

Minutes

CORPORATE, FINANCE AND PROPERTY SELECT COMMITTEE

2 February 2022

Meeting held at Committee Room 6 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge



	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Richard Mills (Chairman), Tony Eginton (Opposition Lead), Lindsay Bliss, Farhad Choubedar and Richard Lewis</p> <p>Also Present: Cllr Steve Tuckwell</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Richard Coomber (Energy Efficiency Officer), Liz Penny (Democratic Services Officer), Gary Penticost (Head of Repairs, Engineering, Planned Works and Facilities Management) and Iain Watters (Head of Finance - Financial Planning, Capital, Treasury & Systems)</p>
60.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Vanessa Hurhangee and Raymond Graham, with Councillor Steve Tuckwell substituting for the latter.</p>
61.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
62.	<p>TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>In response to a query from Councillor Eginton, it was confirmed that an update on the action points relating to Website Performance and Improvement had yet to be received. Democratic Services would communicate the information to Members as soon as it was available. The minutes of the meeting dated 12 January 2022 were unanimously agreed.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting dated 12 January 2022 be agreed as an accurate record.</p>
63.	<p>TO CONFIRM THAT THE ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED AS PART I WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT THE ITEMS MARKED AS PART II WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>It was confirmed that all items were in Part I and would be considered in public.</p>
64.	<p>DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS 2022/2023 - COMMENTS FROM SELECT COMMITTEES (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p>

A typographical error in the comments / minutes relating to the Families, Health & Wellbeing Select Committee was noted whereby the date should read 5 January **2022** rather than 2021. It was agreed that this would be corrected by Democratic Services.

Members enquired whether the comments of each Select Committee could go straight to Cabinet rather than being referred to the Corporate, Finance and Property Select Committee for approval first. It was agreed that Democratic Services would explore this further. ***(After the meeting Democratic Services established that this was a local convention rather than a constitutional requirement therefore, in future, the comments of each select committee could go directly to Cabinet as requested).***

Subject to the above typographical amendment to the date in the comments / minutes of the Families, Health & Wellbeing Select Committee, the combined set of formal Select Committee comments on the Cabinet's budget proposals 2022/23 were unanimously approved.

RESOLVED: That the Corporate, Finance and Property Select Committee:

- 1. Considered the formal comments on the Cabinet's budget proposals from the other three Select Committees;**
- 2. Agreed its own final comments on the Cabinet's budget proposals for submission; and,**
- 3. Agreed to submit the combined set of formal Select Committee comments to Cabinet for consideration.**

65. **ENERGY EFFICIENCIES IN THE CIVIC CENTRE** *(Agenda Item 6)*

An addendum, which had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting, was tabled which included graphs setting out the Civic Centre electricity consumption from 2016 onwards, avoided energy costs, annual electricity cost and impact of energy price inflation and Civic Centre carbon emissions.

Gary Penticost, Head of Repairs, Engineering, Planned Works & Facilities Management, and Richard Coomber, Energy Efficiency Officer, introduced the report which provided an update to the Committee on the initiatives being explored to reduce the carbon footprint of the Civic Centre and actions that supported the Council's overall Climate Action Plan, commitments and vision.

Members heard that the Civic Centre had been constructed between 1974 and 1979. It was a large building with 700 single glazed windows and doors. The heating was provided by 4 large gas fired boilers and the hot water by 3 dedicated gas fire boilers. The Committee's attention was drawn to the graphs which gave an indication of the work carried out over the last 3 or 4 years. In terms of energy, it was noted that the baseline for kilowatt usage had been set in 2016/17 and the trend in terms of annual consumption had been generally downwards. Carbon emissions were also reducing and heading in the right direction.

The Committee heard that, to assist in achieving these reductions, nearly 2,000 lights in Phase I of the building had been replaced with LED lighting. These LED lights had a lifespan of over 50,000 hours and would last for about 11 years. Other initiatives and

innovations were currently being worked on. Members were informed that details as to how energy reductions could be achieved were to be submitted for inclusion in the Deloitte's Sustainable Interventions paper; these included improvements to the fabric of the building, use of Photovoltaic (PV) materials and changes to ventilation systems.

As set out in the graphs, it was noted that successes in terms of carbon reductions and avoided energy costs had already been achieved. Over £500,000 in avoided energy costs had been achieved since 2016/17 mainly due to the introduction of LED lighting and other energy efficiency works; there had been a spike in energy consumption in 2019/20 which was being explored further but could possibly be attributable to the use of cooling systems at the time. Members heard that a large amount of work was ongoing to reduce carbon emissions in the building.

In response to questions from the Committee it was confirmed that six options were being considered and costed out by Deloitte; these included thermal stores, replacement chillers, cooling towers, and water / air sourced heat pumps. In terms of cost, works could potentially range from £4m to £10m/12m depending on what options were selected.

The Committee was interested to know the age of the gas-fired boilers in the Civic Centre. It was confirmed that the current Hoval boilers were inefficient having been in place for many years. It was acknowledged that this was a matter of concern and would form part of the review by Deloitte. British Gas was currently looking at hydrogen type gas replacement boilers which could be of interest.

