

MINUTES OF THE MAYOR AND CABINET

Wednesday, 9 February 2022 at 5.00 pm

PRESENT: Damien Egan (Mayor), Councillors Brenda Dacres, Paul Bell, Chris Best, Patrick Codd and Amanda De Ryk.

ALSO JOINING THE MEETING VIRTUALLY: Councillors Chris Barnham, and Kevin Bonavia, (Cabinet Members) and Councillor Mark Ingleby (Chair Public Accounts Select Committee)

NB: Those Councillors listed as joining virtually were not in attendance for the purposes of the meeting being quorate, any decisions taken, or to satisfy the requirements of s85 Local Government Act 1972.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Andre Bourne and Councillor Kim Powell

619. Declaration of Interests

None were made.

620. Matters Raised by Scrutiny and other Constitutional Bodies

Matter Referred by the Public Accounts Select Committee – Budget 2022-23

The views of the Public Accounts Select Committee were presented by their Chair, Councillor Mark Ingleby. The Mayor thanked the Select Committee and the other Scrutiny Chairs for their diligence and professionalism in the way they had reviewed the Budget proposals. The Mayor ensured a written response to the views of the Select Committee was tabled at the meeting and the Cabinet agreed it should be reported to the Select Committee.

Having considered an open officer report, the Mayor and Cabinet:

RESOLVED that the tabled response prepared by Executive Director for Corporate Resources be approved and reported to the Public Accounts Select Committee.

621. Budget 2022-23

The Mayor presented his fourth budget, the last of this administration by reflecting that the Council had suffered Government cuts every year since 2010 and in real terms the Council's budget had been slashed from over £400m to £248m resulting in having 1,000 fewer members of staff

When austerity was combined with COVID an even more difficult position was presented for all councils The Mayor added that one-year budgets made it difficult to plan for the long term and suggested three-year budgets as

operated by Government Departments would be preferable. The Mayor noted the “Levelling Up” agenda would drive money out of London. Added to that was the cost of living crisis evidenced by inflation, rising food prices and fuel costs.

The Mayor stated the intention to increase Council Tax by 2.99 per cent which was the highest possible without holding a referendum. The budget did not propose to use reserves to balance the budget. A balanced budget was a necessity to avoid the alternative of a Council run by Government commissioners.

The Mayor pledged to continue to prioritise good contract management and improve demand management such as the Newton Review of Adult Social Care. He said the Council needed to do more of this type of work – transforming services to deliver differently not just trying to do more with less.

The Mayor acknowledged overspends were too big and cuts need to be implemented. Despite huge challenges the Mayor noted significant achievements had been made and he highlighted Lewisham officially had the best parks in London; was a top-tier council for climate action; had been made London Borough of Culture and was officially the UK’s first Borough of Sanctuary.

The Mayor concluded by thanking Councillor Amanda de Ryk for her leadership and the input made by the Executive Director for Corporate Resources and her Senior Management Team.

This is a budget which delivers on our priorities, safeguards the Council’s finances, and ensures we are able to continue the important work of putting

Councillor Amanda De Ryk formally moved the recommendations and confirmed the Council Tax increase and the level of cuts. She reflected that the long term picture was not positive. She ended by thanking the Officers who had assisted her in preparing the budget.

Having considered an open officer report, and presentations by the Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources, Councillor Amanda De Ryk, and the Chair of the Public Accounts Select Committee, Councillor Mark Ingleby, the Mayor and Cabinet, for the reasons set out in the report and by a vote of 6-0:

RESOLVED that:

(1) the comments of the Public Accounts Select Committee of 27 January 2022 be received;

(2) That, having considered the views of those consulted on the budget, and subject to consideration of the outcome of consultation with business ratepayers and subject to proper process, as required, the Mayor and Cabinet adopted the following recommendations:

