

BUDGET PANEL

14 March 2018

Present: Councillor M Hofman (Chair)
Councillors N Bell, A Dychton, J Fahmy, R Martins, M Parker,
G Saffery and N Shah

Also present: Councillor M Watkin (Portfolio Holder for Finance)

Officers: Head of Finance (Shared Services)
Head of Community and Environmental Services
Interim Head of Finance - shared services
Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer (IM)

27 Apologies for absence/committee membership

Apologies were received from the Chair. Councillor Khan asked for his thanks to be conveyed to Budget Panel members for their efforts scrutinising the council's finances during 2017/18. The Vice Chair, Councillor Hofman, chaired the meeting.

Martin Henwood, the interim Head of Finance, was introduced to Budget Panel members. He would be taking over from Bob Watson, the current Head of Finance, who was leaving the council on 16 March 2018.

28 Disclosure of interests

There were no disclosures of interest.

29 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2018 were submitted and signed.

30 Commercialisation - update

Budget Panel members had received a copy of the council's commercial strategy with the agenda.

The Head of Community and Environmental Services provided a short presentation to the panel answering members' questions on the council's commercialisation programme. This was based on four key strands: maximising

value from the council's assets, charging for the council's services, generating novel income and being more business-like in the council's undertakings.

It was agreed that a copy of the Head of Community and Environmental Services' presentation would be circulated to Budget Panel members after the meeting.

31 **Finance Digest 2017/18: Period 10**

The Head of Finance introduced the Finance Digest for period 10 2017/18.

Watford Borough Council's revenue budget had been reset at the full Council meeting on 30 January 2018. The current finance digest showed the expected financial position or forecast outturn for 2017/18 based on the council's actual financial performance at the end of period 10 (January 2018) and against the latest budget. There was an unfavourable variance of £104,000. The key variances were set out in the report and it was explained that these were expected to be met from the economic impact reserve.

The Head of Finance continued through his report providing a brief overview of the main points for members' attention. These included: the outturn position which was showing a forecast spend below budget on capital of £5.08 million; the capital programme, which had a current budget of £53.902 million as approved by Council on 30 January 2018; the council's revenue income, which was £28.548 million in 2017/18; and the council's treasury management.

Looking at treasury management in more detail, it was noted that the forecast outturn on investment interest was £120,000 against a budget of £220,000. This largely reflected the diversion of investment funds to property, including two recent purchases in Wakefield and the London Borough of Sutton. These would provide an income stream to the council over time.

Questions were taken from panel members, particularly in regard to on-going discussions with Watford Indoor Bowls Club, the activities of the Property Investment Board and the main risk areas facing the council over coming months and years.

The meeting thanked the Head of Finance for his good advice and guidance to Budget Panel and wished him well in his new position.

RESOLVED –

that Budget Panel notes the content of the Finance Digest 2017/18, period 10.

Chair

The Meeting started at 7.05 pm
and finished at 7.55 pm