



Policy and Resources Committee

Date:	Wednesday, 5 October 2022
Time:	6.00 p.m.
Venue:	Committee Room 1 - Wallasey Town Hall

Contact Officer: Daniel Sharples
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Website: wirral.gov.uk

Please note that public seating is limited, therefore members of the public are encouraged to arrive in good time.

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This meeting will be webcast at
<https://wirral.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

AGENDA

- 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**
- 2. APOLOGIES**
- 3. MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members are asked to consider whether they have any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interest in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest.

- 4. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 14)**

To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meetings held on 31 August 2022 and 7 September 2022.

5. PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS

5.1 Public Questions

Notice of question to be given in writing or by email by 12 noon, 30 September 2022 to the Council's Monitoring Officer (committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk) and to be dealt with in accordance with Standing Order 10.

For more information on how your personal information will be used, please see this link:

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Please telephone the Committee Services Officer if you have not received an acknowledgement of your question by the deadline for submission.

5.2 Statements and Petitions

Notice of representations to be given in writing or by email by 12 noon, 30 September 2022 to the Council's Monitoring Officer (committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk) and to be dealt with in accordance with Standing Order 11.1.

Petitions may be presented to the Committee if provided to Democratic and Member Services no later than 10 working days before the meeting, at the discretion of the Chair. The person presenting the petition will be allowed to address the meeting briefly (not exceeding three minute) to outline the aims of the petition. The Chair will refer the matter to another appropriate body of the Council within whose terms of reference it falls without discussion, unless a relevant item appears elsewhere on the Agenda. If a petition contains more than 5,000 signatures, it will be debated at a subsequent meeting of Council for up to 15 minutes, at the discretion of the Mayor.

Please telephone the Committee Services Officer if you have not received an acknowledgement of your statement/petition by the deadline for submission.

5.3 Questions by Members

Questions by Members to dealt with in accordance with Standing Orders 12.3 to 12.8.

SECTION A - KEY AND OTHER DECISIONS

There are no key or other decisions to consider.

SECTION B - BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

6. 2023/24 BUDGET UPDATE (Pages 15 - 24)

SECTION C - WORK PROGRAMME / OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

7. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 25 - 34)

SECTION D - REFERRALS FROM COMMITTEES / COUNCIL

8. MINUTES OF FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE (Pages 35 - 36)

Minutes of the Finance Sub-Committee held on 8 September 2022.

Policy & Resources Committee Terms of Reference

The Policy and Resources Committee has two main areas of responsibility, which is to provide strategic direction to the operation of the Council, including making decisions on policies and co-ordinating spend not reserved to full Council, and to maintain a strategic overview of outcomes, performance, risk management and budgets.

The Committee is charged by full Council to:-

- (a) formulate, co-ordinate and implement corporate policies and strategies and the medium term financial plan (budget), which includes responsibility for any decision:
 - (i) that relates to such matters to the extent that they are not reserved to full Council;
 - (ii) on any cross-cutting policies that impact on other committee areas;
 - (iii) on policy matters not otherwise allocated to any other committee; and
 - (iv) to determine any dispute or difference between committees;
- (b) provide a co-ordinating role across all other service committees and retain a 'whole-council' view of performance, budget monitoring and risk management, which includes responsibility for a decision:
 - (i) that has a major impact on a number of Council services or on the Council as a whole;
 - (ii) on any virement between Budget funds (revenue) requested by a Committee or officer in excess of **£500,000**;
 - (iii) on any virement between Budget funds (capital) or any amendment to the Capital Programme requested by a Committee or officer in excess of £500,000
 - (iv) regarding land and property including major acquisition and disposals, which includes reserved decision making concerning any purchase, sale or transfer of a value in excess of, or likely to exceed, **£500,000**, unless the Committee has delegated this function in relation to a specified area or business plan as the Committee may

determine

- (v) regarding companies or limited liability partnerships including acquisition and disposals; and
 - (vi) which is deemed significant in terms of impact on the Council's revenue or capital (to be determined by the Head of Paid Service and/or Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Leader);
- (c) without limiting the generality of responsibility for cross-cutting policies (at (a) above), lead on behalf of the Council:
- (i) in matters concerning relationships with HM Government, the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and other major public and non-public bodies;
- (d) appoint Council representatives as required;
- (e) nominate councillors and other persons to outside bodies; and
- (f) undertake responsibility for developing and monitoring the enabling corporate services, including, finance and investment, project support and risk management, strategic procurement and commercial strategies, ICT, property and asset management, human resources and organisational development, law and governance, communications and public affairs, emergency planning and business continuity.

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 31 August 2022

Present: Councillor J Williamson (Chair)

Councillors T Anderson P Stuart
P Gilchrist H Cameron
P Cleary L Rennie
EA Grey A Hodson (In place
of J Johnson)
T Jones J Bird
Y Nolan M Booth
J Robinson K Hodson

34 **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

The Chair welcomed members, officers and members of the public to the meeting and read out the webcast notice.

35 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jenny Johnson.

36 **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. No declarations were made.

37 **MINUTES**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2022 be approved and adopted as a correct record.

38 **PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS**

39 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

The Chair reported that one Public Question had been received.

Ruth Molyneux outlined the impact the cost-of-living crisis was having on residents in Wirral South and asked whether Wirral Council would commit to keeping Bromborough Civic Centre and Library open during the winter months and ensure that the Civic Centre was put in scope for Community Asset Transfer.

In response, the Chair outlined that she was proposing to move a motion later in the meeting to ask officers to review Council assets with a view to setting up 'warm banks' in partnership with public sector partners.

A supplementary question was then asked in relation to Bromborough Civic Centre and Library, asking whether it would be included in the warm bank proposals and whether it could be kept open until a Community Asset Transfer could be completed. The Chair confirmed that the review officers would be asked to undertake would include all assets include Bromborough Civic Centre and Library.