General Fund Revenue Budget

- (3) asks Council to note the projected overall variance of £2.9m (or 1.2%) against the agreed 2021/22 revenue budget of £243.100m as set out in section 6 and that any year-end overspend will be met from corporate provisions and reserves;
- (4) endorses and asks Council to endorse the budget cut reduction measures of £11.835m as per the Mayor and Cabinet meeting of the 2 February 2022, as set out in section 6 and summarised in Appendix Y1 and Y2;
- (5) agrees and asks Council to agree the allocation of £6.500m in 2022/23 be set aside for corporate risks and pressures;
- (6) agrees and asks Council to agree the allocation of £21.315m of resources from the corporate risks and pressures, social care precept, new homes bonus, social care grant, lower tier grant, market sustainability and Fair cost of care grant, services grant and legacy s31 monies in 2022/23 to be invested in funding quantified budget pressures and opportunities, both recurring and once-off and that within this £1.877m is held in corporate provisions for the Executive Director for Corporate Resources to apply as necessary to the identified but as yet unquantified risks as set out in section 6;
- (7) agrees to recommend to Council that a General Fund Budget Requirement of £248.610m for 2022/23 be approved;
- (8) asks Council to agree to a 2.99% increase in Lewisham's Council Tax element. This will result in a Band D equivalent Council Tax level of £1,421.22 for Lewisham's services and £1,816.81 overall. This represents an overall increase in Council Tax for 2022/23 of 4.2% and is subject to the GLA precept for 2022/23 being increased by £31.93 (i.e. 8.78%) from £363.66 to £395.59, in line with the GLA's draft budget proposals;
- (9) notes the final settlement figure for 2022/23 has not yet been announced and delegates authority to the Executive Director for Corporate Resources to include any change to the provisional settlement of £124,170,641 in the report for Council with any difference covered from provisions and reserves as necessary;
- (10) notes the provisional and estimated precept and levies from the GLA and other bodies as detailed in Appendix Y6 and delegates authority to the Executive Director for Corporate Resources to include any changes to these in the report for Council with any difference covered from provisions and reserves as necessary;
- (11) notes and asks Council to note the Council Tax Ready Reckoner which for illustrative purposes sets out the Band D equivalent Council Tax at various levels of increase. This is explained in section 6 and is set out in more detail in Appendix Y4;
- (12) asks that the Executive Director for Corporate Resources issues cash limits to all Directorates once the 2022/23 Revenue Budget is agreed;

(13) considers, and asks Council to consider, the Section 25 Statement from the Chief Finance Officer attached at Appendix Y5;

(14) agrees and asks Council to agree the draft statutory calculations for 2022/23 as set out at Appendix Y6;

(15) notes and asks Council to note the prospects for the revenue budget for 2022/23 and future years as set out in section 6;

(16) agrees and asks officers to continue to develop firm proposals to redesign and transform services and inform the capital strategy by bringing them forward in good time to support the work towards a savings and investment round to help plan early to meet the future forecast medium term finance strategy objectives;

Other Grants (within the General Fund)

(17) notes and asks Council to note the adjustments to and impact of various specific grants for 2022/23 on the General Fund as set out in section 7 of this report;

Fees and charges

(18) approves the approach to setting 2022/23 fees and charges for chargeable services in section 8 of the report and attached at Appendix Y8; External Audit

(19) accepts, and recommends that Council accepts, the Public Sector Audit Appointments' invitation to opt into the sector-led option for the appointment of external auditors for five financial years from 1 April 2023.

Dedicated Schools Grant and Pupil Premium Schools Block

(20) note and recommends that Council notes that the provisional Dedicated Schools Grant allocation of £221.069m be the Schools' Budget (Schools Block) for 2022/23 covering both maintained schools and academies;

(21) notes that following the Schools Forum meeting on the 20 January, submission has been made to the Department for Education with regards to school funding formula, recommending the application of the National Funding Formula (including unit values) allowing for a 2% uplift in Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG);

(22) agrees and recommends that Council agrees, (as recommended by Schools Forum) the once-off transfer of circa £0.7m of Dedicated Schools Grant to the High Needs Block;

(23) agrees and recommends that Council agrees, (as recommended by Schools Forum) the once-off transfer of £0.15m to fund the shortfall in the School Improvement and Brokerage Grant;

