

Decisions of the Policy and Resources Committee

17 June 2020

Members Present:-

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

Councillor Dean Cohen
Councillor Geof Cooke
Councillor Val Duschinsky
Councillor Anthony Finn
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

The Chairman introduced the minutes. Councillor Geof Cooke requested that an amendment be made to the minutes of the last meeting to reflect that that he had declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to Pension Fund Administration (Agenda Item 9) by virtue of the fact that his wife and one of his daughters are ex-employees of the council with deferred benefits in the pension fund. Subject to the inclusion of the above, the Committee:

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

None.

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

Councillor Arjun Mittra disclosed a non-pecuniary Interest in relation to Agenda Item 9 - Discretionary Small Business Support Grant Post-Decision Scrutiny by virtue of the fact that his mother's business may have received a Small Business Grant in the past. He advised the Committee that he would not be voting on this item and that he would leave the meeting for this item.

Councillor Ross Houston declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to Agenda Item 7 – Covid-19 Recovery Planning, Agenda Item 8 - Outturn 2019/20; Budget 2020/21 and Business Planning 2021-25, and Agenda Item 9 - Agenda Item 9 - Discretionary Small Business Support Grant Post-Decision Scrutiny by virtue of being a Council Appointed Member of The Barnet Group Board.

Councillor Alison Moore declared a general interest by virtue of being a London-Wide Assembly Member, and noted that this was documented in her Member's Declaration of Interests.

4. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER (IF ANY)

None.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS (IF ANY)

None.

6. MEMBERS' ITEMS (IF ANY)

Member's Item in the name of Councillor Barry Rawlings – Cost of the Pandemic:

The Chairman introduced the Item and noted that Councillor Barry Rawlings had indicated that he wished to raise his Members Item during the consideration of the following items: Agenda Item 7 – Covid-19 Recovery Planning, and Agenda Item 8 - Outturn 2019/20; Budget 2020/21 and Business Planning 2021-25.

Member's Item in the name of Councillor Alison Moore: Adult Social Care:

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Moore introduced her Member's Item. Following the introduction, which outlined issues surrounding Covid-19 and Adults Social Care, Councillor Alison Moore MOVED the following motion:

THAT THE COMMITTEE ESTABLISH AN INFORMAL WORKING GROUP ON THE MATTER.

The Motion was SECONDED by Councillor Barry Rawlings.

The Chairman commented that regardless, he would request for a future briefing where Members can talk about the lessons learned in relation to Covid-19. **(ACTION)**

The Chairman moved to the vote. Votes were recorded as follows:

Member	Vote
Councillor Daniel Thomas	Against
Councillor David Longstaff	Against
Councillor Dean Cohen	Against
Councillor Geof Cooke	For
Councillor Val Duschinsky	Against
Councillor Anthony Finn	Against
Councillor Ross Houston	For
Councillor Arjun Mittra	For
Councillor Alison Moore	For
Councillor Sachin Rajput	Against
Councillor Barry Rawlings	For
Councillor Gabriel Rozenberg	For
Councillor Peter Zinkin	Against

The motion was declared LOST.

Member's Item in the name of Councillor Arjun Mittra: Black Lives Matter and BAME:

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Mittra introduced his Members' Item.

Members Item Request:	Instruction from Committee:
That the Council seeks the views of its BAME communities on the issues arising from the Black Lives Matter protests and the PHE report	The Committee requested that engagement and views be sought by using the good networks that the Council has.
That the Council reviews the PHE report and responds to the issues raised affecting Barnet's BAME communities	The Committee noted that they had received a comprehensive report from the Director of Public Health (<i>which had been published to the Committee website</i>) The Committee suggested that this is considered alongside the Covid-19 Recovery Report.
That the Committee agrees to include dealing with structural inequality arising from the PHE report and the pandemic in its recovery planning	The Committee suggested that this is considered alongside the Covid-19 Recovery Report. The Committee noted that this particular issue could have its own workstream.
That the Council considers how to support BAME staff already at work and those returning to work.	To begin consulting with staff on the matter and then consider next actions.
That the Council updates its Equalities Policy and Action Plan to address any racism or inequality found by the review of the PHE report or the consultation with Barnet's BAME communities,	The Committee noted that this work would be undertaken within corporate Barnet documents.
That the Council issues a statement in support of the Black Lives Matter campaign and responding to the PHE report, as many other Councils have already done from RB Kensington & Chelsea to LB Brent to LB Camden, to LB Havering.	The Committee noted that this point had been covered by the recent statement put out by the Leader of the Council.

Following a point from the Chief Executive, The Committee invited the Barnet Equalities Allies back to a future meeting. **(ACTION)**

The actions captured in relation to this Member's Item were unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the Committee issue their instruction in relation to the Members' Items, as set out above.

7. COVID-19 RECOVERY PLANNING

The Chairman introduced the report, which updated the Committee on Covid-19 recovery planning and outlined the Council's proposed Recovery Framework.

