

Decisions of the Policy and Resources Committee

22 February 2023

Members Present:-

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

Councillor Daniel Thomas	Councillor Edith David
Councillor Arjun Mitra	Councillor Anne Clarke
Councillor Sara Conway	Councillor Alex Prager
Councillor Richard Cornelius	Councillor Emma Whysall
Councillor Sarah Wardle	Councillor Nigel Young

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2022 be agreed as a correct record.

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

None.

3. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND NON PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Councillor Wardle declared an interest in Item 8 – Business Planning (including BOOST Business Plan) as a Board Member of The Barnet Group Ltd.

Councillor Mitra declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 18 (Barnet Group Ltd Budget and Business Plan) as his mother is a tenant of Barnet Homes.

4. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

None.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Details of the question asked and the answer provided were published and circulated at the meeting. A supplementary question was answered verbally at the meeting.

6. MEMBERS' ITEMS

None.

7. CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER REPORT

The Committee considered the Chief Finance Officer Report which contained a summary of the Council's revenue and capital forecast outturn for the financial year 2022/23 as at Month 9 (31 December 2022). It also contained information on the level of debt and the top 10 debtors as at 31 December 2022.

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

The vote was recorded as follows:

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

RESOLVED that the Committee notes the:

- 1. Current forecast financial outturn for 2022-23.**
- 2. Projected use of reserves.**
- 3. Current debt position and related actions.**

8. BUSINESS PLANNING (INCLUDING BOOST BUSINESS PLAN)

The Committee considered a report which set out the proposed budget for 2023/24 and the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which include the assumptions for 2023-27 with regards to Council Tax, other funding, expenditure forecasts and the savings and income generation plans necessary to set a balanced budget. This would help to ensure resources are aligned to the strategic outcomes set out in draft Corporate Plan which was also being presented to this Committee elsewhere on the agenda.

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: 8
Against: 4
Abstentions: 0
Total: 12

RESOLVED that the Committee:

In respect of the Budget and Council Tax for 2023/24 and the MTFS 2023-27 taking into account the equality impact assessment and consultation findings:

- 1. Recommends to Council for approval the MTFS, attached as Appendix A, and the detailed revenue budgets in Appendix C, including the proposed savings and funding for pressures in 2023/24;**

- 2. Recommends to Council for approval that the budget 2023/24 is prepared on the basis of a 1.8% increase (which takes account of the proposed 1% refund) for the general element of Council Tax in 2023/24 as discussed in paragraph 1.3.11 to 1.3.18;**
- 3. Recommends to Council for approval that the budget for 2023/24 is prepared on the basis of an increase of 2% for the Social Care Precept, to help fund social care as detailed in paragraph 1.3.11 to 1.3.18;**
- 4. Recommends to Council for the approval the resolutions relating to Council Tax contained within Appendix B;**
- 5. Recommends 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 2023/24 as set out in Council Tax resolution Appendix B, 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 2023/24;**
- 6. Recommends 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; and**
- 7. Have considered the issues that have emerged from the consultation discussed in Appendix G when making their decisions and have made the decisions outlined in this report being mindful of the consultation responses and equalities impact assessments including the cumulative equalities impact assessments at Appendix H.**

In respect of Capital Strategy and the proposed capital programme:

- 8. Recommend to Council the approval of the Capital Strategy as set out in Appendix I1; and**
- 9. Recommend to Council for approval the Capital Programme as set out in Appendix I2 and set out in paragraph 1.10;**

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

- 10. Recommend to Council the approval of the TMSS for 2023/24 as set out in Appendix J.**

In respect of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG):

- 11. Recommend to Council the approval of the Gross Schools Budget of £426.879m for 2023/24 as set out in Section 1.5; and**
- 12. Recommend to Council that any changes to the Schools Budget reasonably required as a result of the final 2023/24 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.**

In respect of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Temporary Accommodation (TA):

- 13. Recommend to Council the approval of Council dwelling rents increases as set out in paragraphs 1.6.3-1.6.8;**
- 14. Recommend to Council to approve Temporary accommodation rents increases in line with Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate as set out in paragraphs 1.6.9-1.6.13;**
- 15. Recommend to Council the approval of services charge and garages increases as set out in paragraph 1.6.14-1.6.26; and**
- 16. Recommend to Council the approval of the HRA Business Plan (at Appendix K) and the removal of the policy to increase the minimum reserve position by CPI each year.**

In respect of the BOOST 3 year Plan:

- 17. Approve the underwriting of S106 monies to enable payments to be made to BOOST to deliver their 3 year plan as set out in section 1.8;**

In respect of routine financial matters for 2022/23:

