

Decisions of the Policy and Resources Committee

29 September 2022

Members Present:-

Councillor Barry Rawlings (Chair)
Councillor Ross Houston (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Daniel Thomas	Councillor Anne Clarke
Councillor Arjun Mittra	Councillor Alex Prager
Councillor Sara Conway	Councillor Emma Whysall
Councillor Richard Cornelius	Councillor Nigel Young
Councillor Edith David	Councillor David Longstaff (Substitute for Councillor Sarah Wardle)

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Sarah Wardle

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2022 be agreed as a correct record.

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

Apologies were received from Councillor Sarah Wardle who was substituted by Councillor David Longstaff.

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

None.

4. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER (IF ANY)

None.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS (IF ANY)

None.

6. MEMBERS' ITEMS (IF ANY)

None.

7. PROGRESS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ADMINISTRATION PRIORITIES

The Chair introduced the report which provided an update on progress against the council's key priorities since May. The council has made good progress on a range of

priorities, from proposals for the council tax rebate and local planning changes, to additional funding of street cleansing and piloting ward walks. The report also sets out the proposed approach for the new Corporate Plan.

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

The vote was recorded as follows:

For: 8

Against: 4

Abstentions: 0

Absent: 0

Total: 12

RESOLVED That the Committee:

- 1. To note the progress implementing the new council priorities**
- 2. To agree to the development approach for the new corporate plan, including transformation projects.**

8. CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER REPORT -FORECAST FINANCIAL OUTTURN AT MONTH 4 (JULY 2022)

The Assistant Director of Finance, Ashley Hughes, introduced the report which contained a summary of the Council's revenue and capital forecast outturn for the financial year 2022-23 as at Month 4 (31 July 2022). The report also contained information on the level of debt and the top 10 debtors as at 31 July 2022 as well as the mid-year treasury and liquidity update.

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

The vote was recorded as follows:

For: 12

Against: 0

Abstentions: 0

Absent: 0

Total: 12

RESOLVED That the committee notes

- 1. the current forecast financial outturn for 2022-23.**
- 2. the projected use of reserves; and**
- 3. the current debt position and related actions.**

9. BUSINESS PLANNING 2023-2027 AND IN-YEAR FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT 2022/23

The Assistant Director of Finance, Jyotika Dabasia introduced the report sets out the process which will take place for 2023/24 and future years in order to achieve a balanced budget. This report also seeks Committee approval for a series of budget management

decisions for 2023/24 required as part of normal business in line with the organisations Financial Regulations.

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

The vote was recorded as follows:

For: 8

Against: 4

Abstentions: 0

Absent: 0

Total: 12

RESOLVED That the committee:

In respect of business planning for 2023-27:

- 1. Notes the higher than usual uncertainty in the following areas:**
 - **Estimates for ongoing service demand and income due to inflationary pressures and the cost of living crisis.**
 - **The increased uncertainty around inflationary increases in government grant funding.**
 - **Level of grant funding as a result of the Spending Review 2022.**
- 2. Notes the three scenarios (A, B (base case), and C) modelled for the Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2023/24 and the preliminary assumptions for future years;**
- 3. Notes the Scenario B (base case) MTFs attached at Appendix A.**
- 4. Takes forward savings and income generation proposals as detailed in 2.3.9 and Appendix B taking into account any equalities impacts. Note that these savings will be referred to Policy and Resources for consideration and, at a later stage, be subject to public consultation and an updated equality impact assessment.**
- 5. Reviews the additional funding pressures to services requested in paragraph 2.3.14 and Appendix C;**
- 6. Notes the service specific pressures as set out in 2.3.14 to 2.3.32.**
- 7. Approves the Fees and Charges as set out in 2.7 and attached at Appendix G for recommendation to Full Council for consideration responses and equality impact assessment.**
- 8. Notes the actions being taken by officers and Theme Committees to address the budget gap for 2023/24 and future years as set out in 2.8.**

In respect of routine financial matters for 2022/23:

- 9. As set out in 3.1.2-3.1.3, delegates to the Chief Finance Officer (S151 Officer) the authority to allocate the non-pay inflation contingency budget for 22/23 to departments. The approval is subject to the final virement being contained within**

the contingency budget and being no more than 10% above the £7.443m set aside when the budget was set.

10. Approves the revised Capital Programme and financing of it; from paragraph 3.2 (also Appendix F) including reprofiling of budgets to and from future years, accelerations, additions, and deletions.

11. Notes the Quarter 1 2022/23 Corporate Risk Register in Section 4 and Appendices D and E;

10. FINANCIAL VULNERABILITIES: COST OF LIVING WORKSTREAM

The Assistant Director for Strategy, Communications and Engagement, Liz Cowie, provided an update to the Committee of the council's recommended approach to the cost-of-living crisis. The Committee noted that work has been done to build on the three-pronged approach to support financially vulnerable residents throughout the cost-of-living crisis, outlined previously to the Committee.

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

The vote was recorded as follows:

For: 8

Against: 4

Abstentions: 0

Absent: 0

Total: 12

RESOLVED That the committee approve:

- 1. The approach in relation to delivery of the administration's commitment to refund residents this year's 1% Council Tax increase.**
- 2. The renaming of the Welfare Assistance Fund to the Barnet Resident Support Fund and add additional funding to extend support to £2 million.**
- 3. The launch of the Barnet Resident Support Fund on 3 October 2022 which will include a streamlined application process.**
- 4. Funding of £0.120m to invest in systems and software to develop an application process and targeted support to residents in need and agree the procurement activity as this is not on the agreed Forward Plan presented to this Committee in December 2021.**
- 5. Matching an additional £0.150m investment to deliver a £0.3m Barnet Together Community Response Fund.**
- 6. That the Community Innovation Fund include cost-of-living support measures into desired outcomes.**

7. **The communications and information dissemination recommendations as outlined in this paper to ensure a proactive approach to reaching residents experiencing financial difficulties.**
8. **To authorises the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of the Committee to implement any additional funding to respond to the cost-of-living crisis that can be delivered within existing budgets, legal and financial authorisations.**

11. Q1 2022/23 CONTRACTS PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Acting Assistant Director (Commercial), Tim Campbell introduced the report that provided an overview of Quarter 1 (Q1) 2022/23 performance for the contracted services delivered by the Customer and Support Group (Capita) and Regional Enterprise (Capita), which do not fall under the remit of another theme committee. The report also provided oversight of collective performance for the contracted services delivered by Regional Enterprise (Capita) with specific performance reported to Housing and Growth Committee and Environment and Climate Change Committee in September 2022.

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

The vote was recorded as follows:

For: 12
Against: 0
Abstentions: 0
Absent: 0
Total: 12

RESOLVED That the committee notes

1. **the Quarter 1 (Q1) 2022/23 performance for the contracted services delivered by the Customer and Support Group (Capita) and Regional Enterprise (Capita), which do not fall under the remit of another theme committee**
2. **the collective performance for the contracted services delivered by Regional Enterprise (Capita).**

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

The Chair 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.

15. EXEMPT- BUSINESS PLANNING 2023-2027 AND IN-YEAR FINANCIAL

MANAGEMENT 2022/23

The Committee RESOLVED to note the details in the exempt appendix.

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

None.

The meeting finished at 8.45 pm