

London Borough of Islington

Executive - 12 January 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held at Council Chamber, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 12 January 2023 at 7.00 pm.

Present: **Councillors** Comer-Schwartz, Ward, O'Halloran, Woolf, Bell-Bradford, Turan, Ngongo and Khondoker
:

Also Present: **Councillors**
:

Councillor Kaya Comer-Schwartz in the Chair

58 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Received from Councillor Rowena Champion.

59 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
None.

60 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**
RESOLVED:
That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2022 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

61 **MONTHLY BUDGET MONITOR, INCLUDING FUNDING ALLOCATIONS AND ADJUSTMENTS TO THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME**
RESOLVED:
(a) That the breakdown of the forecast General Fund outturn by individual variance at Appendix 1 and by service area detailed at Appendix 2 of the report of the Corporate Director of Resources be noted
(b) That, within the overall cash limited budget position, the inter-directorate virements and budget adjustments up to month 8 2022/23, and detailed in Appendix 2 of the report, be approved.
(c) That the delivery progress of the 2022/23 budgeted savings at Appendix 5 of the report, be noted
(d) That the transformation fund allocations and anticipated profiled drawdowns for 2022/23, detailed in Appendix 3 of the report, be noted.
(e) That the collection fund monitoring position at month 8 be noted.
(f) That the Energy Price Analysis position at month 8 be noted
(g) That the forecast 2022/23 HRA estimated outturn of -£2.228m surplus at month 8 be noted.
(h) That it be noted that, as at the end of month 8, total capital expenditure of £83.302m had been incurred against a 2022/23 forecast of £165.136m and the revised 2022/23 capital budget of £175.327m.

- (i) That capital slippage of £5.745m be approved to future financial years it be noted that there was a risk of further slippage over the remainder of the financial year.
- (j) That spend on 16-18 Hornsey Road of £0.050m be approved as a replacement for Holly Hall project which had been discontinued.
- (k) To capital acceleration of £0.080m be approved for the Prior Weston School project.

Reasons for the decision – to ensure the financial resilience of the Council

Other options considered – none

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

62

BUDGET PROPOSALS 2023/24 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY
RESOLVED:

The General Fund Budget 2023/24 and MTFS

(a) That Council be recommended to agree the latest assumed MTFS and balanced 2023/24 budget, including the underlying MTFS principles, in-year monitoring position (to date) and the budget assumptions, as detailed in the report of the Executive Member for Finance, Planning and Performance.

(b) That Council be recommended to approve the proposed 2023/24 net budgets by directorate.

(c) That Council be recommended to agree that centrally held demographic growth be allocated to service budgets once a more evidenced assessment was available and had been approved by the Section 151 Officer.

(d) That it be noted that the 2023/24 budget incorporated budget provision for manifesto commitments and provided additional support to residents in the current cost-of-living crisis.

(e) That a one-off £1m be approved for a Hardship Fund to support residents, focussing on working households, with low incomes, who faced large rent rises, for launch in advance of the 2023/24 financial year.

(f) That the annual budget for the London Councils Grants Committee, following consideration by London Councils' Leaders' Committee on 13 December 2022, be approved and that it be noted that this would be reported to the Voluntary and Community Sector Committee.

(g) That Council be recommended to approve the 2023/24 savings and note that individual savings may be subject to individual consultation before they can be implemented and that the draft savings proposals for 2024/25 and 2025/26 be noted.

(h) That the funding assumptions following the announcement of the Provisional Local Government Settlement on 19 December 2022 be noted.

(i) That it be noted that the fees and charges policy and the General Fund fees and charges for 2023/24 had been agreed by Executive on 24 November 2022.

(i) That Council be recommended to approve the policy on General Fund contingency and reserves and agree the movements to/from earmarked reserves assumed as part of the 2023/24 revenue budget.

(j) That Council be recommended to agree that the Section 151 Officer be delegated responsibility for any technical adjustments required for the 2023/24 budget (in line with the Council's financial regulations).

The HRA Budget and MTFS

(k) That Council be recommended to approve the balanced HRA 2023/24 budget and note the latest estimates over the 3-year MTFS period.

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(l) That Council be recommended to approve the 2023/24 savings and note that individual savings may be subject to individual consultation before they can be implemented.

(m) That the HRA rents and other HRA fees and charges for 2023/24 be approved.

(n) That it be noted that the HRA 30-year business plan was currently being updated to reflect latest government policy.

Capital Investment and Treasury and Investment Management

(o) That Council be recommended to approve the proposed 2023/24 to 2025/26 capital programme and note the latest indicative capital programme for 2026/27 to 2032/33.

(p) That the estimated funding of the 2023/24 to 2025/26 capital programme be noted and the Section 151 Officer be authorised, where necessary, to apply capital resources to fund the capital programme in the most cost-effective way for the Council.

(q) That the estimated borrowing levels for the General Fund and HRA in relation to the 2023/24 to 2025/26 capital programme be noted.

(r) That it be noted that the final version of the budget report to the Executive on 9 February 2023 and to Council on 2 March 2023 would include the Capital Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement, Treasury Management Strategy and Investment Strategy.

Council Tax and Retained Business Rates

(s) That it be noted that the detailed, statutory Council tax calculation and the recommendations for the final 2023/24 Council tax, including the GLA precept, would be included for agreement in the final budget report to the Executive on 9 February 2023 and Council on 2 March 2023.

(t) That the Section 151 Officer be authorised to finalise the Council's 2023/24 NNDR1 (detailed business rates) estimate ahead of the 31 January 2023 statutory deadline.