Following the consideration of the paper, the Committee unanimously:

RESOLVED to approve the Council's proposed Covid-19 Recovery Framework and the proposed next steps (as set out in Section 4).

8. OUTTURN 2019/20; BUDGET 2020/21 AND BUSINESS PLANNING 2021-25

The Chairman introduced the report and noted that this report had been considered at the Performance and Contract Management Committee earlier that week.

The report provided an overview of the council's outturn for the 2019/20 financial year. Additionally, the report provided an update on the current forecast impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on 2020/21 budget and the process for 2021/22 and future years budget setting. The report also sought Committee approval for a series of budget management decisions for 2020/21.

Referring to the Member's Item raised by Councillor Barry Rawlings, the Chairman noted that the Member's Item had requested that the Committee "Run a public campaign demanding the Government cover all Covid 19 costs." The Chairman advised that he had raised funding issues with the local Members of Parliament.

The Chairman noted that the Member's Item had requested that the Committee "bring forward fees and charges increase to the 1st January 2021 as proposed by the Labour alternative budget" The Chairman noted that the budget setting process would take place later in the year and that this request could be picked up as part of this piece of work. He requested that Officers advise how this would be done. **(Action)**

Concluding the discussion on the Member's Items, the Chairman advised that the issues raised within the Member's Item would be considered in future budget reports.

The Chairman advised the Committee that an addendum to this paper had been published on the Council's website and circulated to Members, which provided a correction to Recommendation 8 contained within the original report. He advised that this following recommendation would be voted upon alongside all other Recommendations as set out in the report:

8. Approve the budget virements as detailed in Section 1.4.9; Approve the changes to the existing Capital Programme in relation to additions as set out in paragraph 1.4.19 and the addendum to the report, in accordance with the virement rules;

Following the consideration of the report, the Committee unanimously **RESOLVED:**

1. **Notes the 2019/20 budget outturn as set out in 1.2;**
2. **Notes the current balances of reserves as set out in section 1.2.5;**
3. **Approves the allocation methodology of confirmed Covid-19 grants to services as set out in 1.3.14;**

4. Approve that officers review current year expenditure plans to minimise the impact of Covid-19 including actions set out in 1.3.18 such as safely reintroducing income generating services, reducing expenditure and developing recovery plans. Officers will seek decisions or provide updates to Theme Committees as appropriate;
5. Approve that the MTFs and its assumptions be reviewed in light of Covid-19 and the potential economic/service impact (including New Homes Bonus, income generation, Council tax base growth and service pressures);
6. Approve that officers start to develop budget proposals for 2021/22 and delegate authority to the Section 151 officer to issue targets to officers to support the achievement of a balanced budget;
7. Notes the delegation given to the Section 151 officer by the Urgency Committee of the 27th April 2020 in relation to virements required as a result of Covid19 as set out in paragraph 1.4.6;
8. Approve the changes to the existing Capital Programme in relation to additions as set out in paragraph 1.4.19 and the addendum to the report, in accordance with the virement rules;
9. Notes the budget virements as detailed in Sections 1.4.11-1.4.13
10. Approve the changes to the existing Capital Programme in relation to additions as set out in paragraphs 1.4.19 in accordance with the virement rules;
11. Approve the use of Area Committee Funding to support revenue spend to assist services during this period of crisis as detailed in 1.4.20-1.4.22;
12. Approve a commitment to continue to support the council's charity (Live Unlimited) as set out in 1.4.23-1.4.24;
13. Approve the approach in working with central government on behalf of our residents and the sector as noted in 1.5.20; and
14. Notes the Environment fees and charges that were noted at relevant Theme Committee as detailed in Appendix A.

9. DISCRETIONARY SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT GRANT POST-DECISION SCRUTINY

Prior to the consideration of this item, Councillor Mittra left the meeting.

The Chairman introduced the report, which provided for post-decision scrutiny relating to the implementation of a temporary discretionary grant scheme in response to additional funding which has been provided by the Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Following consideration of the report, the Committee:

RESOLVED to note the decisions taken by Chief Officers via delegated powers in response to the Coronavirus Pandemic or related matters.

Following the conclusion of this item, Councillor Mittra re-joined the meeting.

10. END OF YEAR (EOY) 2019/20 CORPORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Chairman introduced the report, which provided an End of Year 2019/20 position statement and the Key Performance Indicator results for the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan (Barnet 2024)

Following the consideration of the report, the Committee unanimously:

RESOLVED to note the report.

11. COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Forward Work Programme as set out in the agenda.

RESOLVED that the Committee note the Forward Work Programme.

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

None.

13. MOTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended).

14. THE IMPACT OF SUPPLIER RELIEF ON COUNCIL CONTRACTS

RESOLVED - that the information contained in the exempt report be noted.

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

None.

The meeting finished at 9.48 pm