

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

RESOURCES O&S COMMITTEE – PUBLIC MEETING

1400 hours on Thursday 10 February 2022, Committee Room C, Margaret Street, Birmingham

Action Notes

Present:

Councillor Mohammed Aikhlaq (Chair)

Councillors: Majid Mahmood and Paul Tilsley

Also Present:

Councillor Tristan Chatfield, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources

Rebecca Hellard, Director of Council Management

Meena Kishinani, Interim Transformation Director

Richard Peirce, Finance Manager – Financial Strategy

Sara Pitt, Director of Finance (Deputy Section 151 Officer)

Mohammed Sajid, Interim Head of Financial Strategy

Lisa Taylor, Interim Head of Financial Planning

Jayne Bowles, Scrutiny Officer

Christian Scade, Interim Head of Scrutiny and Committee Services

1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

The Chair advised the meeting to note that this meeting will be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast via the Council's meeting You Tube site (www.youtube.com/channel/UCT2kT7ZRPFCXq6_5dnVnYlw) and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there are confidential or exempt items.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors David Barrie, Barbara Dring, Meirion Jenkins and Shafique Shah.

Members asked for their best wishes to be noted and passed on to Cllr Dring.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

4. ACTION NOTES

(See documents 1 and 2)

RESOLVED:-

The action notes of the meetings held on 25 November 2021 and 20 January 2022 were agreed.

5. FINANCIAL MONITORING 2021/22 – QUARTER 3/MONTH 9

(See document 3)

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, Councillor Tristan Chatfield, was in attendance for this item, together with Rebecca Hellard, Director of Council Management, Sara Pitt, Director of Finance (Deputy Section 151 Officer), Mohammed Sajid, Interim Head of Financial Strategy, Lisa Taylor, Interim Head of Financial Planning, and Richard Peirce, Finance Manager – Financial Strategy.

Cllr Chatfield introduced the report and highlighted the following points:

- There is a £4.2m overspend, which is a significant improvement, and he is confident that will be zero by the end of the financial year;
- 86% of the savings target is set to be delivered, which is in line with the last couple of years and a substantial improvement since before that time;
- Key movements are the use of £6.1m financial resilience reserve to cover off home to school transport issues, which was highlighted as a risk last time;
- The report also outlines around £22.8m in Covid-related income loss, for example car parking and impact on leisure services amongst other things;
- Expenditure of £14.8m on Covid cost outlay;

During the discussion, and in response to Members' questions, the following were among the main points raised:

- There was support for the spending controls, however there was a query as to what was envisaged at the outset of spend controls and whether the extra burden on officers had created extra bureaucracy in terms of resources spent although the Cabinet Member assured the committee this was not the case;
- The National Pay Award has still not been agreed, with a couple of unions having balloted members on strike action and was noted that the delay in implementing the pay deal could mean staff losing out due to the National Insurance increase;
- Members wondered whether officers were still confident that the £38.5m prudent reserves will be protected and were reassured that they were;
- The Cabinet Member would like the Government to give the Council the certainty of a longer-term financial settlement – eg 5 years – it would put the Council in a much better position to plan and project forward for revenue needs and what we need to do to raise income.

- Other issues raised include around capital expenditure and the relocation of Montague St and Redfern St depots “Atlas works project” seeking assurance it is now fully costed.
- There has been slippage of £5m in the property strategy and a report is due to come to Cabinet in 2022/23 and Scrutiny members would welcome getting involved to assist the Cabinet Member in that piece of work.

RESOLVED:-

- Response to be provided to outstanding action from January meeting relating to Fleet & Waste vehicles entering the Clean Air Zone.
- More detail to be provided on the position with Trade Waste.
- More detail to be provided on the projected underspend of £0.9m on the Environmental improvements/cleanliness budgets.
- Consideration to be given to inviting the new Director of Inclusive Growth to a future meeting.
- The report was noted.

6. INVEST TO SAVE INITIATIVES

(See document 4)

Meena Kishinani, Interim Transformation Director, was in attendance for this item on behalf of the report author Gemma Malhi.

Meena introduced the report and made the following points:

- Intended to pump prime key transformation initiatives against three strands
 - Moving residents from crisis to prevention,
 - inclusive growth to ensure residents can benefit from growth coming to city,
 - new ways of working and ensuring we have a fit for purpose organisation that can deliver on what the city is ambitious enough to deliver going forward.
- Focus of the programme management office has been to do a number of things including clear assurance of delivery of the programme, making sure rigorous process of assurance behind the scenes for CLT and Cabinet Members to make sure they are aware of risks. Working hand in glove with finance colleagues in the meeting today, not just about delivery of initiative but also savings delivery.
- The spend is included in quarterly monitoring. Each quarter we are open and transparent about costs and what spending against delivery plan reserve.

In the course of the discussion, and in response to Members’ questions, the following were among the main points raised:

- Members questioned whether we can engage with other stakeholders, eg the NHS, in drawing down funding with them and were informed that was already the case, eg the early intervention and prevention programme due to come to Cabinet is a joint initiative across community and voluntary sector

and police, looking at joint teams in community and how to address the early intervention and prevention agenda going forward.

- Members queried whether, with the rise in electricity costs, the Council may wish to consider bringing in more energy efficient LED streetlights as an initiative we could use with invest to save.
- Officers observed that the movement to LED street lamps is often not as straightforward as changing bulbs, often have to replace columns as well, but would envisage would be done as part of route to zero programme as already set up rather than through this transformation programme so can get more information on that.

RESOLVED:-

- More information to be provided regarding the move to using more energy efficient LED lights as part of the Route to Zero action plan.
- The report was noted.

7. PLANNED PROCUREMENT ACTIVITIES REPORT

(See document 5)

A request was made for a larger font to be used in the quarterly contract award section to make it easier to read.

RESOLVED:-

The report was noted.

8. WORK PROGRAMME

(See document 6)

An item on the Social Charter for Business Responsibility was suggested for the March meeting, following the question to the Chair at the 1st February City Council meeting.

It was also suggested that the April meeting be cancelled, subject to formal agreement at the next meeting.

RESOLVED:-

The work programme was noted.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Noted.

10. REQUEST(S) FOR CALL IN/COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION/PETITIONS RECEIVED (IF ANY)

None.

11. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

12. AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS

RESOLVED:

That in an urgent situation between meetings, the Chairman jointly with the relevant Chief Officer has authority to act on behalf of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 1442 hours.