Central Schools Services Block (CSSB)

(24) notes, and asks Council to note, the construct and allocation of £3.693m for the CSSB block allocation for 2022/23, significantly reduced from the £4.261m 2021/22 allocation;

(25) notes a decrease in both the per pupil unit funding (£0.43) and pupil numbers (949) resulting in a decrease of £61.2k in the “pupil-led” funding element of the block;

(26) notes that the CSSB is anticipated to cease from 2023/24, with potential transfer of any residual funding to the Council’s main revenue grant. Officers are currently engaging with schools to consider options for trading, de-delegation and cessation or reduction in services;

High Needs Block (HNB)

(27) notes, and asks Council to note, the provisional HNB £67.608m to support the Council’s statutory duty with regards Special Education Needs (SEN). This is a net increase of £5.54m relative to 2021/22, The HNB will be finalised in March for deductions arising for institutions funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency(ESFA);

(28) notes that the Schools Forum on 20 January 2022 agreed the transfer of circa £0.7m to the block to support the Council to meet its statutory functions;

(29) notes that the HNB is expected to overspend by between £5m to £6m in 2021/22, increasing the cumulative overspend to £11m in total for 2021/22 as £5m has been brought forward from 2020/21. This overspend is to be met from schools reserves;

Early Years Block (EYB)

(30) notes, and asks Council to note, the provisional Dedicated Schools Grant allocation of £24.12m to the block; and that the Department for Education has increased funding for “3 and 4 year old” from £5.76 to £5.93 (i.e. 17p per hour), and hourly rate for 2 year olds increase from £6.66 to £6.87, an 3% increase (i.e. 21p per hour) for 2022/23.

(31) notes that the maintained nursery supplementary funding allocation for September 2022 to March 2023 is subject to change and has not yet been finalised, initial projections from DfE suggest a reduction overall of circa £40k;
Pupil Premium

(32) notes, and asks Council to note, that the pupil premium will continue in the 2022/23 financial year. The funding rates in the year will be same as 2021/22 and the funding is based on data over a six year census period. It is expected that the DfE will provide updated final allocations in summer 2022;
Social Care Levy Grant

(33) notes, and asks Council to note, the new grant to support the increased

costs of the 1.25% increase in schools National Insurance contributions of £8.8m.

Housing Revenue Account

(34) notes, and asks Council to note, the consultation report on service charges to tenants' and leaseholders in the Brockley area, presented to area panel members on 10th November 2021, as attached at Appendix X3;

(35) notes, and asks Council to note, the consultation report on service charges to tenants' and leaseholders and the Lewisham Homes budget strategy presented to area panel members on 24th November 2021 as attached at Appendix X4;

(36) agrees, and asks Council, to agree set an increase in dwelling rents of 4.1% (an average of £4.07 per week) – as per the formula rent calculations outlined in section 9

(37) agrees, and asks Council to agree, to set an increase in the hostels accommodation charge by 4.1% (or £3.27 per week), in accordance with formula rent calculations;

(38) approves, and asks Council to approve, the following average weekly increases/decreases for dwellings for:

(38.1) service charges to non-Lewisham Homes managed dwellings (Brockley) to ensure full cost recovery and 5.90% inflationary uplift for 2022/23;

- caretaking 5.90% (£0.29)
- grounds 5.90% (£0.13)
- communal lighting 5.90% (£0.08)
- bulk waste collection 5.90% (£0.09)
- window cleaning 5.90% (£0.01)
- tenants' levy 0.00% (£0.00)

(38.2) service charges to Lewisham Homes managed dwellings:

- caretaking 4.00% (£0.27)
- grounds 4.00% (£0.09)
- window cleaning 8.00% (£0.01)
- communal lighting 20.00% (£0.21)
- block pest control 15.00% (£0.27)
- waste collection 0.00% (£0.00)
- heating & hot water 10.00% (£1.05)
- tenants' levy 0.00% (£0.00)
- bulk waste disposal 4.00% (£0.03)
- sheltered housing 0.00% (£0.00)