40 **STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS**

The Chair informed the Committee that no statements or petitions had been received.

41 **QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS**

The Chair informed the Committee that no questions by members had been received.

42 **COST OF LIVING CRISIS**

The Director of Resources introduced the report which detailed the proposed response to the cost-of-living crisis affecting the Borough and its residents caused by the current and predicted high energy costs and rapidly rising inflation impacting on business and residents' incomes. The report detailed the information that had been collected by the Council in terms of the impact of the crisis on residents as well as the impact on the Council with a reported £5.3m gap in the 2022-23 budget as a result of energy increases, contract inflation and reduction in income. The report further detailed the package of both financial and non-financial support put in place for residents and businesses including from the Council, Central Government and other organisations.

Members discussed the report in detail and feedback was provided in relation to communicating with residents about the support on offer, and the links between the climate crisis and cost of living crisis. Further concern was raised in relation to the impact of increasing costs for foster carers, care homes and the delivery of the Council's regeneration programme.

Following the debate, it was moved by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Jean Robinson, that –

“the Policy & Resources Committee:

1. recognises the cost of living rise as a crisis for the Borough and that the Authority's response to assist citizens and businesses in need is declared as a priority in the coming period;
2. authorise the Chief Executive and Directors to:
 - a. collate and communicate the services and facilities that the Council can offer residents and businesses and the means by which they may access that support; and
 - b. work with community groups and other bodies to co-ordinate and assist, directly and through inclusion within the Cost of Living Action Group, to ensure the best delivery of services and facilities that may provide assistance across the Borough in responding to the cost of living crisis: and
3. incorporate the cost of living crisis as a stand-alone item for the Group Leaders' (Member Working Group) agenda for the Group Leaders to be briefed upon ongoing issues and liaise with the Cost of Living Action Group and to report back to a future meeting of the Committee the progress being made to support the crisis
4. That the Director of Resources report to the earliest possible meeting of this Committee on:
 - i. a review of all council buildings, including libraries and leisure centres, and provide the additional energy costings to keep them open during the Winter months to provide safe and warm spaces for residents who are struggling with the cost of living crisis;
 - ii. updating the Committee on work with our partners including the NHS, police, fire service, community and faith sector groups, to establish buildings that can be accessed by residents during the winter months to keep them safe and warm;
 - iii. a breakdown of all funding found to be available to community groups currently providing a support to residents in need, with a view to continuing and/or increasing it to ensure that residents are offered support during the cost of living crisis;
 - iv. a review of schemes to support residents such as fuel top ups whether the frequency and value of the support can be increased and the capacity within organisations to deliver additional support to residents to enable as many people as possible to stay warm at home for longer;
 - v. a review of COMF to support the cost of living crisis;
 - vi. an update on the £113,000 proposed by the Labour Group and agreed at full Council to address fuel poverty;
 - vii. a review of all reserves in light of this crisis and whether any can be used and or re-purposed in support of Wirral's cost of living crisis."

Councillor Tom Anderson then indicated that he wished to move four further additions to the motion. Following a discussion and clarification having been sought from officers, the meeting was adjourned at 19.08pm.

The meeting resumed at 19.34pm.

Councillor Tom Anderson moved an amendment to the motion, seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie, to include the following as an addition –

“Policy and Resources Committee recognises that Council will have to make further saving next financial year. And that difficult decisions will be made. However, local councillors know their communities well and are well placed direct small amounts of funding to support our most vulnerable residents through the unforeseen economic turmoil.

Building on the pilot scheme developed by Wallasey Ward Councillors last Municipal Year, each Councillor will be given an additional £2000 to add to their existing Ward Member Budget to support community groups and charities in their wards to cope with increasing energy costs. This will ensure these Groups can continue the vital services our residents rely on.

To fund this initiative, Committee resolves to make an in year saving of 30% from the Communications and Marketing Budget (£144,450).

Committee further resolves to make this a permanent, full year saving for the 2023 / 2024 financial year.”

The Committee discussed the implications of the amendment and sought legal advice. Members were advised that they should be assured that they have all the necessary information required to make a decision. The motion was then put and lost (6:9).

Councillor Tom Anderson moved a further amendment to the original motion, seconded by Councillor Kathy Hodson, to include the following as an addition –

“On 25th July, the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee approved the funding of Wirral’s Health Protection Delivery Service from April 2023 to March 2024 through the core Public Health Grant.

Given we have now moved into a phase of ‘Living with Covid’, this Committee recognises the unanticipated energy price increased impacting our residents must take precedence. Therefore, this Committee resolves to:

1. Reprofile £705,756 from the Health Protection Delivery Service to the Household Support Fund to ensure our most vulnerable residents, young and old, are supported through the uncertainty of the fluctuating energy markets.
2. Requests the Director of Public Health to review the Health Protection Delivery Service in line with all other services directly funded from the £30.99 million Public Health Grant and make recommendations to the next meeting of the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee as to how the Health Protection Delivery Service could be delivered from April 2023.”

A further discussion ensued on the proposed amendment. The motion was then put and lost (6:9).

Councillor Tom Anderson moved a further amendment to the original motion, seconded by Councillor Helen Cameron, to include the following as an addition –

“Policy and Resources Committee recognises the excellent work undertaken by community and voluntary groups enabled by the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) as part of the Government and Council’s response to the Covid crisis.

In addition to the £1.7 million of COMF money identified, this Committee believes we should go further in support of our most vulnerable residents this winter. Therefore, utilising £5.1 million from the Public Health Reserve for 2022/23 (retaining £800,000 to mitigate against overspends) Policy and Resources Committee resolves to create a £6.8 million Cost of Living Fund building on the practices, oversight and delivery developed during the operation of COMF to support our most vulnerable residents.”

Members debated the addition and its implications. It was then put and lost (6:9).

