

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2023 starting at 7.00 pm

Present:

Councillor Colin Smith (Chairman)
Councillors Kate Lymer (Vice-Chairman),
Nicholas Bennett J.P., Aisha Cuthbert, Angela Page and
Diane Smith

Also Present:

Councillor Simon Fawthrop and Councillor Simon Jeal

125 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Yvonne Bear and Councillor Christopher Marlow.

126 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In relation to Minute 133 (Item 9), Councillor Bennett noted that his household was hosting two Ukrainian guests.

127 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 NOVEMBER 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2022 (excluding exempt information), were agreed and signed as a correct record.

128 QUESTIONS

No questions were received.

129 DRAFT BUDGET 2023/24 AND UPDATE ON THE COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL STRATEGY Report FSD23003

The report sought approval of the initial draft 2023/24 Budget including the full year effect of changes agreed as part of the 2022/23 Council Tax report and savings approved during the year with the resultant impact on the Council's medium term "budget gap".

A key part of the financial strategy was to highlight the budget issues that would need to be addressed by the Council over the coming financial years, by forecasting the level of available resources from all sources and budget pressures relating to revenue spending. Details of the capital programme and the impact on the revenue budget was reported elsewhere on agenda.

PDS Committees views would also be sought and reported back to the next meeting of the Executive, prior to the Executive making recommendations to Council on the 2023/24 Council Tax and Adult Social Care precept levels.

The report provided details of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2023/24 which was published on 19th December 2022 and represented a one-year settlement only, with limited indication of funding for 2024/25. The awaited Fair Funding Review and changes relating to the devolution of business rates, which could have a significant impact on future funding, had been delayed until at least 2025/26 – more realistically unlikely to be implemented until 2026/27.

There were still outstanding issues and areas of uncertainty remaining, including, for example grant conditions, which could impact on the final revenue budget. Further updates would be included in the 2023/24 Council Tax report to the next meeting of the Executive.

In Councillor Marlow's absence, The Leader announced that the proposed staff pay award for 2023/24 would be 5.75%. This was to be supplemented by an additional 2.00% for 2022/23 making a total of 7.75% all in. There would also be an increase in the merit payment scheme to £400k pa to reward outstanding performance in service.

The report had been scrutinised by the Executive, Resources and Contracts PDS Committee on 16th January 2022 and the Committee made recommendations to the Executive in respect of the London Boroughs Grant Committee and recommended that any identified savings should be taken in year.

The Executive considered and discussed the recommendations from the Executive, Resources and Contracts PDS Committee but felt further discussion was needed. The Leader offered to write to the Chairman of London Councils outlining any concerns held by Members. The Executive agreed that the position should be reviewed next year after further consideration.

RESOLVED: That

- 1. The initial draft 2023/24 Budget detailed in Appendix 7 be agreed.**
- 2. The initial draft 2023/24 Budget for each portfolio be referred to the relevant PDS Committees for consideration.**
- 3. The financial projections for 2024/25 to 2026/27 be noted.**
- 4. It be noted that there are still areas of financial uncertainty which will impact on the final 2023/24 Budget.**

5. **The proposed increase in rent levels for London Affordable Rents and Social (Formula) Rents by 7% from April 2023 as set out in Section 12.2 of the report be agreed.**
 6. **The proposed contribution of £246,470 in 2023/24 to the London Boroughs Grant Committee (see section 22 of the report) be agreed.**
 7. **The setting of the schools' budget, mainly met through Dedicated Schools Grant, be delegated to the Education, Children and Families Portfolio Holder, allowing for consultation with the Schools Forum (see section 23 of the report).**
 8. **Note that the outcome of consultation with PDS Committees will be reported to the next meeting of the Executive.**
 9. **The outcome of the Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement 2023/24 as detailed in the report be noted.**
 10. **The budget gap remaining of an estimated £29.6m per annum by 2026/27 and that any decisions made for the 2023/24 Budget will have an impact on the future year projections be noted.**
 11. **Any final decision by Executive on recommended Council Tax and Adult Social Care Precept levels to Council will normally be undertaken at the next meeting of Executive.**
 12. **Where possible any identified savings should be taken in year.**
- 130 **CAPITAL STRATEGY 2023/24 TO 2026/27 & Q3 CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING**
 Report FSD23001

The report incorporated the Council's new Capital Strategy and Capital Programme for 2023/24 to 2026/27. It also summarised the current position on capital expenditure and receipts following the conclusion of the third quarter monitoring exercise.

The report included details of the new schemes that would be added to the Capital Programme and information concerning the proposed asset disposals that would be used to generate capital receipts and ultimately contribute towards the funding of the Capital Programme.

Also included were details of the related Capital Financing implications, including proposals to refinance current housing schemes through borrowing, utilisation of revenue reserves to address the shortfall in capital resources for 2023/24 onwards and details of how these proposals would impact the Council's revenue budget.

The report had been scrutinised by the Executive, Resources and Contracts

PDS Committee on 16th January 2022 and the Committee had supported the recommendations.