(38.3) approves, and asks Council to approve, the following average weekly percentage changes for hostels and shared temporary units for;

- service charges (hostels) – caretaking etc.; no change
- energy cost increases for heat, light & power; no change

□ water charges increase; no change

(38.4) approves, and asks Council to approve, an increase in garage rents by 4.9% (£0.77 per week) for Brockley and Lewisham Homes residents as outlined in Appendix X6;

(38.5) notes, and asks Council to note, that the budgeted expenditure for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for 2022/23 is £304.0m, split £94.4m revenue and £209.6m capital, which includes the decent homes and new build programmes;

(38.6) agrees the HRA budget strategy cut proposals in order to achieve a balanced budget in 2022/23, as attached at Appendix X1;

(38.7) agrees to write off twenty-one cases of Former Tenants' Arrears as set out in paragraphs 9.28 to 9.31 and Appendix X7, totalling £365,462.94;

Treasury Management Strategy

(39) approves and recommends that Council approves the prudential indicators and treasury indicators, as set out in section 10;

(40) approves and recommends that Council approves the Annual Investment Strategy and Creditworthiness Policy, set out in further detail at Appendix Z2;

(41) approves and recommends that Council approves the Investment Strategy as set out in section 10;

(42) approves and recommends that Council approves the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy as set out in section 10;

(43) agrees and recommends that Council agrees to delegate to the Executive Director of Corporate Resources authority during 2022/23 to make amendments to borrowing and investment limits provided they are consistent with the strategy and there is no change to the Council's authorised limit for borrowing;

(44) approves and recommends that Council approves the overall credit and counterparty risk management criteria, as set out at Appendix Z2, the proposed countries for investment at Appendix Z3, and that it formally delegates responsibility for managing transactions with those institutions which meet the criteria to the Executive Director for Corporate Resources;

(45) approves and recommends that Council approves a minimum sovereign rating of AA for non-UK investments;

Capital Programme

(46) notes the capital programme position and recommends that Council approves the 2022/23 to 2024/25 Capital Programme of £600.4m as set out in section 11 and Appendix W1.

622. Contract Award Report Mountsfield Cafe (part 1)

Having considered an open and a confidential officer report, and a presentation by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Councillor Pat Codd, the Mayor and Cabinet, for the reasons set out in the report and by a vote of 6-0:

RESOLVED that a contract be awarded to Bright & True to deliver the design, build and operation of a café at Mountsfield Park: The concessionaire contract will be for an initial period of 15 years, commencing around March 2022.

623. The Libraries Consortium Courier Service (part 1)

Having considered an open and a confidential officer report, and a presentation by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Brenda Dacres, the Mayor and Cabinet for the reasons set out in the report and by a vote of 6-0:

RESOLVED that:

(1) delegated authority be granted to the Executive Director for Community Services to:

(a) approve the award the contract to the successful contractor for the Libraries Consortium Courier Service Framework Agreement, following the procurement activity up to a total maximum of five years.

(b) approve the Call off the Framework Agreement for the Lewisham Library and Information Service for a period of two years, and subsequent contract extensions for a further three years (periods of two years or one year), up to a total maximum of five years.

624. Determined Admissions Arrangements 2023-24

Having considered an open officer report, and a presentation by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and School Performance, Councillor Chris Barnham, the Mayor and Cabinet for the reasons set out in the report and by a vote of 6-0:

RESOLVED that:

(1) the admissions arrangements for mainstream community nursery, primary, secondary schools and sixth forms be as set out in Appendix A to G.

(2) the Published Admissions Number (PAN) for each community mainstream school in the borough be as detailed in Appendix H.

(3) the pan London Admissions Schemes for reception and secondary transfer and a local scheme for in year admissions as detailed in Appendix I.

625. Exclusion of the Press and Public

This item was not considered.

626. Contract Award Mountsfield Park Cafe 2021 (part 2)

The report was considered in conjunction with the Part 1 item on the same subject.

627. The Libraries Consortium Courier Service (part 2)

The report was considered in conjunction with the Part 1 item on the same subject.

The meeting closed at 5.49pm.