

Decisions taken by the Public Accounts Select Committee on Thursday, 1 December 2022

Agenda Item No	Topic	Decision
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Part A – Items considered in public

A1	Minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2022	that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 September be agreed as an accurate record.
A4	Financial monitoring	that the report be noted.
A5	Budget reductions report	<p>that the Committee would refer its views to Mayor and Cabinet as follows –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee welcomes the careful consideration given to the budget reduction proposals by the Healthier Communities; Safer Stronger; Children and Young People and Sustainable Development select committees. It is also grateful for the attendance of select committee chairs and vice-chairs as well as senior officers at the Public Accounts Select Committee meeting to share member views and officer responses on the proposals. • The Committee notes that the setting of a balanced budget for 2023/23 is essential to ensuring the ongoing financial viability of the Council and it recognises that there are sustained budget pressures and unfunded costs in a number of areas. Therefore, it is with reluctance that the Public Accounts Select Committee endorses these budget reduction proposals. Members believe that it would be irresponsible to recommend that these proposals should be dropped or delayed. • In relation to comments and questions on the proposal to reduce opening hours at libraries (COM_SAV_08) the Committee notes and welcomes the comments from members of the other select committees. Public Accounts Select Committee recommends that officers be tasked with a strategic overview of the operation of the service – which should include consideration of the best means of making this saving whilst minimising the impact on residents. The Committee believes that this should include consideration of the hours of operation, footfall and usage levels across the service as well as careful consultation with library users.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee also wishes to place on record its appreciation and thanks for the work of Council officers. Members are concerned about considerable budgetary and operational pressures - as well as levels of vacancies across the organisation. Commenting on proposals to manage pay inflation and to restructure senior management (All_SAV_01 and ALL_SAV_02) the Committee emphasised its worry that the amalgamation of responsibilities would have a further detrimental impact on staff wellbeing and welfare.