

Decisions of the Policy and Resources Committee

9 December 2021

Members Present:-

Councillor Daniel Thomas (Chairman)
Councillor David Longstaff (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Dean Cohen
Councillor Geof Cooke
Councillor Caroline Stock
Councillor Val Duschinsky
Councillor Ross Houston
Councillor Arjun Mittra

Councillor Alison Moore
Councillor Sachin Rajput
Councillor Barry Rawlings
Councillor Gabriel Rozenberg
Councillor Peter Zinkin

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2021 be agreed as a correct record.

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

None.

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

Councillor Mittra declared an interest in item 11 Delivery and Outcomes Framework for Barnet Plan - Q2 2021-22 as he was connected.

4. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER (IF ANY)

None.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS (IF ANY)

Details of the questions asked and the answers provided were published and circulated at the meeting. Verbal responses were given to supplementary questions at the meeting.

6. MEMBERS' ITEMS (IF ANY)

None.

7. BUSINESS PLANNING (BUDGET 2022/23, MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2022-26), AND BUDGET MANAGEMENT 2021/22

The Chairman then introduced the report which provided an update following the Autumn Budget and Spending Review (SR21) on 27 October 2021. The report sets out the latest estimates and assumptions on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2022-26, savings and income generation plans, fees and charges and the capital programme

The report sought Committee approval for budget management decisions for 2021/22, required as part of normal business in line with the Financial Regulations.

During discussion the Committee unanimously agreed to amend recommendation 2 as follows:

The Chairman moved a Approves delegated authority to the Executive Director of Resources (S151 Officer) to amend the MTFs in line with the 2022/23 Local Government Finance Settlement *and other rates*, to enable the 2022/23 Budget Consultation process to commence as discussed in paragraph 5.9.

Following consideration of the item, the Chairman moved to vote on the recommendations in the report as amended.

The vote was recorded as follows:

For	7
Against	6
Abstentions	0

The Committee RESOLVED

Regarding the medium term financial strategy:

- 1. To note the latest update on the MTFs further to budget submissions from council services and the information contained in the Chancellor's Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021. This includes the budget proposals (savings, income generation, and pressures) for 2022/23 and later years. This is detailed in this report and in appendix A;**
- 2. To delegated authority to the Executive Director of Resources (S151 Officer) to amend the MTFs in line with the 2022/23 Local Government Finance Settlement and other rates, to enable the 2022/23 Budget Consultation process to commence as discussed in paragraph 5.9;**
- 3. To approve the proposed fees and charges for referral to council, including proposed rent increase in line with Government policy for existing council tenants for social dwellings and affordable rent dwellings, proposed rent increase for temporary accommodation and proposed service charges and garage rents to take effect from 1st April 2022, as set in appendix C;**
- 4. To note the current and forecast position on earmarked reserves in paragraph 1.4;**

Regarding consultation on budget and council tax proposals:

- 5. To consult on the use of the Council's flexibility to raise the level of General Council Tax by up to 1.99% in 2022/23 in accordance with the scenarios in paragraph 1.3.7;**
- 6. To consult on the use of the Council's flexibility to apply a Social Care Precept of 1%, to help fund pressures in social care;**

7. To approve the council’s budget consultation be launched in the week of 20 December 2021 after which the budget with a cumulative equality impact assessment will be considered by the Committee on 9 February 2022, before it is referred to council;
8. To note the current position on the Eight Authority Business Rates Pool for 2022/23 discussed in paragraph 1.3.15-17, and delegates authority to the Executive Director of Resources (S151 Officer) to take all necessary actions to participate in and execute the agreement;

8. ANNUAL PROCUREMENT FORWARD PLAN [APFP] 2022/2023

The Chairman introduced the report which set out the detail of envisaged procurement requirements for 2022/2023 and, where known, for 2023/24, 2024/25. This report sought authorisation to enable commencement of procurement activity in accordance with the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules, subject to confirmation of continued requirement, and any additional approvals required under the Council’s Constitution.

Following consideration of the item, the Chairman moved to vote on the recommendations in the report as amended.

The vote was recorded as follows:

For	7
Against	0
Abstentions	6

The Committee RESOLVED

1. To approve the Annual Procurement Forward Plan as a record of forward activity for 2022/23 – 2024/25.
2. To note the requirements for procurement activity will be subject to service confirmation of continued requirement of any additional approvals required under the Council’s Constitution, including the Contract Procedure Rules, authorisation of Procurement Launch Document including identification of approved budget source.

9. SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

The Chairman introduced the report which provided an overview of the Sustainability Strategy Framework which will be used to scope and inform the forthcoming Sustainability Strategy. The framework builds on existing sustainability action the Council is taking and has been written in the context of the agreements reached at COP26 and the Environment Act 2021.

It was noted that the Sustainability Strategy had an important part to play in Barnet Council’s role of improving the lives of residents and businesses across the borough, by investing in sustainability to deliver long and short-term improvements in the lives of residents.

Following consideration of the item, the Chairman moved to vote on the recommendations in the report as amended.