Members noted that the reductions achieved to date were to be welcomed but enquired whether the Council was on track to meet the requirements of the Climate Action Plan. It was acknowledged that things were heading in the right direction but there was still a lot of work to be done and this was likely to be a costly process. It was agreed that, through Democratic Services, the Head of Repairs, Engineering, Planned Works & Facilities Management would provide the Committee with an update regarding the Deloitte report and its recommendations once available.

In response to further questioning from the Committee, it was confirmed that boilers in the Civic Centre were used for both heating and hot water. Gas bills were in the region of £127,000 annually at present. Members were informed that the reduction in emissions in 2017/18 and 2018/19 could primarily be attributed to the replacement of lighting systems on the ground and first floors of the Civic Centre. Wholesale replacement of the lights on the 3rd and 4th floors had been suspended temporarily pending the results of the review; however, it was noted that, when lights failed, they would be replaced with LED. Moreover, pyroelectric (or passive) infrared (PIR) systems were being introduced gradually whereby, when lights were not in use, they switched off automatically.

Members noted that the thermostat in the Labour Group meeting room did not work at present. It was confirmed that officers checked the building on a daily basis to identify any such issues and it was agreed that the thermostat would be repaired as soon as possible.

Members enquired whether the reduction in emissions during 2021/21 could also be attributed to changes in lighting systems. It was confirmed that this was the case although the move to laptops with high efficiency screens had also played a part. Councillors heard that the whole office environment was changing and that people working from home was having an impact in terms of energy usage in the Civic Centre.

In the future, the main servers in the building would be moving to the Cloud or offsite which would also reduce energy usage further.

In response to Members' questions, the Committee heard that future plans mainly focussed on insulation and ventilation. Energy from food waste was not being considered at present but some good technology was available including walkways which could generate electricity from people's movement.

At the request of the Committee, it was agreed that the EPC rating of the building would be checked and confirmed. Members commented that, as the Civic Centre was a listed building, superannuation grants would be available and suggested that officers speak to the Finance Team to establish which tax advantages which could be applied for.

Members commented that it would be preferable to introduce LED lighting on the 3rd and 4th floors of the building immediately rather than waiting for the outcome of the Deloitte's review paper. In response to this, officers confirmed that the usage of the 3rd and 4th floors was under review at present; the Committee would be appraised of further developments.

In response to further queries, it was confirmed that the generators at the Civic Centre were diesel powered and were tested every 3 months approximately. It was agreed that an update on the last test completed would be provided to the Committee. Uninterruptable Power Supply (UPS) back up was still carried out on some of the main servers in the building but there would be less reliance on these servers in the future once they were moved to the Cloud / offsite. It was believed that there was only one power supply to the building at present, but this would be checked and confirmed. At the request of Members, it was also agreed that officers would confirm whether separate metering was available to establish usage in different parts of the building.

The Committee sought clarification regarding the Council's electricity contract; it was confirmed that the current contract was with Laser Energy and had commenced in April 2020. The contract would run until 2024 with an option to extend for a further year. Laser used a purchase in advance strategy which meant that energy was purchased in advance of the current financial year and the price fixed for that year. The Council's rates were fixed until 31 March 2022. However, from 1st April 2022, Laser had indicated that electricity prices were likely to rise by 35.7% and gas prices by 66%. The Council's expenditure on electricity had amounted to £562,000 in 2021/22 and was therefore projected to reach £763,000 in 2022/23. For gas, the figure was £125,000 in 2021/22 and was projected to total approximately £207,000 in 2022/23. Members heard that Laser was one of the largest public sector providers, had a good track record and was considered credit worthy.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Head of Repairs, Engineering, Planned Works & Facilities Management provide the Committee with an update regarding the Deloitte's report and its recommendations once available;**
- 2. That the thermostat in the Labour Group meeting room be repaired;**
- 3. That the EPC rating of the building be confirmed;**
- 4. That the Head of Repairs, Engineering, Planned Works & Facilities**

	<p>Management confirm whether there was only one power supply to the building at present and whether separate metering was available to establish usage in different parts of the building; and,</p> <p>5. That the Corporate, Finance and Property Select Committee noted the content of the report.</p>
66.	<p>FORWARD PLAN (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>)</p> <p>It was noted that the Performance Monitoring and Reporting review report would be going to Cabinet on 17 February 2022.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Corporate, Finance and Property Select Committee noted the Cabinet Forward Plan.</p>
67.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME (<i>Agenda Item 8</i>)</p> <p>It was noted that the next meeting of the Corporate, Finance and Property Select Committee was scheduled for 2 March 2022. Due to the impact of the pandemic, no further update was available at present regarding the Homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic Bullying review; however, an update on the Voluntary Sector Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic review would be provided at the March meeting. At the request of Members, it was agreed that Democratic Services would explore the possibility of the Select Committee receiving an update regarding the HOAC construction project.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Democratic Services explore the possibility of the Select Committee receiving an update regarding the HOAC construction project; and, 2. That the Corporate, Finance and Property Select Committee considered the Work Programme and agreed any amendments.
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.05 pm.</p>

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Liz Penny on epenny@hillingdon.gov.uk or Tel: 01895 250185. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.