

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 13 July 2022

Present:

Councillors	P Gilchrist	A Hodson (In place of T Anderson)
	EA Grey	G Wood (In place of J Robinson)
	Y Nolan	J Bird
	P Stuart	M Booth
	H Cameron	H Gorman (In place of P Cleary)
	L Rennie	K Hodson
	S Foulkes (In place of J Williamson)	J Johnson
	B Kenny (In place of T Jones)	

In attendance: Councillors C Davies

23 **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

In the absence of both the Chair and the Vice-Chair, the Head of Legal Services welcomed members and officers to the meeting and read out the webcast notice.

24 **ELECTION OF CHAIR**

In the absence of both the Chair and the Vice-Chair, the Head of Legal Services sought nominations for a Chair.

On a motion moved by Councillor Yvonne Nolan, seconded by Councillor Steve Foulkes, it was –

Resolved – That Councillor Paul Stuart be elected Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee for the duration of the meeting.

Councillor Paul Stuart in the Chair

25 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tom Anderson, Pat Cleary, Tony Jones, Jean Robinson and Janette Williamson.

26 **MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests and any other relevant interest and to state the nature of the interest.

Councillors Paul Stuart, Liz Grey, Steve Foulkes, Yvonne Nolan, Gill Wood and Brian Kenny declared personal interests in item 10 – ‘Sale of Egerton House and Pacific Road, Birkenhead’ by virtue of a link between the Labour MP for Birkenhead and Egerton House.

27 **MINUTES**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2022 be approved and adopted as a correct record.

28 **PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS**

The Chair informed the Committee that no public questions, statements, petitions or questions by members had been received.

29 **TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22**

The Interim Director of Finance introduced the report of the Director of Resources which provided the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2021-22. The Authority’s treasury management activity was underpinned by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management (“the Code”), which required the Authority to approve treasury management semi-annual and annual reports. Therefore the report fulfilled the Authority’s legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to both the CIPFA Code and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Investment Guidance.

It was reported that there was an underspend on net Treasury activities of £0.1 million, which was attributable to lower debt management costs which was incorporated into the Revenue Outturn report. It was further reported that Capital Financing debt had reduced by £6m to £160m and temporary loans from other Local Authorities has reduced by £27m to £58m.

In response to various queries from members, further information was to be provided on the cost benefits of short-term lending to other local authorities, the Council’s risk appetite and the guidance associated with the Public Sector Social Impact Fund.

Resolved – That Council be recommended to agree the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2021/22.

30 **2022/23 BUDGET MONITORING AND 2023/24 BUDGET SETTING PROCESS**

The Assistant Director of Finance introduced the report of the Director of Resources which provided an update on the 2022-23 budget monitoring and 2023-24 budget setting processes in the Committee’s capacity as the Policy

and Service Committee for the functions of the Chief Executive's Office, the Law and Governance Directorate and the Resources Directorate.

The Committee discussed the level of detail provided to members for financial monitoring and the recommendations of the External Assurance Review in relation to the level of financial detail were highlighted. Further detail was sought on the Business Rates Equalisation Reserve and the budget for Enterprise Resource Planning.

Resolved – That

(1) The anticipated timetable for reporting quarterly financial information be noted.

(2) The budget position specific to the Policy and Resources Committee be noted.

31 WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23

The Head of Legal Services introduced the report which provided the Committee with an opportunity to plan and regularly review its work across the municipal year.

It was moved by Councillor Lesley Rennie, seconded by Councillor Yvonne Nolan, that –

(1) The Committee notes the proposed Policy and Resources Committee work programme for the 2022/23 municipal year.

(2) In light of the significant challenges relating to the Council's finances and the importance of budget monitoring and delivering a budget strategy for 2023/24 the work programme of budget development planned to be undertaken by the Finance Sub-committee as a working group should be undertaken by Group Leaders meeting as a working group.

(3) That the interim Director of Finance be requested to develop a Forward Plan for the Group Leaders Working Group in relation to budget management.

Following a discussion on the implications of the motion, the motion was put and agreed (12:3). It was therefore –

Resolved (12:3) – That

(1) The Committee notes the proposed Policy and Resources Committee work programme for the 2022/23 municipal year.

(2) In light of the significant challenges relating to the Council's finances and the importance of budget monitoring and delivering a budget strategy for 2023/24 the work programme of budget development planned to be undertaken by the Finance Sub-committee as a working group should be undertaken by Group Leaders meeting as a working group.

(3) That the interim Director of Finance be requested to develop a Forward Plan for the Group Leaders Working Group in relation to budget management.

32 EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved – That, under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act. The Public Interest test has been applied and favours exclusion.

33 SALE OF EGERTON HOUSE AND PACIFIC ROAD, BIRKENHEAD

The Assistant Chief Executive introduced the report of the Director of Regeneration and Place. Following a lengthy discussion on the officer recommendations contained within the report, it was –

Resolved (14:0) (1 abstention) – That the Council's freehold interest in the properties Egerton House and Pacific Road be sold to the lessee, Wirral Chamber of Commerce and Industry, for the sum detailed in the report.