The vote was recorded as follows:

For	13
Against	0
Abstentions	0

The Committee unanimously RESOLVED:

- 1. To approve the net zero ambitions laid out within the report, including the Council's target of being a net zero organisation by 2030, and for Barnet as a place to be net zero as soon as possible following this and by 2050 at the latest**
- 2. To note the carbon baseline and its findings (section 1.4-1.6)**
- 3. To note the actions already taken to date that have helped to begin addressing carbon emissions within the Council and across the borough, and the communications activity that has taken place**
- 4. To approve the Sustainability Strategy Framework (section 1.9-1.11), which will form the basis of the Sustainability Strategy**
- 5. To instruct officers to begin work on conducting feasibility studies and implementing the workstreams (section 1.9-1.11), and delegate authority to the Executive Director of Resources in order to take the necessary actions to look at the funding and resource requirements needed to deliver on these ambitions, and authority to proceed with procurements for the development of the Sustainability Strategy.**

10. RECOMMENDATION FROM FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE AND CONTRACTS COMMITTEE - REVIEW OF CAPITA CONTRACTS

The Chairman introduced the report from the Financial Performance and Contracts Committee at its meeting on 23 November 2021 which considered the reports on the Review of Capita Contracts and referred to this Committee. The report makes recommendations to Full Council to make the decision given the financial value and strategic importance of the Re and CSG contracts.

Following consideration of the item, the Chairman moved to vote on the recommendations as set out in the report.

The vote was recorded as follows:

For	13
Against	0
Abstentions	0

The Committee unanimously RESOLVED:

- 1. To recommend to Council that:**

- a) the council does not seek to extend those elements of the RE and CSG contracts that relate to the Procurement service, Regulatory Services (Trading Standards, Licensing, Environmental Health), the regeneration service and highways;
- b) upon expiry of those elements of the contract, these services be returned to the Council;
- c) the future strategy for the Highways service should be the subject of a separate report to the Environment Committee;
- d) the Recruitment service be returned to the Council in February 2022; and
- e) the Chief Executive be authorised to take the necessary action relating to any transfers or actions associated with the services, subject to the conclusion of the necessary due diligence.

2. To recommend that Council notes the direction of travel for each service that was agreed previously as set out in section 1.8 of the report (Annex 1) including the services listed for further review, with short extension: Accounts Payable/Integra, HR/Core HR*, Estates* (*with some element of the service potentially returning to the Council upon expiry of the contract) and Cemetery and Crematorium.

3. To recommend that Council notes the content of the Review of Capita Contracts Public Engagement report (Annex 2) and ORS Report (Appendix 2A)

11. DELIVERY AND OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK FOR THE BARNET PLAN - Q2 2021-22

The Chairman introduced the report which provides a progress update on delivery of the Barnet Plan and performance against the associated Outcomes Framework Q2 2021-22.

Following consideration of the item, the Chairman moved to vote on the recommendations as set out in the report.

The vote was recorded as follows:

For	13
Against	0
Abstentions	0

The Committee unanimously RESOLVED to note the report and progress made towards delivering the agreed outcomes of the Barnet Plan.

12. SOCIAL VALUE POLICY 2021-25

The Chairman introduced the report which sought approval on the council's Social Value Policy 2021-25, including a pledge to raise the baseline weighting for social value in contract bids to 20%. The Social Value policy determined the council's approach to sourcing goods and services beyond the principles of competition and value-for-money, to ensure social and community benefits are obtained whenever we do business.

Following consideration of the item, the Chairman moved to vote on the recommendations in the report as amended.

The vote was recorded as follows:

For	13
Against	0
Abstentions	0

The Committee unanimously RESOLVED:

- 1. To adopt the Social Value Policy (Appendix 1 to this report) and its pledge to raise the baseline weighting for social value in contract bids to 20%.**
- 2. To authorise officers to implement the Social Value Policy and to use a Social Value Toolkit (as set out in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2).**

13. ANNUAL EQUALITIES REPORT 2020/21

The Chairman introduced the report which sought approval for the council's Annual Equalities Report (AER) for the financial year 2020/21 which demonstrates how the council complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010.

The AER looked back over the previous financial year and detailed how the council approached its statutory responsibilities under The Equality Act and the Public Sector Equality Duty; the approach to implementing the equalities policy; and the progress against the Strategic Equalities Objective, covering the key achievements and case studies from across the council.

Following consideration of the item, the Chairman moved to vote on the recommendations in the report as amended.

The vote was recorded as follows:

For	13
Against	0
Abstentions	0

The Committee unanimously RESOLVED to approve the Annual Equalities Report 2020/21 for publication on the council website.

14. TELECARE - REQUEST FOR A 1-YEAR CONTRACT WAIVER

The Chairman introduced the report which sought approval from the Committee to extend the contract with Argenti for a further year via a waiver of the Contract Procedure Rules at a cost of £1,850,000. The additional time granted by the waiver would enable the council to engage with NHS partners to develop integrated services over the longer term.

Following consideration of the item, the Chairman moved to vote on the recommendations in the report as amended.

The vote was recorded as follows:

For	13
Against	0
Abstentions	0

The Committee unanimously RESOLVED to approve a waiver of the Contract Procedure Rules pursuant to Rule 12.1. for the extension of the contract with Argenti for the provision of the Telecare service from 1st April 2022 for the period of one year up to 31st March 2023 at a cost of £1,850,000

15. COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED – The Committee noted the Work Programme.

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

None.

17. MOTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chairman asked committee members if there were any questions on the exempt reports on the agenda. The Committee confirmed that there were no questions. There was therefore no requirement to move into exempt session.

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

None.

The meeting finished at 8.50 pm