Matters to consider in setting the Budget

(u) That the following be noted:

- The need to have regard to the Section 151 Officer's report on the robustness of the estimates included in the budget and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves when making decisions about the budget and the level of council tax, as required under Section 25(2) of the Local Government Act 2003.
- The Monitoring Officer comments.
- The Equality Impact Assessment and the need to take full account of it in approving the overall budget and related proposals.
- The assessment of compliance against the CIPFA Financial Management Code and that this would be re-visited at least annually as part of the budget process, with any actions or recommendations implemented on an ongoing basis.
- That the Council was inviting business rate payers or representatives of business rate payers in Islington, to comment on the draft 2023/24 budget proposals in the report, as required under Section 65 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

Reasons for the decision – to agree draft proposals in respect of the Council's 2023/24 budget and level of council tax and the latest assumed medium term financial position.

Other options considered – none

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

63 **FAIRER TOGETHER, EARLY INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION STRATEGY**

RESOLVED:

That the Fairer Together Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy, attached as Appendix A to the report of the Leader of the Council, be approved and adopted.

Reasons for the decision – To deliver better outcomes for and with local people, co-owned across the partnership, to ensure that change and the power shift was tangible and successfully achieved.

Other options considered – none

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

64 **DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF**

RESOLVED:

That, with regard to the programme for rate relief from 2023, Option 3 in the report of the Executive Member for Homes and Communities be approved viz:

Review and revise the Discretionary Rate Relief Programme, which would involve updating the current policy in order to ensure value for money in how awards were made to organisations and that the impact of the programme was of maximum benefit to residents in the Borough. A new policy would begin on 1 April 2023 and run for 3 years until 31 March 2026.

Reasons for the decision – There was a clear need for this type of relief to support voluntary and community organisations working in the not-for-profit sector, particularly coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic and with the cost-of-living crisis impacting residents and organisations

Other options considered – none

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

65 **NEW HOUSING ALLOCATIONS SCHEME**

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the contents of the report of the Executive Member for Homes and Communities, detailing a draft new housing allocations scheme, be noted.
- (b) That the proposed consultation arrangements proposed in the report be approved.
- (c) That, following the consultation exercise, officers report back to Executive on the outcomes.

Reasons for the decision – the rising pressure on the Council's housing register made the need to refine the criteria around how access was prioritised essential.

Other options considered – none

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

66 **PROCUREMENT STRATEGY FOR HOME CARE REPROCUREMENT**

RESOLVED:

(a) That the recommended Home Care commissioning model and procurement approach (Option Three) as outlined in the report of the Executive Member for Health and Social Care be approved.

(b) That the Director of Adult Social Care be authorised to appoint providers to the proposed framework agreement for Home Care for a total period of eight years and an estimated budget of £170m, following consultation with the Executive Member for Health and Social Care.

(c) That the Director of Adult Social Care be authorised to award call-off contracts pursuant to the framework agreement for Home Care.

(d) That the Director of Adult Social Care be authorised to award any required contracts for spot packages of care until and for the duration of the new framework agreement for Home Care as outlined in the report.

Reasons for the decision – The implementation of a new outcome focused and locality model of home care placed a greater focus on independence and wellbeing for residents, together with a procurement approach that supported the Council's ambitions for an inclusive economy.

Other options considered – none

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

67

PEOPLE-FRIENDLY STREETS PROGRAMME UPDATE

In the absence of the Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport, the report was introduced by the Leader of the Council and included progress on the People Friendly Streets programme against the longer-term plan to realise cleaner, greener, healthier streets for local people in Islington. She also outlined plans to expand the Schools Streets plan and People Friendly Pavements programme and the aim to improve cycling in Islington to make it an accessible option for as many local people as possible.

A number of members of the public attended to ask questions about the Programme, which were responded to by the Leader and the Corporate Director of Environment.

RESOLVED:

(a) That the progress made on the delivery of the people-friendly streets programme, as set out in the report of the Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport, be noted.

(b) That the people-friendly streets programme be continued, as outlined in the Executive report of 18 June 2020, Executive report of 14 October 2021 and amended by this report, including i) School Streets; ii) liveable neighbourhoods (including the Blue Badge exemption policy and people-friendly pavements) and iii) cycleways.

(c) That the roll out of future phases of the School Streets programme at schools on main roads, following the delivery of two successful trial schemes, be approved, as set out in the report.

(d) That the initiation, consultation and delivery of School Streets at secondary schools, as set out in the report, be approved.

(e) That phase three of the people-friendly streets programme be commenced by developing and delivering liveable neighbourhoods in the Borough, subject to in-depth consultation and engagement, as detailed in the report.

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(f) That it be noted that the 'Individual exemption' policy for access through existing traffic filters was currently being trialled and a feedback period was open. The final policy to be subject to a future Executive decision, taking into consideration the feedback received during the trial.

(g) That the Council's ambitious vision with regards to the cycle network in the Borough, be noted.

(h) That the Corporate Director of Environment be authorised to delegate authority to the Director of Climate Change and Transport, in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport and the Corporate Director of Environment, to continue the implementation of the people-friendly streets programme through specific schemes.

Reasons for the decision – to contribute to the Borough's transformation and support the delivery of wider Council ambitions related to public health, road danger reduction, clean air, climate change, social justice, greening and place-making.

Other options considered – a wide range of options were considered in the formulation of the Programme.

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

MEETING CLOSED AT 7.50 pm