Councillor Tom Anderson moved a further amendment to the original motion, seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie, to include the following as an addition –

“Policy and Resources Committee recognises the Government provided over £200 million to support our residents through the Covid crisis.

From the latest tranche funding figures, £673,155 remains uncommitted from a total of £8.5 million.

Therefore, Policy and Resources resolves to transfer this uncommitted spend to the Emergency Financial Support Scheme and Discretionary Housing Scheme to support those residents who can demonstrate they have suffered financial hardship as a direct result of Covid.”

The Director of Resources outlined that there was a requirement to spend the tranche funding on Covid-19 related outcomes, therefore proposed the addition of “subject to the equivalent amount of funding being released from core budgets”. Councillor Tom Anderson as mover of the amendment accepted the additional wording.

The substantive amendment was then agreed as a friendly amendment by Councillor Janette Williamson as the mover of the original motion.

The substantive motion was then put and agreed unanimously. It was therefore –

Resolved – That the Policy & Resources Committee:

- 1. recognises the cost of living rise as a crisis for the Borough and that the Authority’s response to assist citizens and businesses in need is declared as a priority in the coming period;**
- 2. authorise the Chief Executive and Directors to:**
 - c. collate and communicate the services and facilities that the Council can offer residents and businesses and the means by which they may access that support; and**
 - d. work with community groups and other bodies to co-ordinate and assist, directly and through inclusion within the Cost of Living Action Group, to ensure the best delivery of services and facilities that may provide assistance across the Borough in responding to the cost of living crisis: and**
- 3. incorporate the cost of living crisis as a stand-alone item for the Group Leaders’ (Member Working Group) agenda for the Group Leaders to be briefed upon ongoing issues and liaise with the Cost of Living Action Group and to report back to a future meeting of the Committee the progress being made to support the crisis**
- 4. That the Director of Resources report to the earliest possible meeting of this Committee on:**
 - viii. a review of all council buildings, including libraries and leisure centres, and provide the additional energy costings to keep them open during the Winter months to provide safe and warm spaces for residents who are struggling with the cost of living crisis;**
 - ix. updating the Committee on work with our partners including the NHS, police, fire service, community and faith sector groups, to establish buildings that can be accessed by residents during the winter months to keep them safe and warm;**
 - x. a breakdown of all funding found to be available to community groups currently providing a-support to residents in need, with a view to continuing and/or increasing it to ensure that residents are offered support during the cost of living crisis;**
 - xi. a review of schemes to support residents such as fuel top ups whether the frequency and value of the support can be increased and the capacity within organisations to deliver additional support**

to residents to enable as many people as possible to stay warm at home for longer;

- xii. a review of COMF to support the cost of living crisis;**
 - xiii. an update on the £113,000 proposed by the Labour Group and agreed at full Council to address fuel poverty;**
 - xiv. a review of all reserves in light of this crisis and whether any can be used and or re-purposed in support of Wirral's cost of living crisis.**
- 5. recognises the Government provided over £200 million to support our residents through the Covid crisis. From the latest tranche funding figures, £673,155 remains uncommitted from a total of £8.5 million. Therefore, Policy and Resources resolves to transfer this uncommitted spend to the Emergency Financial Support Scheme and Discretionary Housing Scheme to support those residents who can demonstrate they have suffered financial hardship as a direct result of Covid, subject to the equivalent amount of funding being released from core budgets.**

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POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 7 September 2022

Present: Councillor J Williamson (Chair)

Councillors T Anderson P Stuart
P Gilchrist H Cameron
P Cleary J Bird
EA Grey M Booth
T Jones A Hodson (in place
of L Rennie)
Y Nolan K Hodson
J Robinson J Johnson

In attendance: Councillors C Davies

43 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and those watching the webcast. The Chair informed the Committee that it was the last meeting that Philip McCourt would attend before leaving his role as Director of Law and Governance to take up a role as a consultant at Bevan Brittan LLP. Following a speech from the Director of Law and Governance, Group Leaders placed on record their thanks to Mr McCourt for his work during his time at the Council.

44 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lesley Rennie.

45 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.

No declarations were made.

46 PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS

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

47 CAPITAL MONITORING QUARTER 1 2022/23

The Director of Resources introduced the report which provided an update on the progress of the Capital Programme 2022/23 at the end of June 2022 and recommended that Committee agree the revised 2022/23 Capital Programme

of £147.6 million taking account of re-profiling, virements, additional funding requirements and grant variations identified since the Capital Programme was formally agreed on 28th February 2022.

Following the setting of the budget in February 2022, a number of schemes remained unspent and the funding had been reprofiled into the capital programme as detailed in the report. The report further detailed the new grant funded schemes including the Better Care Fund Disabled Facilities Grant, the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement and Basic and High Needs school provision. The report sought the Committee's approval of the proposed virements within the gift of Policy and Resources Committee and the recommended approval of the revised Capital Programme to Council.

Members discussed the detail of a number of the Capital Programmes including the cost for the works to the Dock Road Bridge and the liability for the increased costs for the West Kirby Flood Alleviation Scheme. Following a detailed discussion in relation to the Secretary of State's request to see the Council's plan to generate additional capital receipts, the Director of Resources undertook to report back to the Committee on the proposed phasing of repaying the capitalisation funding based on the timing of capital receipts.

Resolved – That

(1) Council be recommended to approve the revised Capital Programme of £147.6 million for 2022/23, including the addition of the new grant funding referred to in section 3.4.

(2) The virements referred to in Appendix D to the report with a value of less than £0.5m be approved.

48 2022/23 BUDGET MONITORING FOR QUARTER ONE (1 APR – 30 JUN)

The Director of Resources introduced the report which set out the financial monitoring information for the Council as at quarter 1 (1 Apr – 30 Jun) of 2022/23 and provided Members with an overview of budget performance, including progress on the delivery of the 2022/23 saving programme and a summary of reserves and balances, to enable the Committee to take ownership of the budgets and provide robust challenge and scrutiny to Officers on the performance of those budgets.

