

Minutes

PROPERTY, HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SELECT COMMITTEE

20 September 2023



Meeting held at Committee Room 5 - Civic Centre

	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Keith Burrows (Chairman) Steve Tuckwell (Vice-Chairman) Darran Davies Elizabeth Garelick Kamal Preet Kaur Peter Money (Opposition Lead)</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Chris Mayo, Assistant Director of Financial Management Andy Goodwin, Head of Strategic Finance Steve Clarke, Democratic Services Officer</p>
21.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO REPORT THE PRESENCE OF ANY SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies had been received from Councillor Alan Chapman.</p>
22.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest in matters coming before the meeting.</p>
23.	<p>TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting dated 11 July 2023 be agreed as a correct record.</p>
24.	<p>TO CONFIRM THAT THE ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED AS PART 1 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT THE ITEMS MARKED PART 2 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>It was confirmed that all items on the agenda were marked as Part 1 and would therefore be held in public.</p>
25.	<p>2024/25 BUDGET PLANNING REPORT FOR SERVICES WITHIN THE REMIT OF THE PROPERTY, HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT SELECT COMMITTEE (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>The Chairman introduced the item and welcomed Chris Mayo, Assistant Director of Financial Management, and Andy Goodwin, Head of Strategic Finance, to the meeting for this item. Officers gave a summary of the report highlighting that this was the first of two budget reports that would be coming to the Select Committee in the 2023/24 municipal year. The scope of this report was to give strategic context to the budget</p>

setting process; later in the municipal year, the Committee would be receiving the detailed budget proposals for 2024/25. Following which, their feedback would be presented to Cabinet where Cabinet would be asked to approve the budget proposals to full Council.

Officers ran through the headlines in terms of the Council's in-year monitoring position and set out the context of the Council's approved budget strategy. Overall, for 2023/24 the Council was reporting a net underspend of £23k, however services within the remit of the Property, Highways & Transport portfolio were forecast to overspend by £51k with the overspend being driven by a slight pressure on recharge income against capital schemes. It was also noted that, overall, the single largest factor driving savings requirements was the exceptional inflation environment. However, it was also noted that, within the remit of the Property, Highways & Transport portfolio, there were no exceptional inflation items.

The Committee thanked officers for their hard work in monitoring the Council's budgetary position and budget planning. It was commended that there were no items within the red category of the savings tracker under the Cabinet Member for Property, Highways & Transport's portfolio; and the £303k in the amber two category were noted as being related to the reduction in the Civic Centre's operating costs. The £736k within the amber one category was highlighted as being primarily linked to fees and charges income. Members praised officers in their sound financial management and doing exceptional work to protect frontline services. The Committee expressed their interest in receiving the in-depth budget setting report for 2024/25 at their January 2024 meeting.

Members also discussed the depth of efficiency savings that could be achieved whilst protecting frontline services and delivering services to the level expected by residents. Officers noted that the capacity of efficiency savings were difficult to determine through any snapshot of the Council's financial position due to the progressive nature of efficiency savings. Efficiencies could be discovered and implemented at a point in the future where they could be applied without any detriment to services due to improvements in technologies, where those efficiencies would not currently be achieved without impacting services. It was highlighted that efficiencies were generally targeted in back office functions to protect those frontline services. The Committee noted the fluid nature of achieving efficiency savings and highlighted the difficult environment that all local authorities were facing in the drive to achieve efficiency savings.

RESOLVED: That the Property, Highways & Transport Select Committee noted the financial context in which the 2024/25 budget setting process will take place in advance of detailed savings proposals being developed and approved at Cabinet in December 2023.

26. **DRAFT REPORT: ATTAINING BEST PRACTICE AND VALUE FOR THE COUNCIL'S HIGHWAYS RESURFACING ACTIVITIES** (*Agenda Item 6*)

The Chairman introduced the item noting that the Committee had come to the final stage of its review into attaining best practice and value for the Council's highways resurfacing activities. The draft final report presenting the Committee's findings was presented to Members for their comment and amendments.

The Committee were supportive of the draft report and highlighted a number of key recommendations arising from the review. Officers were thanked for the work that had

gone into the review and the preparation of the final report. Members gave their general endorsement of the report and recommendations to be submitted to Cabinet.

