

Appendix 5 – Policy & Services Committee Budget Proposals Feedback

Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee

The Head of Legal Services introduced the report which provided consideration of the recommendations of the Policy and Resources Committee in respect of the 2022/23 Budget Update. The proposals outlined were part of a draft budget and were therefore not without prejudice, and it was for the Committee to focus on these specific proposals, any comments on which would be fed back to the Policy and Resources Committee.

The report included one savings proposal titled Demand Mitigation – Technology and Care Package Review which was an increased efficiency requirement for 2022/23 against the community care budget based on a range of case reviews, demand management approaches and care provider market shaping, providing a saving of £3.89m.

Members queried how the saving would be achieved and whether a guarantee could be made that those who needed care would still be able to access it. The Director of Care and Health explained different opportunity savings and that these were counted once a care package had been reduced as a result of providing alternative services which allowed residents to live more independently. He outlined that as care packages were reviewed on an individual basis, care would only ever be reduced when it was safe to do so and where it was in the interest of an individual to do this.

Resolved – That

(1) the 2022/23 draft budget proposals be noted.

(2) the Director of Care and Health be authorised to take the necessary action to consult on any proposals that require additional consultation and take necessary action to deliver the resulting service changes in consultation with the Chair and Group Spokesperson or reporting to the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee as the Director considers appropriate.

Children, Young People and Education Committee

The Head of Legal Services introduced the report of the Director of Law and Governance which provided for consideration the recommendations of the Policy and Resources Committee in respect of the 2022/23 Budget Update. It was emphasised that the Council had a significant financial challenge and had to demonstrate financial viability, under the scrutiny of an independent Assurance Panel. The proposals outlined were part of a draft budget and were therefore not without prejudice, and it was for the Committee to focus on these specific proposals, any comments on which would be fed back to the Policy and Resources Committee.

Members questioned details of some of the options in the report which established:

- At this stage the process was to set the overall budget, and decisions on particular services would follow once the budget was set

- Equality Impact Assessments, and environmental implications, would be needed at the stage of a decision affecting a service
- Consultations would overlap with the decision on the overall budget and any change in proposals would need alternative budget provisions
- Children's services were very high on the list of people's priorities in the budget consultation
- Any consultation has to include different methods of feedback including non-digital

Resolved: That -

- (1) the 2022/23 draft budget proposals be noted.**
- (2) the relevant director with portfolio be authorised to take the necessary action to consult on any proposals that require additional consultation and take necessary action to deliver the resulting service changes in consultation with the Chair and Group Spokesperson or reporting to the Children Young People and Education Committee as the Director considers appropriate.**

Economy, Regeneration & Development Committee

The Lead Principal Lawyer (Regeneration, Planning and Property) introduced the report of the Director of Law and Governance which provided for consideration the recommendations of the Policy and Resources Committee in respect of the 2022/23 Budget Update.

It was emphasised that the Council had a significant financial challenge and had to demonstrate financial viability, under the scrutiny of an independent Assurance Panel. The proposals outlined were part of a draft budget and were therefore not without prejudice, and it was for the Committee to focus on these specific proposals, any comments on which would be fed back to the Policy and Resources Committee.

Members questioned the details of some of the options in the report and noted:

- That the proposed closure of public conveniences would achieve operational savings and queried if disposal of the buildings to raise revenue had been considered.
- Concerns about the closure of public conveniences in Thornton Hough and Moreton Common and associated anti-social behaviour.
- The costs of maintaining empty corporate buildings and increases in energy tariffs.

Resolved – that:

- (1) the 2022/23 draft budget proposals be noted.**
- (2) the relevant director with portfolio be authorised to take the necessary action to consult on any proposals that require additional consultation**

and take necessary action to deliver the resulting service changes in consultation with the Chair and Group Spokesperson or reporting to the Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee as the Director considers appropriate.

Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee

The Head of Legal Services introduced the report of the Director of Law and Governance which provided for consideration the recommendations of the Policy and Resources Committee in respect of the 2022/23 Budget Update.