The impact of the Cost-of-Living Crisis on the Council's budget was outlined, with the report detailing the pressures arising from the macroeconomic pressures resulting in an adverse variance of £5.3m at Q1. This included additional cost of utilities in Council buildings, a shortfall in leisure income, a reduction in car parking income and an increase in the cost of the waste

contract. It was further reported that the national employers staff pay award presented an additional pressure of £3.4m, and that this had yet to be accepted. The report detailed the proposed mitigations against the increase budget pressures, and the Committee was advised that these would continue to be reported throughout the financial year.

In response to queries by members, it was clarified that the loss of income in car parking charges was due to both the delay in implementation of new charges, and the reduction in income on existing parking schemes. An update was also provided on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) statutory override, which presently meant Local Authorities were not liable for the DSG deficit but was due to expire 2022-23, with national lobbying of central government ongoing to extend the override. The costs associated with reprovision of Library Services was also raised, with £0.380m additional costs to be mitigated as a result of unexpected circumstances such as additional security and energy costs.

Resolved – That

- (1) the balanced forecast revenue position presented at Quarter 1 be noted.**
- (2) the progress on delivery of the 2022/23 savings programme at Quarter 1 be noted.**
- (3) the forecast level of reserves and balances at Quarter 1 be noted.**

49 **2022-23 REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING FOR QUARTER ONE (1 APR – 30 JUN) FOR RESOURCES, LAW AND GOVERNANCE AND CORPORATE OFFICE**

The Director of Resources introduced the report which set out the financial monitoring information for the Policy & Resources Committee as its function as a Policy and Services Committee for the Resources Directorate, the Law and Governance Directorate and the Corporate Office at quarter 1 (1 Apr – 30 Jun) of 2022-23. The report provided Members with an overview of revenue and capital budget performance, including progress on the delivery of the 2022-23 saving programme and a summary of reserves to enable the Committee to take ownership of the budgets and provide robust challenge and scrutiny to Officers on the performance of those budgets.

Resolved – That

- (1) the forecast adverse revenue position of £0.657m presented at Quarter 1 be noted.**

(2) the progress on delivery of the 2022-23 savings programme at Quarter 1 be noted.

(3) the forecast level of reserves at Quarter 1 be noted.

(4) the forecast capital position presented at Quarter 1 be noted.

50 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Director of Law and Governance introduced the report which provided the Committee with an opportunity to plan and regularly review its work across the municipal year.

Members discussed the Cost of Living report due to be considered by the Committee in the future and suggested the inclusion of the financial and public health implications of keeping council buildings open during the winter to act as 'warm banks'.

On a motion by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Jean Robinson, it was –

Resolved – That the work programme, with the inclusion of a report on the financial and public health implications of keeping council buildings open during the winter to act as 'warm banks', be noted.

51 **EXTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT 2020-21, AUDITORS REPORT COMPANY GOVERNANCE 2020-21 AND MERSEYSIDE WASTE VALUE FOR MONEY REPORT 2020-21**

The Director of Resources introduced the report which provided for consideration the recommendations of the Audit and Risk Management Committee in respect of External Audit Annual Audit Report 2020-21, Auditors Report Company Governance 2020-21 and Merseyside Waste Value for Money Report 2020-21. It was reported that the report was submitted to Policy and Resources Committee as per best practice to provide an overarching view of the final reports prior to submission to Council for approval.

The Committee discussed the recommendation of the External Auditor in relation to a Council officer being a member of the Board of Edsential, and it was confirmed that the Assistant Director of Education was a member of the Board.

On a motion by Councillor Jean Robinson, seconded by the Chair, it was –

Resolved – That

(1) Council be recommended to approve the publication of the External Audit Annual Audit Report 2020-21, Auditors Report Company Governance 2020-21 and Merseyside Waste Value for Money Report 2020-21.

(2) a further report on the implementation of the Auditors recommendations and progress throughout the year be considered at a future meeting.

52 MINUTES OF THE SENIOR OFFICER AND APPOINTMENTS STAFFING SUB-COMMITTEE

Resolved – That the minutes of the Senior Officer and Appointments Staffing Sub-Committee meeting held on 28 July 2022 be noted.

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POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 5 October 2022

REPORT TITLE:	2023/24 BUDGET SETTING PROCESS
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the 2023/24 budget position following changes to the assumptions made and presented to the Committee in March 2022. These changes have arisen as a result of the national picture of high inflation and rising costs which are impacting on the budget gap, causing it to increase significantly for 2023/24. The report sets out the work already undertaken as well as the need for further work to develop the 2023/24 budget in order to urgently mitigate the gap.

The Policy and Resources Committee, in consultation with the respective Policy and Service Committees, is charged by Council to formulate a draft Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and budget to recommend to the Council. The Policy and Service Committees are responsible for those services being delivered under their operational headings within their annual budget envelope.

The report supports the delivery of the Wirral Plan as part of the process of delivering a balanced budget for all Council activity, and therefore all Wirral Plan aims and objectives, for 2023/24.

