

CABINET

Date and Time: Thursday 3 August 2023 at 7.00 pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present:

Neighbour (Leader), Radley (Deputy Leader), Clarke, Cockarill, Collins and Oliver

In attendance:

Officers:

Graeme Clark	Executive Director, Corporate Services & S151 Officer
Joanne Rayne	Finance & Property Manager
Liz Vango-Smith	Sustainability & Climate Change Officer
Sharon Black	Committee and Member Services Manager

22 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of 6 July 2023, including exempt minutes, were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Proposed by Cllr Neighbour; Seconded by Cllr Radley

23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Cllr Quarterman. Cllr Bailey was attending the meeting virtually and therefore was unable to vote on agenda items.

24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

25 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman had no announcements.

26 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (ITEMS PERTAINING TO THE AGENDA)

There were none.

27 CLIMATE CHANGE UPDATE

Members heard that this report presented the current status on some priority actions identified in the Climate Action Plan, which had previously been approved by Cabinet on 6 July. It also recommended projects for Cabinet approval to be funded from the Climate Change budget.

Cabinet noted:

- How the Council was supporting Fleet Town Council with bids for funding for work to be carried out on the Harlington Centre, and that work to get a decarbonisation strategy for the building drawn up would be underway once issues with the lease were resolved
- That the projects listed in the report represented around two thirds of the budget for 2023/24

Proposed by Cllr Neighbour; seconded by Cllr Radley

DECISION

Cabinet approved the proposed projects list and associated cost allocations to be funded from the approved 2023/24 climate budget.

28 REVENUE, CAPITAL AND TREASURY OUTTURN 2022/23

The Revenue Outturn report presented the revenue outturn for the year ended 31st March 2023 comparing it with the approved budget and providing explanations of significant variances.

The report also contained the capital outturn for the year ended 31st March 2023 and requests for budget carry forwards.

Cabinet noted:

- The projected outturn from Q3 had been a £17k underspend, had subsequently turned into a £1.3M underspend at the end of the financial year
- This increase was due to additional income from recycling, car parking and interest as well as some accountancy savings and investments
- Contractual inflation and potential cuts in government funding were likely to have a more negative impact on the outturn for 2023/24
- The Q1 forecast would be circulated in O&S paperwork the following week

Proposed by Cllr Radley; Seconded by Cllr Neighbour

Councillors discussed:

- Whether there was any significant variances from the original budget that need to be taken into consideration in 2023/24
- Whether it would be possible to have accurate forecasts of the areas where large variances have occurred throughout the year rather than just at the end of the financial year. It was confirmed that the issue of the significant variance between Q3 and end of year finances had been raised at O&S and, whilst it was confirmed by the S151 officer that most of the large variances had occurred in Q4, there were some areas where

better forecasting could be done and that this issue was being addressed by the Finance team this year.

Councillors thanked the Finance team for their work and diligence in ensuring that the budgets were adhered to.

The Treasury Management Report presented the Council's Treasury Management activities during the year ended 31 March 2023.

A question was asked about the loan from Hampshire County Council at 0% interest and it was confirmed that this was for a specific Fleet Pond project.

DECISION

Cabinet noted the outturn positions for 2022/23 and approved the capital carry forward requests.

29 REVIEW OF RESERVES INCLUDING SANGS FUNDING

The Section 151 Officer presented the outcome of his initial review of the Council's financial reserves, which had been requested by Full Council in February 2023. This review included funds held for Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGS).

The report was intended to inform members of the balances and purpose of reserves held and present proposals to better align them with priority service needs and emerging risks. A further review would be undertaken later in the year alongside the budget process and update of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Councillors noted:

- That SANGS funding was received from developers, and included the need for this to run for 80 years to address maintenance needs
- That there were some recommendations to be noted and others to go to Full Council in September
- That this was intended as an interim review and that a further review would be undertaken later in the financial year

Proposed by: Cllr Radley; Seconded by Cllr Neighbour

Councillors discussed:

- The positive move to allocate funds into areas that would further benefit residents
- That the move would allocate additional funds to various teams, who would now need to look at suitable schemes to use the money available to them

- Whether we were certain that we were not exceeding any restrictions on the funds received during the pandemic that were linked to Covid

DECISION

Cabinet:

- i. Noted the findings of the initial review of reserves and requested that the second stage of the review was undertaken as part of the update of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy once the government funding position was more certain.
- ii. Approved the proposed actions in relation to SANG finances as set out in paragraph 14 and asked officers to report back to Cabinet in the budget setting report.
- iii. Approved the proposed actions in relation to capital reserves as set out in paragraph 16 and asked officers to develop a programme of projects to utilise S106 funds and include these in the budget setting report.

and recommended to Council:

- iv. To approve the proposed prudent minimum balance on the General Fund Working Balance of £6m, to be reviewed as part of the updated Medium-Term Financial Strategy
- v. To approve the earmarking of the 2022/23 underspend to meet the known future cost pressures as detailed in paragraph 8.
- vi. To approve the changes to earmarked reserves highlighted in Appendix 2

30 CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

Cabinet considered and agreed the Cabinet Work Programme for August.

The meeting closed at 7.36 pm