Officers noted with regard to recommendation 2 that as a direct result of the Committee's review, the Highways Team had begun to adopt and give a weighting to feedback from residents and Ward Councillors in contributing to the process by which the Council assesses the condition of footways and roadways and their priority for repair. As this had already been undertaken by the Highways Team following the Committee's witness sessions with officers, the Committee were asked to amend recommendation 2 asking Cabinet to endorse the adoption of this principle. The Committee agreed to the amendment.

Finally, the Democratic Services Officer confirmed that the new reactive road maintenance machines purchased by the Council and mentioned in the final report were now up and running. The Cabinet Member was due to attend a site visit to observe the new machines the following day and the Select Committee would be invited to also observe the new machines on a separate site visit in October or November.

RESOLVED: That the Property, Highways and Transport Select Committee:

- 1) Agreed the draft final report and recommendations in principle and endorsed its submission to Cabinet for due consideration; and**
- 2) Delegated any drafting changes required prior to the report's submission to Cabinet, including the amendment agreed to recommendation 2, to the Democratic Services Officer and the Chairman, in consultation with the Labour Lead.**

27. SCRUTINY REVIEW INTO THE COUNCIL'S ROAD SAFETY INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES (Agenda Item 7)

The Chairman introduced the item noting that at the Committee's meeting on 11 July 2023, the Select Committee had suggested a number of topics for its next major scrutiny review. These topics were explored with officers for feasibility and briefly presented within the report. The frontrunning topic was deemed to be a review looking into how the Council addresses road safety matters. Officers had produced a draft scoping report for the Committee's consideration which was presented to Members.

The Committee discussed the parameters of the prospective review and sought to focus the review specifically on road safety around the Borough's schools, what the Council was doing to engage with schools and how this could be encouraged. Members highlighted a number of initiatives related to school road safety that were existing in the Borough and sought to explore these further through the review, it was deemed an important facet of the review to engage directly with schools in the Borough and to possibly bring them in as witnesses during the information gathering sessions.

Potential lines of enquiry highlighted by Members of the Committee included:

- Discussing JRSOs (Junior Road Safety Officers) and exploring whether the scheme was still active and to what extent.
- Investigating the School Streets Scheme further, including uptake and interest expressed from the Borough's schools.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking enforcement around the Borough’s schools. • Exploring where there may be tensions between schools, parents and residents. <p>The Committee felt that the review would be an incredibly fruitful one that could prove beneficial in forming productive recommendations to the Cabinet. The recommendations could benefit not only pupils of the Borough’s schools but also residents young and old who live in the vicinity of schools.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the Committee had previously expressed their appetite for conducting a number of smaller scrutiny reviews simultaneously. Whilst it was noted that this was what the Committee sought to do, Members were informed that in considering the Committee’s work programme and resources available, it would be best placed to stack a number of smaller scrutiny reviews back to back allowing the Committee to conduct several reviews in forthcoming year as oppose to the previous approach of conducting one in-depth major scrutiny review.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Property, Highways and Transport Select Committee commented on, amended, and agreed the scoping report to initiate the review into Road Safety around the Borough’s schools.</p>
28.	<p>CABINET FORWARD PLAN (<i>Agenda Item 8</i>)</p> <p>The Committee expressed an interest in receiving a draft version of the new Hillingdon Cycling Strategy ahead of its approval and publication, which was scheduled for November 2023 and was the first of its kind in the Borough. It was confirmed that the Cabinet Member and relevant Officers would be approached with an eye to providing the draft Strategy for the Select Committee’s sight and comment.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Property, Highways and Transport Select Committee noted the Cabinet Forward Plan.</p>
29.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME (<i>Agenda Item 9</i>)</p> <p>The Select Committee agreed to add an item relating to the draft Hillingdon Cycling Strategy to its work programme for its October or November meetings. Members also discussed the Platinum Jubilee Leisure Centre in West Drayton and concerns regarding the project, it was confirmed that the matter was to be discussed at the Full Council meeting on 28 September 2023 and it was noted that the Full Council meeting would be an appropriate forum to discuss any issues related to the delivery of the new Leisure Centre.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Property, Highways and Transport Select Committee noted the Committee Work Programme and agreed any amendments.</p>
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 7.42 pm.</p>

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Steve Clarke on 01895 250 636
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