This is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Policy & Resources Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the work undertaken to date to deliver the 2023/24 budget.
2. Note the revised 2023/24 budget gap and the factors contributing to this.
3. Note that officers will work up a further package of policy options to meet the revised budget gap, with Members engaged via the Group Leaders' Budget working group and a further round of budget workshops with Policy & Services Committees.
4. Authorise the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair and Group spokespersons, to undertake a pre-budget "have your say" consultation, setting out the scale of the Council's 2023/24 budget challenge and inviting residents to offer their views on the prioritisation of Council Services.
5. Approve that the outcomes of the pre-budget "have your say" consultation be reported back to a future meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee as part of the budget setting process.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 The Council has a legal responsibility to set a balanced budget, which sets out how financial resources are to be allocated and utilised. To do this effectively requires engagement with staff, elected members and residents. This report highlights the external challenges that are impacting on the 2023/24 budget setting process and highlights the urgent need for further work to ensure the necessary preparations towards a budget recommendation to Council on 28 February 2023.
- 1.2 The scale of the financial challenge that the Council faces cannot be overstated. Setting a budget, especially in the context of largely uncontrollable, macro-economic pressures, emerging at an unprecedented pace, requires difficult decisions to ensure that a balanced position can be presented. Regular Member engagement on the process, which this report forms part of, is considered essential for effective budget formulation.
- 1.3 Failure to set a balanced budget may lead to intervention from the Secretary of State under section 15 of the Local Government Act 1999. Failure to set a lawful budget by the required time may lead to a loss of revenue, significant additional costs and reputational damage.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 There is a need to identify a package of policy options that exceeds the anticipated 2023/24 budget gap to enable Members to make a decision in respect of setting a balanced budget. There are no other options open to the Council that effectively mitigate the risk of issuing a section 114 notice.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The budget setting process for 2023/24 commenced much earlier than in previous years in order to put the Council in a strong position in terms of its continued improvement and financial recovery, set against the backdrop of the key principles from the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (Appendix 1). Directors were asked by the Chief Executive in May to work up and present to the Strategic Leadership Team viable budget policy options in order to meet the then forecast budget gap of £14.1m. Proposals were brought forward against defined Directorate savings targets and shared with Policy and Service committees through a series of budget workshops during the summer.
- 3.2 As a result of this work, a suite of proposals totalling £13.2m were brought forward to the relevant Policy and Services Committees for comment. These proposals have also been stress-tested to ensure they are realistic and achievable. The early start to the budget setting process put the Council in a strong position in its 2023/24 budget preparation with the anticipated gap almost balanced with the proposals brought forward. This early start demonstrated that the Council had regained a positive position of sound financial sustainability with robust practices in place that evidenced

a culture of good financial management. This progress was also shared with the Independent Assurance Panel, which endorsed the approach that had been taken.

- 3.3 In June, financial monitoring highlighted a range of in-year (2022/23) financial pressures resulting from emerging external, national and global circumstances. These financial challenges are having a significant impact on:
- Contract inflation
 - Reduced income
 - Energy price increases
 - Pay inflation.
- 3.4 Mitigation was identified against the in-year pressures to make it possible to report a balanced budget at financial year end. However, there quickly became a need to review and continuously re-assess the 2022/23 impact, 2023/24 baseline gap and wider MTFP considerations.
- 3.5 Over the summer, further modelling of increasing pressures was undertaken as the national economic picture worsened at an unprecedented rate with record high inflation and rising energy costs. During August, a review was conducted to re-assess the scale of pressures in 2023/24 across all Council Directorates and to re-set the MTFP against worse/mid-range/best case scenarios. It should be noted that these financial challenges are facing the whole country and Wirral, like most other Council's, is now facing a significantly worsened assumed budget gap for 2023/24, which currently stands at £49m.
- 3.6 Contained within the net budget gap of £49m, are five main items, which constitute approximately £42.3m of all pressures:
- Adult Social care - £12.9m
 - Utility costs - £10.5m
 - Pay award impact estimate - £9.9m
 - Children's residential placements - £5.5m
 - Reduced income - £3.5m
- 3.7 The Senior Leadership Team has been meeting regularly to formulate a revised approach to meeting the budget gap in the context of this worsening financial picture. This includes:
- Completing a detailed review of all forecast 2023/24 assumed pressures,
 - Completing a review of earmarked reserves,
 - Identifying a second Tranche of budget policy options for 2023/24 to be brought forward at pace.
- 3.8 In terms of the final bullet point above, given the scale of the budget challenge, an approach of salami-slicing all budgets is not considered sustainable and more radical approaches will need to be considered. Specifically, there will be a need to re-visit the Council's core purpose and statutory duties and responsibilities for providing essential services to those with the greatest needs, over those services which are discretionary and have been delivered by choice rather than legal or statutory duty.
- 3.9 A package of Tranche 2 savings will be brought forward and a further round of budget workshops will be scheduled with Policy Committees during

October/November. The outcomes from these workshops will be combined with the first round of budget workshops delivered over the summer to review Tranche 1 policy options and will be presented to Policy & Resources Committee in December.

- 3.10 Given the scale of the revised 2023/24 budget challenge, it is also proposed that a high-level, pre-budget consultation is initiated as early as possible, that seeks to harness the views of Wirral residents in relation to the prioritisation of Council services. The outcomes of this consultation will inform one of a number of the Policy and Resources committee's considerations when formulating its final budget recommendation, alongside the outcomes from the committee budget workshops and the level of funding available once the government's Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) is completed and the financial settlement for 2023/24 is clear.
- 3.11 This high-level approach should be seen as an opportunity to set out to residents the scale of the budget challenge the Council faces and the reasons behind this, in line with other authorities across the country. It should also be used as an opportunity to remind residents how the Council's budget is made up and how it is spent, highlighting the distinction between statutory services which the Council has a legal duty to provide and additional discretionary services which are delivered out of choice.
- 3.12 Officers will continue to monitor the financial situation closely given the level of volatility in the external environment and factors that have led to the worsened budget position set out in this report. It is only once the government's financial settlement is made clear, that a robust and final budget position can be presented. It is the responsibility of officers to ensure there is a sufficient package of policy options for members to decide upon as a gap position for the forthcoming budget year emerges.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This report provides the Committee with an update on 2023/24 budget preparation, how external factors are impacting on this and how the assumed gap has significantly worsened from £14.1m to £49m over the past three months due to major changes in the financial landscape. Work is now under way to address the increased gap and bring forward a package of policy options to inform the final budget recommendation in February 2023.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Policy and Resources Committee, in consultation with the respective Policy and Service Committees, has been charged by Council to formulate a draft Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and budget to recommend to the Council.
- 5.2 The Council must set the budget in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and approval of a balanced budget each year is a statutory responsibility of the Council. Sections 25 to 29 of the Local Government Act 2003 impose duties on the Council in relation to how it sets and monitors its budget. These provisions require the Council to make prudent allowance for the risk and uncertainties in its budget and regularly monitor its finances during the

year. The legislation leaves discretion to the Council about the allowances to be made and action to be taken.

