

BUDGET PANEL

11 September 2018

Present: Councillor S Bashir (Chair)
Councillor P Kloss (Vice-Chair)
Councillors A Barton, N Bell, J Johnson, R Martins, M Parker,
G Saffery and N Shah

Also present: Councillor Mark Watkin

Officers: Head of Finance
Regeneration and Property Section Head
Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer

7 Apologies for absence/committee membership

There were no apologies for absence.

8 Disclosure of interests

There were no disclosures of interest.

9 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2018 were submitted and signed.

10 Finance Digest 2018/19 Q1

The Head of Finance introduced the Finance Digest for quarter 1 2018/19. This showed the expected financial position (forecast outturn) for the current financial year, based on the actual performance at the end of Quarter 1 (June 2018) set against the latest budget.

It was reported that the Finance Digest had been adjusted to separate funding from reserves and the summary of variances. The latest forecast outturn figure was £15.162 million, a variation when compared to the latest budget of £0.035 million. There had been a planned use of reserves totalling £0.188 million, including on projects around the Watford 2020 programme and on-demand transport scheme. However, once the key variances, listed separately in the

report, had been taken into account there was a favourable residual variance of £0.153 million at the end of quarter 1.

The Head of Finance summarised current information about the council's revenue budget, noting the comparison between the latest budget and forecast outturn and the variances in different council services. Currently there was an unfavourable service variance of £0.35 million. The Head of Finance identified any risks to the council's finances, including the costs of temporary accommodation which had been monitored closely by the panel previously.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Head of Finance confirmed that the impact of the market's current difficulties was not reflected in the figures under consideration since the report only considered the council's financial position between April and end-June 2018. The next quarter's data would provide more clarity on this issue.

In a further clarification, the Head of Finance advised that the one-off investigation into a fatality at work, detailed in Appendix 1A under Community and Environmental, involved a non-council employee and was in relation to the council's enforcement function.

Responding to a question about the car parking revenues, the Head of Finance confirmed that this income was ring-fenced for car parking maintenance and transport purposes. It was not considered necessary to build up extensive reserves.

There followed a brief discussion about debtors to the council. These included the Watford Indoor Bowls Club, which was the subject of legal proceedings. It was noted that debtors of more than one month's duration represented 3.2% of the commercial rent and fees and charges income.

RESOLVED –

that Budget Panel notes the content of the Finance Digest 2018/19, quarter 1.

11 **Exclusion of press and public**

RESOLVED –

that under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business as it is likely, in the view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during consideration of the item there would be disclosure to them of exempt

information as defined in Section 100(1) Schedule 12A of the Act for the reasons stated in the report.

12 **Presentation on Property Investment Board activities**

A presentation was received from the Regeneration and Property Section Head, who responded to questions from Budget Panel members.

RESOLVED –

that Budget Panel notes the content of the presentation.

13 **Date of next meeting**

27 November 2018

Chair

The meeting started at 7.00 pm
and finished at 7.45 pm