

Decisions of the Policy and Resources Committee

11 June 2018

Members Present:-

Councillor Richard Cornelius (Chairman)

Councillor Dean Cohen
Councillor Anthony Finn
Councillor Ross Houston
Councillor Alison Moore
Councillor Sachin Rajput

Councillor Barry Rawlings
Councillor David Longstaff
Councillor Peter Zinkin
Councillor Arjun Mitra
Councillor Kath McGuirk

Also in attendance

Councillor Gabriel Rozenberg (as substitute)

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Daniel Thomas

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2018 be agreed as a correct record.

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Daniel Thomas who was substituted for by Councillor Gabriel Rozenberg.

3. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND NON PECUNIARY INTERESTS (IF ANY)

Councillor Arjun Mitra declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 13 – 'Authorisation to participate in the Mayor of London's REFIT programme', as he is an employee of the GLA.

4. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER (IF ANY)

None.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS (IF ANY)

Details of the questions asked and the published answers were provided with the agenda papers for the meeting. Verbal responses were given to supplementary questions at the meeting.

Public comments were made by Mr John Dix on Agenda Item 7– Business Planning 2018-22.

6. MEMBERS' ITEMS (IF ANY)

Councillor Barry Rawlings introduced his Member's Item on Universal Credit, requesting that a report is brought to the October Policy & Resources Committee reviewing the first five months of the full Universal Credit Service in Barnet, including operations and impact on residents.

RESOLVED That the above request be agreed and incorporated within the committee work programme.

7. BUSINESS PLANNING

The Committee considered the report.

Councillor Barry Rawlings moved an additional recommendation as follows: 'That as a matter of urgency all functions relating to strategic finance come back in house'.

Councillor Richard Cornelius requested that the proposed additional recommendation be amended to request that the Business Planning report due to be considered at the July Policy and Resources Committee meeting includes an option to bring strategic finance functions in house in order that the recommendation could be supported by appropriate analysis. This was duly agreed. The amended motion was seconded by Councillor Kath McGuirk and unanimously agreed by the Committee.

RESOLVED:

- 1. Notes the draft 2017/18 outturn position described in paragraph 1.2.1;**
- 2. Approves the New Homes Bonus Reserve reassignment described in paragraph 1.2.5 and the associated proposed policy change set out in paragraph 1.2.6;**
- 3. Notes the value of General Fund Balances described in paragraph 1.2.8;**
- 4. Notes the current and forecast values of reserves set out in Table 1;**
- 5. Notes the remaining in year pressure in 2018/19 of £9.5m as per paragraph 1.2.12;**
- 6. Approves the transfers from contingency as set out in paragraphs 1.2.14-1.2.18;**
- 7. Approves the debt write offs over £5,000 described in paragraphs 1.2.20 and 1.2.24;**
- 8. Approves the revisions to the capital programme set out in paragraphs 1.3.3-4 and Appendix B;**

9. Notes that proposals will be prepared to delete capital projects to fit within the approved budget, for consideration at an additional Policy and Resources Committee meeting proposed to be scheduled in July;
10. Notes the current capital receipts position set out in paragraph 1.3.7;
11. Notes that officers are exploring options to meet the cashflow pressure resulting from additional borrowing required to finance the Thameslink Brent Cross West station until the anticipated Business Rate increase repays scheme costs as set out in paragraphs 1.4.3-6;
12. Notes the gap within the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 2022, as set out at Appendix A and the assumptions underpinning this in para 1.5.22;
13. Notes the process for developing a new corporate plan and MTFS set out in paragraphs 1.5.19-21;
14. Notes the consultation results in Appendix C pertaining to a policy for offering council tax relief to care leavers based on guaranteed relief for their first two years of independent living and a presumption in favour of granting relief should it be required after that up to age 25; and recommend the policy to Council, to be implemented and backdated to 1 April 2018; and
15. That the Business Planning report due to be considered at the July Policy and Resources Committee meeting includes an option to bring strategic finance functions in house.

8. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

The Committee considered the report.

RESOLVED That Barnet's revised Local Development Scheme, as set out in Appendix A to this report, be approved for publication.

9. STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Committee considered the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the committee notes the content of the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) (attached at Appendix A).

2. That the Committee approves the draft SCI as the basis for public consultation. The SCI will then return to the Committee with the consultation responses.
3. That the Committee delegates authority to the Deputy Chief Executive to make any necessary changes of a minor nature to the draft SCI in consultation with the Leader prior to public consultation.

10. SARACENS LOAN AGREEMENT

The Chairman noted this item was deferred.

11. CBAT LICENSING TO EXTERNAL PARTIES

The Committee considered the report.