- 5.3 Section 30(6) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 provides that the Council has to set its budget before 11th March in the financial year preceding the one in respect of which the budget is set.
- 5.4 The provisions of section 25, Local Government Act 2003 require that, when the Council is making the calculation of its budget requirement, it must have regard to the report of the chief finance (s.151) officer as to the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.
- 5.5 When considering options, Members must bear in mind their fiduciary duty to the council taxpayers of Wirral. Members must have adequate evidence on which to base their decisions on the level of quality at which services should be provided.
- 5.6 Where a service is provided pursuant to a statutory duty, it would not be lawful to fail to discharge it properly or abandon it, and where there is discretion as to how it is to be discharged, that discretion should be exercised reasonably.
- 5.7 The report sets out the relevant considerations for Members to consider during their deliberations and Members are reminded of the need to ignore irrelevant considerations. Members have a duty to seek to ensure that the Council acts lawfully. Members must not come to a decision which no reasonable authority could come to; balancing the nature, quality and level of services which they consider should be provided, against the costs of providing such services.
- 5.8 There is a particular requirement to take into consideration the Council's fiduciary duty and the public sector equality duty in coming to its decision.
- 5.9 The public sector equality duty is that a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to: (1) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010; (2) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and (3) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 5.10 Any decision made in the exercise of any function is potentially open to challenge if the duty has been disregarded. The duty applies both to Full Council when setting the budget and to the Policy and Services Committees when considering decisions.
- 5.11 Once a budget is in place, Council has delegated responsibility to the Policy and Services Committees to implement it. The Committees may not act contrary to the Budget without consent of Council other than in accordance with the Procedure Rules set out at Part 4(3) of the Constitution.
- 5.12 It is essential, as a matter of prudence that the financial position continues to be closely monitored. In particular, Members must satisfy themselves that sufficient

mechanisms are in place to ensure both that agreed savings are delivered and that new expenditure is contained within the available resources. Accordingly, any proposals put forward must identify the realistic measures and mechanisms to produce those savings.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 The budget process for 2023/24 will have a direct impact on resources. For all individual budget policy options brought forward, an impact assessment will be completed setting out their impact on staffing, assets and other resource requirements.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 The Council's ability to maintain a balanced budget is dependent on a proactive approach due to estimated figures being provided in the calculation for the budget, albeit the best estimates available at the time, plus any amount of internal and external factors that could impact on the budget position. Examples of which are the significant emerging inflationary and cost of living pressures, new legislation, increased demand, loss of income, increased funding, decreased funding, inability to recruit to posts, ongoing impact of the pandemic, etc.

7.2 A robust monitoring and management process for the budget is in place. If at any time during the year an adverse position is forecast, remedial action must be agreed and implemented immediately to ensure the budget can be brought back to balanced position.

7.3 The risk of this not being able to be achieved could mean that the Council does not have enough funding to offset its expenditure commitments for the year and therefore not be able report a balanced budget at the end of the year. This could result in the Section 151 Officer issuing a Section 114 notice.

7.4 A key risk to the Council's financial plans is that funding and demand assumptions in particular can change as more information becomes available. As such, the MTFP is regularly reviewed and updated as part of routine financial management.

7.5 A balanced MTFP is fundamental in demonstrating robust and secure financial management. Delivering a balanced position requires continual review and revision of plans to allow alternative financial proposals to be developed and embedded in plans as situations change. A delay in agreeing these may put the timetable for setting the 2023/24 budget at risk and may result in a balanced budget not being identified in time ahead of the deadline of 11 March 2023.

7.6 Assumptions have been made in the current budget outlook for income and funding from business rates and council tax and social care grants as the main sources of funding. If there is an adverse change to these assumptions as a result of the CSR, additional savings proposals or reduced expenditure would need to be identified as soon as possible to ensure a balanced five-year MTFP can be achieved. Committees will be kept updated with any announcements regarding the CSR through the year.

7.7 Sections 25 to 29 of the Local Government Act 2003 impose duties on the Council in relation to how it sets and monitors its budget. These provisions require the Council to make prudent allowance for the risk and uncertainties in its budget and regularly monitor its finances during the year. The legislation leaves discretion to the Council about the allowances to be made and action to be taken.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 The preparation of the annual budget requires engagement of all key stakeholders. Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has been engaged in the 2023/24 budget setting process since May. Elected Members have been engaged through Policy and Resources Committee Finance Working Group and all Policy Committees have been engaged in the process through the budget workshops delivered over the summer. A further round of budget workshops will be scheduled to enable members to review further budget policy options brought forward as part of Tranche 2 savings.

8.2 The budget development process creates a requirement for consultation on a number of different levels including:

- Pre-budget consultation (as proposed in this report),
- Service impact consultations,
- Statutory budget consultation (with members of the business community),
- Staff impact consultation where staff are directly impacted by proposals.

As budget policy options are brought forward, they will be assessed to determine any specific consultation requirements.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.