- 18. Notes the contingency budget and allocations from it in 1.9.1-1.9.3;**
- 19. Approves the virement set out in 1.9.4-1.9.6;**
- 20. Approves the writes-offs for Business Rates debt, Housing Benefit Overpayments debt, Sundry Debt, Housing Revenue Account tenant arrears and General Fund tenant arrears as detailed in 1.9.7-1.9.31 and Appendix N;**
- 21. Approves the revised Capital Programme and financing of it as detailed in Section 1.10 (also Appendix I2) including reprofiling of budgets to and from future years, accelerations, additions, and deletions;**
- 22. Recommend to Council to approve delegation to Chief Finance Officer to adjust capital programme and financing in 2023/24 in line with the 2022/23 outturn position; and**
- 23. Notes the Strategic Risk Register in Section 1.11 and Appendix O.**

In respect of Business Rate Reliefs and a new Council Tax Support Fund:

- 24. As set out in section 1.12, Committee to approve the following schemes and delegate authority to the Chief Finance Officer to make minor amendments to the schemes to take account of updated Government advice and software functionality:**
 - Council Tax Support Fund Scheme;**
 - Business Rates Supporting Small Business Relief Scheme; and**
 - Business Rates New 2023/24 Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Scheme.**

In respect of Barnet’s 2023/24 Business Rates Discretionary Rate Relief and Hardship Policy:

25. Committee to approve Barnet’s 2023/24 Discretionary Rate Relief and Hardship policy, as set out in 1.12, and delegate authority to the Chief Finance Officer to make minor amendments to the scheme to take account of updated Government advice or other relevant considerations. This ensures Barnet are operating the scheme in accordance with a live policy from 1 April 2023 following the expiry of the previous policy;

In respect of the Council Tax Support Scheme:

26. Instructs officers to review the Council Tax Support Scheme to consider restoring the 100% Council Tax rebate for households in the lowest income band alongside work to ensure our cost-of-living support is helping those that need it, and to bring back any recommendations to the relevant meeting in September.

9. CORPORATE PLAN

The Committee considered a report which set out the Council’s Corporate Plan: “Caring for people, places and the planet: our plan for Barnet 2023 – 2026”.

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: 8
Against: 0
Abstentions: 4
Total: 12

RESOLVED that the Committee:

- 1. Agrees the proposals and content of the Corporate Plan 2023-2026 (Annex A).**
- 2. Agrees to refer the Corporate Plan to Council (28 February 2023) for adoption.**
- 3. Agrees to delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council to make final formatting and non-material changes to the corporate plan prior to submission to council for adoption.**

10. TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY

The Committee considered a report which set out the Council’s proposed Transformation Strategy and governance arrangements for delivery of the Strategy.

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: 8
Against: 4
Abstentions: 0
Total: 12

RESOLVED that the Committee:

- 1. Agrees the council's Transformation Strategy, as set out in Appendix A;**
- 2. Notes the feedback from the Collaborate engagement exercise, as set out in paragraph 1.5; and**
- 3. Notes the proposed governance arrangements for implementation of the Strategy, as set out in paragraph 1.9.**

11. DEPOT CONSOLIDATION PROGRAMME

The Committee considered a report which set out proposals to consolidate Street Scene services at Oakleigh Road Depot and seeks authorisation to commence the second phase of works.

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: 12
Against: 0
Abstentions: 0
Total: 12

RESOLVED that the Committee:

- 1. Note the contents of the report and the appended Full Business Case (FBC) (Appendix 1);**
- 2. Approve the recommended option for the Oakleigh Road Consolidation, to consolidate services on the existing Brogans site and to explore designs for future required remedial works to the Biel Brothers site;**
- 3. Notes:**
 - a) the funding strategy outlined in section 5 of the report and approve an additional £10.783m Public Loans Works Board capital funding to complete the project;**
 - b) the total anticipated final cost of the project of £19.783m;**
- 4. Approves the proposal to submit a planning application for the installation of a new salt storage barn and associated Mechanical and Electrical (M&E) installations for the wider site on the former Biel Brothers site;**

5. Authorise the procurement of the new salt storage barn, on completion of the design process and relevant Board endorsement of the procurement strategy;
6. Agree to delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive for further decisions required to deliver the remaining activities within the scope of the business case (outlined in section 4.1).

12. AREA COMMITTEES - COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

The Committee considered a report which set out proposals for revised arrangements in respect of Area Committee Community Infrastructure Levy funding.

