Council Contracts – In terms of the £440,000 efficiency savings noted as being at risk in Q1 [as set out in paragraph 9.2.7 of the CRC Report] the Committee was informed that not all of the savings would be realised this financial year.

Resolved that:

The Committee note the 2012/13 Quarter One Corporate Finance and Performance Report

6. COMMERCIAL PROPERTY INCOME

Judith Ellis, Valuation Manager, presented the Committee with a report that detailed the income received from the Council's commercial estate including a summary of void properties and costs of maintaining empty properties.

Ms Ellis provided a clarification to the Committee regarding risk management issues highlighted in the report which related to the potential implications of delays to disposing of assets as a result of the Community Right to Bid provisions set out in the Localism Act 2011.

The Committee were informed that in relation to the disposal of assets should the Council receive an expression of interest in an asset that was included on the Council's list of "Assets of Community Value" then the subsequently arising moratorium on the sale of the asset could result in a risk of increased costs to the Council as a result of having to maintain the asset during the moratorium.

Ms Ellis provided the Committee with a brief overview of the list of void properties contained within the report.

Resolved that:

The Committee note the Report.

7. MEMBERS' ITEMS (SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULE 9) (IF ANY)

None.

8. ADVANCE NOTICE OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

Resolved that:

The committee note the Advance Notice of Executive Decisions.

9. BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the forthcoming scrutiny of the NSCSO and DRS contracts. The Chairman requested that members bring forward to the Committee details of outside bodies whose advice the Committee could draw upon in terms of contract scrutiny.

Resolved that:

The Committee note the Forward Work Programme

10. ANY OTHER ITEMS THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

None.

The meeting finished at 8.20 pm