9.2 For all budget policy options included as part of the final budget recommendation, and EIA will be completed.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no Environment and Climate Emergency implications arising as a direct result of this report. All budget policy options brought forward, will need to consider any associated implications as part of their implementation.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 This report has no direct community wealth implications however the budget proposals under consideration should take account of related matters across headings such as the following:

- **Progressive Procurement and Social Value**
How we commission and procure goods and services. Encouraging contractors to deliver more benefits for the local area, such as good jobs, apprenticeship, training & skills opportunities, real living wage, minimising their environmental impact, and greater wellbeing.
- **More local & community ownership of the economy**
Supporting more cooperatives and community businesses.
Enabling greater opportunities for local businesses.
Building on the experience of partnership working with voluntary, community and faith groups during the pandemic to further develop this sector.
- **Decent and Fair Employment**
Paying all employees a fair and reasonable wage.
- **Making wealth work for local places**

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

BACKGROUND PAPERS

CIPFA's Financial Management Code
Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022-27 Wirral Council

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Policy and Resources Committee	13 July 2022
Policy and Resources Committee	16 March 2022
Full Council	28 February 2022
Policy and Resources Committee	15 February 2022

APPENDIX 1 – KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The Council will:

1. Set fees and charges commensurate with a going market rate for the services we provide and make concessions available for vulnerable groups.
2. Set spending levels for services not higher than the Metropolitan average to ensure we can demonstrate value for money for resident funding, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
3. Ensure a digital first approach and review all services to ensure we are making full and immediate use of digital capacity and automation.
4. Ensure that our non-statutory services are not subsidised at the detriment of statutory services unless an evidenced return on investment is demonstrated.
5. Ensure our establishment is at the required level for the services we need to provide and where it needs to be reduced, we will attempt to redeploy staff or provide opportunities for staff to exit the organisation voluntarily before making any compulsory redundancies.
6. Only allocate resources to the themes in the Wirral Plan and where beneficial outcomes can be evidenced.
7. Provide opportunities for communities to engage in where we allocate our resources whilst being clear and realistic about affordability.
8. Consider a range of delivery mechanisms for providing services appropriate to the most beneficial outcomes for communities.
9. Aim to promote and stimulate strong and sustainable growth to generate future income flows.
10. Support trusted partners by leveraging external funding and, within risk-based controls, use the council's covenant strength to enable regeneration.
11. Within 2 years build up and maintain its general fund balances at 5% of its net revenue budget and will maintain a suite of earmarked reserves that will be used for specific projects to support the key priorities and safeguard against financial risk.
12. Not use any one-off Council funding to underpin the revenue budget.
13. Recognise the impact of council tax increases on the public and consider this alongside the annual budget setting process.
14. Ensure that expenditure is contained within the budget envelope and where unforeseen circumstances result in a risk that expenditure will exceed the budget envelope, produce immediate plans to bring it back in line.

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POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 5 October 2022

REPORT TITLE:	WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE
REPORT OF:	HEAD OF LEGAL SERVICES (DEPUTY MONITORING OFFICER)

REPORT SUMMARY

The Policy and Resources Committee, in co-operation with the other Policy and Service Committees, is responsible for proposing and delivering an annual committee work programme. This work programme should align with the corporate priorities of the Council, in particular the delivery of the key decisions which are within the remit of the Committee.

It is envisaged that the work programme will be formed from a combination of key decisions, standing items and requested officer reports. This report provides the Committee with an opportunity to plan and regularly review its work across the municipal year. The work programme for the Policy and Resources Committee is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Policy & Resources Committee is recommended to comment on and note the proposed Policy and Resources Committee work programme for the 2022/23 municipal year.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 To ensure Members of the Policy and Resources committee have the opportunity to contribute to the delivery of the annual work programme.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Various formats for the workplan were explored. The current format is open to amendment to match the requirements of the committee.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The work programme should align with the priorities of the Council and its partners. The programme will be informed by:

- (i) The Council Plan
- (ii) The Council's transformation programme
- (iii) The Council's Forward Plan
- (iv) Service performance information
- (v) Risk management information
- (vi) Public or service user feedback
- (vii) Referrals from Council

Terms of Reference

The Policy and Resources Committee has two main areas of responsibility, which is to provide strategic direction to the operation of the Council, including making decisions on policies and co-ordinating spend not reserved to full Council, and to maintain a strategic overview of outcomes, performance, risk management and budgets.

The Committee is charged by full Council to:-

- (a) formulate, co-ordinate and implement corporate policies and strategies and the medium-term financial plan (budget), which includes responsibility for any decision:
 - (i) that relates to such matters to the extent that they are not reserved to full Council;
 - (ii) on any cross-cutting policies that impact on other committee areas;
 - (iii) on policy matters not otherwise allocated to any other committee; and
 - (iv) to determine any dispute or difference between committees;
- (b) provide a co-ordinating role across all other service committees and retain a 'whole-council' view of performance, budget monitoring and risk management, which includes responsibility for a decision:
 - (i) that has a major impact on a number of Council services or on the Council as a whole;

- (ii) on any virement between Budget funds (revenue) requested by a Committee or officer in excess of **£500,000**;
 - (iii) on any virement between Budget funds (capital) or any amendment to the Capital Programme requested by a Committee or officer in excess of **£500,000**;
 - (iv) regarding land and property including major acquisition and disposals, which includes reserved decision making concerning any purchase, sale or transfer of a value in excess of, or likely to exceed, **£500,000**;
 - (v) regarding companies or limited liability partnerships including acquisition and disposals; and
 - (vi) which is deemed significant in terms of impact on the Council's revenue or capital (to be determined by the Head of Paid Service and/or Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Leader);
- (c) without limiting the generality of responsibility for cross-cutting policies (at (a) above), lead on behalf of the Council:
- (i) in matters concerning relationships with HM Government, the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and other major public and non-public bodies;
- (d) appoint Council representatives as required;
- (e) nominate councillors and other persons to outside bodies; and
- (f) undertake responsibility for developing and monitoring the enabling corporate services, including, finance and investment, project support and risk management, strategic procurement and commercial strategies, ICT, property and asset management, human resources and organisational development, law and governance, communications and public affairs, emergency planning and business continuity.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 This report is for information and planning purposes only, therefore there are no direct financial implication arising. However, there may be financial implications arising as a result of work programme items.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. However, there may be legal implications arising as a result of work programme items.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 There are no direct implications to staffing, ICT or Assets.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1** The Committee's ability to undertake its responsibility to provide strategic direction to the operation of the Council, make decisions on policies, co-ordinate spend, and maintain a strategic overview of outcomes, performance, risk management and budgets may be compromised if it does not have the opportunity to plan and regularly review its work across the municipal year.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1** Not applicable

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1** Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision, or activity.

