

Decisions of the Policy and Resources Committee

9 February 2022

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 9 December 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 7 - Business planning - The Barnet Plan, Budget 2022/23, Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022-26 and Budget Management 2021/22 as he and his family are Barnet Homes Tenants.

4. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER (IF ANY)

None.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS (IF ANY)

Details of the question asked and the answer provided was published and circulated at the meeting. There was no supplementary questions.

6. MEMBERS' ITEMS (IF ANY)

None.

7. BUSINESS PLANNING - THE BARNET PLAN, BUDGET 2022/23, MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2022-26 AND BUDGET MANAGEMENT 2021/22

The Chairman introduced the report and addendum which sets out the proposed budget for 2022/23 and the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which include the

assumptions for 2022-26 with regards to council tax, other funding, expenditure forecasts and the savings and income generation plans necessary to set a balanced budget. This report helps to ensure resources are aligned to the strategic outcomes set out in The Barnet Plan, which was included in the report.

Following consideration of the item, the Chairman moved to vote on the recommendations in the report and addendum.

The vote was recorded as follows:

For 7

Against 6

Abstentions 0

The Committee RESOLVED

In respect of The Barnet Plan:

- 1. To note The Barnet plan, included as Appendix A, to ensure alignment of resources to corporate and strategic priorities;**

In respect of the Budget and Council Tax for 2022/23 and the MTF5 2022-26:

- 2. To recommend to Council for approval the MTF5, attached as Appendix B, and the detailed revenue budgets in Appendix D, including the proposed savings and funding for pressures in 2022/23;**
- 3. To recommend to Council for approval that the budget 2022/23 is prepared on the basis of a 0% increase for the general element of Council Tax in 2022/23 as discussed in paragraph 1.3.10 to 1.3.17;**
- 4. To recommend to Council for approval that the budget for 2022/23 is prepared on the basis of an increase of 1% for the Social Care Precept, to help fund social care as detailed in paragraph 1.3.10 to 1.3.17;**
- 5. To recommend to Council for the approval the resolutions relating to Council Tax contained within Appendix C;**
- 6. To recommend to Council for approval, on the advice of the Chief Finance Officer, that it determines that the council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2022/23 as set out in Council Tax resolution Appendix C, 2(iv) is not excessive in accordance with the principles approved under section 52ZB and 52ZC of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, set out in the Referendums relating to Council Tax increases (Principles)(England) Report 2022/23;**
- 7. To recommend to Council that in accordance with Section 38(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 the Chief Executive be instructed to place a notice in the local press of the amounts set under recommendation 5 above within a period of 21 days following the Council's decision;**
- 8. To note within Section 1.6 that the financial position in 2021/22 remains stable despite the pressures on the council arising from the pandemic, and that an overall breakeven position is currently anticipated for this year (after making some targeted contributions to reserves);**

9. To consider the issues that have emerged from the consultation discussed in Appendix G when making their decisions. The committee make the decisions outlined in this report being mindful of the consultation responses and equalities impact assessments including the cumulative equalities impact assessments;

10. To note the fees and charges as detailed in Appendix F;

In respect of Capital Strategy, proposed capital expenditure and the policy on Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP):

11. To recommend to Council the approval of the Capital Strategy as set out in Appendix J1;

12. To recommend to council for approval the Capital Programme as set out in Appendix J2 and set out in paragraph 1.7;

13. To approve the changes to the existing Capital Programme in relation to slippage detailed in paragraphs 1.7.3-1.7.20;

14. To recommend to Council to approve delegation to Chief Finance Officer to adjust capital programme and financing in 2022/23 in line with the 2021/22 outturn position;

In respect of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS):

15. To recommend to Council the approval of the TMSS for 2022/23 as set out in Appendix K1;

16. To note the mid-year review report for 2021/22 as set out in Appendix K2;

In respect of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA):

17. To recommend to Council the approval of Council dwelling rents increases as set out in section 1.9.3-1.9.8;

18. To recommend to council to approve Temporary accommodation rents increases in line with Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate as set out in paragraphs 1.9.9-1.9.13,