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: 12
Against: 0
Abstentions: 0
Total: 12

RESOLVED that the Committee:

1. Having considered the Equality Impact Assessment ('EqIA') carried out by the three Area Committees and their public consultation in respect of this recommendation and 2 and 3 below, agree that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding be allocated based on the population within each Area Committee area;
2. Having considered the public consultation undertaken and considered by Area Committees, agree to adopt the Area Committees CIL funding eligibility guidelines (Appendix C) to allow Area Committees to spend their CIL funding on a broader range of schemes addressing the demands that development places on an area (as defined under Regulation 59F(3) of the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended) ("the Regulations") (see Paragraph 1.6);
3. Having considered the public consultation undertaken by Area Committees, agree the Area Committees to adopt that Sustainability, Community Engagement, Public Health & Community Safety will form part of the Area Committees CIL Funding priorities;
4. Having considered the public consultation undertaken by Area Committees, agree to implement the revised CIL funding application guidelines (Appendix D);
5. Agree that each Area Committee should develop and approve their own CIL funding priorities for each financial year starting in 2022/23;

6. Having considered the public consultation undertaken, agree in respect of the Road Safety & Parking Fund that it continues to be allocated borough wide and the schemes to be authorised by the Director of Highways & Transportation.

13. ENABLEMENT CARE - ADDITIONAL ENABLEMENT PROVISION

The Committee considered a report which sought approval for a waiver to the Contract Procedure Rules section 12.1 to undertake a direct award to up to two additional enablement care providers.

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: 12
Against: 0
Abstentions: 0
Total: 12

RESOLVED that the Committee approve a waiver of the Contract Procedure Rules Section 12.1 to undertake a direct award of contract to up to two providers for provision of enablement care, following the completion of an expression of interest exercise with approved homecare providers.

14. ADULTS CONTRACTS UPDATE

The Committee considered a report which sought authority to waive Contract Procedure Rules and award contracts directly to incumbent contractors under single tender actions to enable continuation of identified contracts. The identified contracts will be subject to fully compliant procurement in 2023/24.

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: 12
Against: 0
Abstentions: 0
Total: 12

RESOLVED that the Committee:

- 1. Authorise a waiver of Contract Procedure Rules (CPR), pursuant to CPR 12.1, requiring written quotations to be obtained, and the award of contracts listed in this report directly to incumbent contractors under Single Tender Actions; and**
- 2. Note that officers will conduct a review of the identified contract requirements and future procurement plans, which will be identified on the Annual**

Procurement Forward Plan 2023/24 and presented for authorisation to Policy & Resources or Adults & Safeguarding Committees as appropriate.

15. ANNUAL PROCUREMENT FORWARD PLAN 2023-24

The Committee considered a report on the Annual Procurement Forward Plan 2023/24 which set out the detail of envisaged procurement requirements for 2023/24 and, where known, for 2024/25 and 2025/26.

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: 8
Against: 0
Abstentions: 4
Total: 12

RESOLVED that the Committee:

- 1. Approve the Annual Procurement Forward Plan 2023/24 to enable commencement of procurement activity for 2023/24 – 2025/26; and**
- 2. Note the requirements for procurement activity to be subject to service confirmation of continued requirement, any additional approvals required under the Council's Constitution, including the Contract Procedure Rules, and authorisation of a Procurement Launch Document including identification of approved budget source as set out in Appendix 1.**

16. ENFORCEMENT AND PROSECUTION POLICY

The Committee considered a report on an updated Enforcement and Prosecution Policy.

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: 12
Against: 0
Abstentions: 0
Total: 12

RESOLVED that the Committee:

- 1. Approves the implementation of the updated Enforcement and Prosecution Policy 2023 (Appendix 1) with effect from 1st April 2023**
- 2. Considers the Equalities Impact Assessment (Appendix 2); and**

3. Approves delegated authority to the Executive Director of Assurance to make necessary administration or updates as required to the Enforcement and Prosecution Policy.

17. AVENUE HOUSE ESTATE

The Committee considered a report on an application from their tenant, the Avenue House Estate Trust, for consent for alterations to the layout of the second floor flat in Avenue House.

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: 12
Against: 0
Abstentions: 0
Total: 12

RESOLVED that the Committee approves consent via a license for alterations to allow The Avenue House Estate to make alterations to the layout of the second floor flat in Avenue House and delegates authority to the Deputy Chief Executive to negotiate and settle the terms of the licence for alterations.

Councillor Mitra declared a pecuniary interest in the following agenda item as his mother is a tenant of Barnet Homes. He left the meeting during consideration of the item.

18. BARNET GROUP LTD BUDGET AND BUSINESS PLAN

The Committee considered a report which set out The Barnet Group's Business Plan for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28.

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: 12
Against: 0
Abstentions: 0
Total: 12

RESOLVED that the Committee approve The Barnet Group Business Plan attached as set out in Appendix A.

Councillor Mitra re-entered the meeting room.

19. COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED that the Committee note the Forward Work Programme.

The meeting finished at 8.17 pm