This report is for information to Members and there are no direct equality implications.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1** This report is for information to Members and there are no direct environment and climate implications.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING

- 11.1** This report is for information to Members and has no direct community wealth implications.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Policy and Resources Committee Work Plan

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Council Plan
The Council's transformation programme
The Council's Forward Plan

Subject History (last three years)

Council Meeting	Date
Policy and Resources Committee	7 October 2020
Policy and Resources Committee	11 November 2020
Policy and Resources Committee	21 December 2020
Policy and Resources Committee	20 January 2021
Policy and Resources Committee	17 February 2021
Policy and Resources Committee	17 March 2021
Policy and Resources Committee	9 June 2021
Policy and Resources Committee	30 June 2021
Policy and Resources Committee	28 July 2021
Policy and Resources Committee	01 September 2021
Policy and Resources Committee	07 October 2021
Policy and Resources Committee (Special Meeting)	25 October 2021
Policy and Resources Committee	10 November 2021
Policy and Resources Committee (Special Meeting)	30 November 2021
Policy and Resources Committee	01 December 2021
Policy and Resources Committee	17 January 2022
Policy and Resources Committee (Budget)	15 February 2022
Policy and Resources Committee	16 March 2022
Policy and Resources Committee	8 June 2022

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POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23

KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN BETWEEN OCTOBER 2022 AND JANUARY 2023

Item	Brief Description	Approximate timescale	Lead Departmental Officer
Capital Ward Funding		Between October 2022 and January 2023	Shaer Halewood

STANDING FORWARD PLAN ITEMS (AS REQUIRED)

Item	Brief Description	Approximate timescale	Lead Departmental Officer
Liverpool City Region Enabling Powers and Associated Issues	Various matters which may require the consent of this Authority as one of the constituent authorities of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority	As required	Director of Law and Governance
Strategic Asset Acquisitions	Approval to acquire key assets as part of the Council's growth strategy	As required	Director of Regeneration and Place
Property and Land Disposals		As required	Director of Regeneration and Place
Loan / Loan Facility Application	To agree a business loan application relating to a local business	As required	Director of Resources
Treasury Management	To report and agree any significant new investments and or loan arrangements including refinancing	As required	Director of Resources
Capital Programme Amendments	To agree changes including new	As required	Director of Resources

2022/23	schemes, funding and any major variations relating to the Capital Programme.		
Financial Support Packages	Proposed financial support packages in response to additional government support funding and additional Wirral fuel support fund.	As required	Director of Resources

ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS – WAITING TO BE SCHEDULED

Item	Brief Description	Approximate timescale	Lead Departmental Officer
Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) – SmartBusiness	To approve the full business case for delivery of phase 2 of the project (Human Resources & Payroll).	April 2023	Shaer Halewood
Discretionary Rate Relief Policy	Proposed changes to Discretionary Rate Relief Policy (Section 47 LGFA 1988) to reflect changes made by Central Government to existing provisions and guidance.	January 2023	Director of Resources
Strategic Change Programme	This report provides an overview of the Council's emerging change programme.	Between January and March 2023	Director of Resources

STANDING ITEMS AND MONITORING REPORTS

Item	Reporting Frequency	Lead Departmental Officer
Performance Monitoring	TBC	Shaer Halewood
Financial Monitoring	Quarterly	Shaer Halewood
Work Programme Update	Every Meeting	Dan Sharples

WORK PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE COMMITTEE

Item	Format	Timescale	Lead Officer	Progress
Working Groups/ Sub Committees				
Task and Finish work				
Spotlight sessions / workshops				
Briefing Notes				
Wirral Growth Company Accounts		TBC	Director of Resources	

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FINANCE SUB COMMITTEE

Thursday, 8 September 2022

Present:

Councillor J Williamson (Chair)

Councillors T Anderson L Rennie
J Bird J Robinson
P Gilchrist

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed members and officers to the meeting. The Sub-Committee was advised that due to the advanced scheduling of meetings, the meeting of the Finance Sub-Committee had fallen the day after Policy and Resources had considered the budget monitoring report for Quarter 1 of 2022/23, and that as a result many of the members' queries in relation to the 2022/23 budget had already been raised.

2 APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence were received.

3 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. No declarations were made.

4 PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS

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

5 2022/23 BUDGET SAVINGS STAR CHAMBER

The Director of Resources introduced the report which provided progress against delivery of the 2022/23 budget savings agreed at full Council on 28 February 2022 as at the end of June 2022. The Star Chamber approach provided the opportunity for members to gain assurance from Directors as to the deliverability of the savings and to support Officers with recommendations for mitigations, should savings be at risk of non-delivery.

Following a query from a member, the Director of Care and Health identified additional pressures in the Adult Social Care and Health budget as a result of hospital discharges and problems identifying domiciliary care support packages, and how these pressures were being offset. Following the

discussion, all Directors were asked to provide a brief summary on any potential pressures in the initial forecast position for Q2 of 2022/23. It was reported that:

- There could be a budget pressure caused by vulnerable people unable to repay debt.
- The capitalisation of staff salaries in Regeneration was currently rated as amber in the delivery RAG rating but it was hoped that in Q2 it would be back on target.
- There had been some delays in the delivery of savings in relation to adoption orders, but it was anticipated that the savings would be fully realised.
- The Neighbourhood Services delivery of savings in Q1 had been transitional and it was hoped that there would an improvement in their delivery in Q2.

Resolved – That the progress against the delivery of the 2022/23 budget savings as at the end of Quarter 1 be noted.