It was emphasised that the Council had a significant financial challenge and had to demonstrate financial viability, under the scrutiny of an independent Assurance Panel. The proposals outlined were part of a draft budget and were therefore not without prejudice, and it was for the Committee to focus on these specific proposals, any comments on which would be fed back to the Policy and Resources Committee.

Members discussed the background to the financial situation and recognised that all services affected some people. They noted:

- the possibility of charging more for professional services
- that some issues, notably the climate emergency, would continue even whilst mitigation measures were paused
- there were several school crossing patrol vacancies which could not be filled and these were part of the planned reduction
- that there would be a risk assessment and consultation before any final decisions were made

Resolved – That

(1) the 2022/23 draft budget proposals be noted.

(2) the relevant director with portfolio be authorised to take the necessary action to consult on any proposals that require additional consultation and take necessary action to deliver the resulting service changes in consultation with the Chair and Group Spokesperson or reporting to the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee as the Director considers appropriate.

Housing Committee

The Head of Legal Services introduced the report of the Director of Law and Governance which provided for consideration the recommendations of the Policy and Resources Committee in respect of the 2022/23 Budget Update.

The proposals outlined were part of a draft budget and were therefore not without prejudice, and it was for the Committee to focus on these specific proposals, any comments on which would be fed back to the Policy and Resources Committee. The two proposals relevant to this Committee were: Cease Financial Contribution for the provision of Community Alarms and Response Calls, saving £200k In 2022/23 and

£100k in 2023/24; and, Reconfiguration of Commissioned Homeless Accommodation, saving £115k in 2022/23 and £37k in 2023/24.

Members questioned some of the details of the two savings proposals in the report which established:

- That other funding and services provided by other directorates would alleviate the proposal to cease grant funding for Community Alarms.
- That Wirral Council was one of a small number of local authorities that still provided funding for this service in England.
- Funding for Community Alarms was effectively a subsidy to services being provided by the Social Landlords that are not eligible for Housing Benefits; and that those living in other accommodation settings such as Owner Occupiers and Private Tenants, did not receive this subsidy towards similar services and would be required to pay themselves regardless of incomes. Social Landlords would be required to either pass on the charges to the individual as an additional service charge or could choose to absorb the cost themselves.
- That the proposed reconfiguration of commissioned homeless accommodation services would still allow access to the accommodation for those who are homeless as part of the homeless pathway process.
- Additional Government Grant Funding of £161k p.a. has also been secured until 2024, to strengthen existing services for homeless people allowing enhancement in some schemes.
- That access to the current service offered to homeless people would not be reduced as a result of the savings.

Resolved – That:

(1) the 2022/23 draft budget proposals be noted.

(2) the relevant director with portfolio be authorised to take the necessary action to consult on any proposals that require additional consultation and take necessary action to deliver the resulting service changes in consultation with the Chair and Group Spokesperson or reporting to the Housing Committee as the Director considers appropriate.

Tourism, Communities, Culture & Leisure Committee

The Director of Law and Governance introduced his report which provided for consideration the recommendations of the Policy and Resources Committee in respect of the 2022/23 Budget Update. He emphasised that the Council had a significant financial challenge and had to demonstrate financial viability, under the scrutiny of an independent Assurance Panel. The proposals outlined were part of a draft budget and were therefore not without prejudice, and it was for the Committee to focus on these specific proposals, any comments on which would be fed back to the Policy and Resources Committee.

Members questioned details of some of the options in the report which established:

- These were proposals and consultations on the proposals would take place with stakeholders
- Some existing facilities could provide more varied usage to their local communities.
- The justification and data for the proposals can be provided to Members at a workshop

Resolved – That

(1) the 2022/23 draft budget proposals be noted.

(2) the relevant director with portfolio be authorised to take the necessary action to consult on any proposals that require additional consultation and take necessary action to deliver the resulting service changes in consultation with the Chair and Group Spokesperson or reporting to the Tourism, Communities, Culture & Leisure Committee as the Director considers appropriate.