19. To recommend to Council the approval of services charge and garages increases as set out in paragraph 1.9.14-1.9.25,

In respect of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG):

20. To recommend to council the approval of the Gross Schools Budget of £393.947m for 2022/23 as set out in paragraph 1.4.6-1.4.16;

21. To recommend to Council that any changes to the Schools Budget reasonably required as a result of the final 2022/23 DSG and Post-16 settlement are delegated for decisions to the Executive Director – Children's & Family Services in consultation with the Executive Director of Resources;

Regarding budget management for 2021/22:

22. To approve the debt write off, as set out in paragraph 1.6.9-1.6.21;

23. To note the Quarter 2 2020/21 Corporate Risk Register discussed in section 1.10 and presented in Appendix I;

24. To recommend to Council to delegate authority to the Executive Director of Resources (S151 Officer) to design, implement and manage and take all associated action to enable a scheme upon receipt of full guidance from Government.

8. NORTH LONDON WASTE PLAN (ADOPTION)

The Chairman introduced the report on the draft North London Waste Plan. The plan had been to public consultation and submission to the Government for Examination, with subsequent modification because of issues raised at the Examination in November 2019. The plan is now, with recommended modifications, recommended by the Planning Inspectorate to proceed and as such the Committee is asked to recommend its adoption by the Council

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

The vote was recorded as follows:

For 7

Against 0

Abstentions 6

The Committee RESOLVED

- 1. To note the content of the report and the Inspector's Report on the North London Waste Plan (set out in Appendix A;**
- 2. To refer the North London Waste Plan (at Appendix B) to the Council meeting of 1 March 2022 for adoption.**

9. AFFORDABLE HOUSING VIABILITY REVIEW

The Chairman introduced the report which followed an instruction to officers to undertake a review into how viability assessments have been operating in respect of securing affordable housing on qualifying developments in Borough. The report included the review and findings on viability assessments.

The Chairman also confirmed that all 46 viability assessments would be published as soon as practical.

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

The vote was recorded as follows:

For 7
Against 6
Abstentions

The Committee RESOLVED

To note the contents set out in the viability assessment review (as set out in Appendix A).

10. REVIEW OF INTEGRA AND COREHR

The Chairman introduced the report on the review of the council's accountancy and HR systems that was completed and provided an update on the analysis undertaken and makes recommendations on the best way forward post September 2023 in line with the current Customer Support Group Contract (CSG) and subject to the outcomes of the Strategic Contract Review.

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

The Committee unanimously RESOLVED

- 1. To approve commencement of procurement for the replacement of the council's Finance and HR systems, with the flexibility for an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system or a Best of Breed model with separate Finance and HR systems.**
- 2. To delegate authority to the Executive Director of Resources to take all necessary actions to participate in and execute the successful procurement.**
- 3. To approve a one-year extension to the finance (Integra) and HR systems (CoreHR) to facilitate the procurement of a new system.**
- 4. To delegate authority to the Executive Director of Resources to do an upgrade of the Finance system to Integra Centros, if required, as set out in paras 2.19-21.**

11. COMMUNITY BENEFIT ASSESSMENT TOOL (CBAT) ASSESSMENT CRITERIA UPDATE AND DESIGNATING BARNET PAVILION AND THE BULL THEATRE AS COMMUNITY ASSETS

The Chairman introduced the report which propose how the criteria used for assessing community benefit should be amended, to ensure that community benefit is better incentivised, maximised and recognised in the CBAT calculation and that tenants can demonstrate how they are meeting the requirement to deliver social value. The report also recommended that the current Bull Theatre and the whole of the Barnet Pavilion, be designated as community assets, appropriate for CBAT.

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

The Committee unanimously RESOLVED

1. To approve the CBAT rental subsidy assessment criteria update in accordance with paragraphs 1.4 -1.6 of this report.
2. To designate the following assets as community assets:
 - a) The Barnet Pavilion
 - b) The Bull Theatre

12. COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED – The Committee noted the Work Programme.

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

None.

14. MOTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There was no exempt item.

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

None.

The meeting finished at 8.35 pm