RESOLVED: That

1. **The report, including a total rephrasing of £565k from 2022/23 into future years, be noted and a revised capital programme be agreed.**
2. **The Capital Strategy for 2023/24 to 2026/27 be agreed including the following amendments to the capital programme:**
 - (i) **Adjustments identified as part of the capital monitoring process totalling a net reduction of £14,825k**
 - (ii) **An increase of £74,801k in relation to new schemes which will be added to the Capital Programme**
3. **The refinancing of the Council's existing Housing Schemes through external borrowing of £49.2M via the Public Works Loan Board be approved.**
4. **The use of up to £10M from the Council's earmarked revenue reserves to support funding of the Council's capital programme be approved.**
5. **It be agreed that all new and existing Housing Schemes should be funded by long-term borrowing.**

**131 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION\SUPPORT SCHEME 2023/24
Report FSD22091**

The report advised Members of the result of the public consultation exercise and sought approval for the scheme to be put forward to Full Council.

The Executive recognised that there was significant pressure on some households' income at present, and were reassured that the generous increase in size to the Council's Hardship fund, would ensure that sufficient support remained set in place for those in genuine need.

The report had been scrutinised by the Executive, Resources and Contracts PDS Committee on 16th January 2022 and the Committee had supported the recommendations.

RESOLVED: That

1. **The revised Equality Impact Assessment at Appendix 1 of the report be noted.**
2. **The responses to the public consultation exercise at Appendix 2 & 3 of the report be noted.**

3. **The Council Tax Support scheme from 2023/24 restricts the calculation of entitlement for working-age claimants to 70% of the households' Council Tax liability.**
4. **The introduction a band "D" eligibility restriction from 2023/24 be approved.**
5. **Council be recommended to agree that the Council Tax Support scheme from 2023/24 increases the Discretionary Hardship Fund to £225k per annum.**

**132 PROCUREMENT STRATEGY - PROCUREMENT OF LEASE
 CARS AND LIGHT COMMERCIAL VEHICLES
 Report ES20240**

The report considered the ongoing procurement of vehicles provided under the staff lease car scheme and those cars and light commercial vehicles allocated for departmental use when the current framework operated by Crown Commercial Service (Ref: RM6096) ended on 15th May 2023.

Consultation with the Director of HR & Customer Services and individual fleet user departments had confirmed that the Council had an ongoing requirement for the acquisition of motor vehicles to support the provision of services.

The Assistant Director for Highways confirmed that the financial information shown in para 12.2 of the report was incorrect, and that the spend under this contract was estimated to be £3.1m (as set out in paragraph 13.2 of the report). The Assistant Director also confirmed that it was a decision for the Executive.

The report had been scrutinised by the Executive, Resources and Contracts PDS Committee on 16th January 2022 and the Committee had supported the recommendations.

RESOLVED: That

1. **The forthcoming framework operated by the Crown Commercial Service be utilised to lease any required cars and light commercial vehicles from 16th May 2023 until 11th January 2027 and the continued use of the framework for any extension period that may be applied by Crown Commercial Service be agreed.**
2. **Authority be delegated to the Director of Environment & Public Protection to approve the use of the Vehicle Lease, Fleet Management & Salary Sacrifice call-off framework (Ref; RM6268) with successful suppliers, upon its award by the Crown Commercial Service, in January 2023.**

**133 HOMES FOR UKRAINE
Report HPR2022/032**

This report provided an update on the Homes for Ukraine response by the Council and approach going forward.

An update on the Homes for Ukraine scheme would be provided to Executive quarterly, this report was the second of the update reports.

The Leader thanked the Head of Housing Compliance and Strategy and her Team for their amazing work supporting the guests from Ukraine who had been welcomed across the Borough, in tandem with the community oversight and personal assistance of Cllr Kira Gabbert.

The Leader also paid tribute to every Bromley host who had welcomed and supported families from Ukraine.

The report had been scrutinised by the Executive, Resources and Contracts PDS Committee on 16th January 2022 and the Committee had supported the recommendations.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report be reviewed and noted in relation to the current activities under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

**134 CONSIDERATION OF ANY OTHER ISSUES REFERRED FROM
THE EXECUTIVE, RESOURCES AND CONTRACTS POLICY
DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

There were no additional items referred from Executive, Resources and Contracts PDS Committee.

**135 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE
LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION)
(VARIATION) ORDER 2006 AND THE FREEDOM OF
INFORMATION ACT 2000**

RESOLVED that the Press and public be excluded during consideration of the items of business referred to below as it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that if members of the Press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information.

**The following summaries
refer to matters involving exempt information**

**136 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30
NOVEMBER 2022**

The exempt (not for publication) minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2022, were agreed and signed as a correct record.

**137 CAPITAL STRATEGY 2023/24 TO 2026/27 & Q3 CAPITAL
PROGRAMME MONITORING - APPENDIX E**

The Executive noted the Part 2 Appendix.

Chairman

The Meeting ended at 7.51 pm