RESOLVED:

1. To delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive to enter into a legal agreement (joint venture) with Simetrica Ltd for the further development and trading of the Community Benefit Assessment Tool.
2. To delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive to enter into fee paying licensing agreements with external organisations.

12. IMPLEMENTATION OF IT STRATEGY: FULL BUSINESS CASE FOR NEXT PHASE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF MICROSOFT SHAREPOINT ONLINE FOR DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

The Committee considered the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee approves this phase of implementation of Microsoft SharePoint Online technology at a capital cost of £276,000 and revenue costs of £25,000. This is a maximum cost that may reduce following the technical assurance of the proposal.
2. That the Committee notes the intention to commission Leidos, the council's contracted IT technical assurance partner, to scrutinise the technical proposals before funding is released or contracts are signed.
3. That the Committee delegates authority to the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chairman of Policy and Resources Committee, to enter into contracts and take all other necessary actions to implement the recommendations of this report.

13. AUTHORISATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MAYOR OF LONDON'S REFIT PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the report.

Councillor Barry Rawlings moved that an additional recommendation 4 be added: 'That the council writes to the Mayor of London to thank him for the scheme.' Councillor Richard Cornelius seconded the motion, which was unanimously agreed by the Committee.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Committee resolve that Barnet Council participates in the Mayor of London's RE:FIT programme to secure energy savings across Barnet Council assets.**
- 2. That the Committee approve the decision to apply for a 0% interest Salix loan for energy saving works, subject to due diligence.**
- 3. That the Committee approve the decision for Barnet Council to utilise the GLA's fast track procurement framework for the works.**
- 4. That the council writes to the Mayor of London to thank him for the scheme.**

14. CONTRACT VARIATIONS AND EXTENSIONS

The Committee considered the report.

Councillor Kath McGuirk noted that a supplementary public question had raised the issue of whether the council would seek to recoup the costs of the financial review work from contractors at a later date. She then moved an additional recommendation: 'That the council seek to recoup the cost of the financial review work from contractors'. The motion was duly seconded and unanimously agreed by the Committee.

RESOLVED:

- 1. To vary the direct award contract to Grant Thornton for financial review work up to 30 April 2019 with a value of up to £500,000.**
- 2. To enable increased use of the LGRP framework for interim staff, varying the value up to £500,000 up to the end of the LGRP framework as allowed under the framework.**
- 3. That the council seek to recoup the cost of the financial review work, as referred to in recommendation 1, from contractors.**

15. EMERGENCY PLANNING

The Committee considered the report.

Emergency Planning Officer agreed to re-circulate advice to Members regarding the role of councillors in an emergency situation.

Councillor Peter Zinkin noted that the reference to 'formal identification of lessons' in paragraph 1.16 of the report should more accurately read 'no final identification of lessons.' This was agreed by officers.

RESOLVED That the Committee note the report.

16. END OF YEAR 2017/18 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Committee considered the report. It was noted that Theme Committees will also receive detailed reports relevant to their areas of responsibility.

The Deputy Chief Executive agreed to circulate a breakdown of £0.776m overspend for the Estates Managed Budgets referred to on page 233-34 of the agenda pack.

The Leader noted a typographical error on page 298 of the Agenda pack under 'Libraries Transformation'. It was noted that the statement "Fire risk assessments were undertaken by the Fire Brigade, not the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). It was noted that this followed the Trade Unions raising concerns with the HSE about a few named libraries and the Fire Brigade, as the enforcing authority, carried out visits.

The Committee noted that there would be further consideration regarding the appropriate mechanism for Theme Committees to provide feedback to Policy and Resources Committee on performance issues.

RESOLVED:

- 1. The Committee is asked to scrutinise the overall annual performance of the council, in relation to the Corporate Plan and Theme Committee Commissioning Plans.**
- 2. The Committee is asked to note the 2017/18 revenue position, as detailed in paragraphs A.6-A.7 and in Appendix B.**
- 3. The Committee is asked to note the additions and deletions (which include virements) and accelerations and slippages in the capital programme, as detailed in paragraphs A.8-A.9 and in Appendix C.**
- 4. The Committee is asked to note the savings delivered in 2017/18, as detailed in paragraph A.10.**
- 5. The Committee is asked to note the agency costs for 2017/18, as detailed in paragraph A.11.**

6. The Committee is asked to note the strategic risks, as detailed in paragraph A.18, and the corporate risk register, which includes high level service/joint risks in Appendix A.

17. COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee noted the forward work programme, and noted that Members would be consulted on the date of an additional meeting in July 2018.

18. ANY OTHER ITEM(S) THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

There were none.

The meeting finished at 9.02 pm