

## **BUDGET PANEL**

**15 January 2019**

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

Also present: Councillor Watkin (Portfolio Holder)

Officers: Shared Director of Finance  
Head of Finance  
Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer  
Head of Community and Environmental Services

### **20 Apologies for absence/committee membership**

Apologies were received from Councillor Shah.

### **21 Disclosure of interests**

There were no disclosures of interest.

### **22 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2018 were submitted and signed.

### **23 Budget Report 2019-22**

Budget Panel members received the report of the Director of Finance which would also be presented to Cabinet on 21 January 2019. The report included details of the proposed fees and charges for 2019/20.

The Head of Finance circulated to the meeting a revised table showing the impact of the “budget gap” over the period 2019/20 to 2022/23. This was based on an understanding of the likely financial impacts of the Croxley Business Park proposal, which was being considered by Cabinet and Council on 21 and 23 January respectively.

Introducing the report, the Head of Finance identified some of the key issues for Budget Panel members and responded to questions on the revenue budgets for the period 2019-22 and revised budget for 2018/19, the capital programme for 2018-22, the council's income charging policy (including service fees and charges) and the capital strategy 2019-22.

Looking at the budget gap which had been identified in the figures, the Head of Finance advised that that the gap for the next four years amounted to approximately £10.6 million. However, after taking into account the effect of a 2.2% increase in council tax in 2019/20, together with additional projected income from non-domestic rates, the cumulative gap amounted to £7.9 million. Since the council would not have sufficient balances to fund this gap, consideration would need to be given to a series of proposals to address the projected shortfall between the Medium Term Financial Strategy and available resources. A series of options was set out in the report.

In response to a query, the Director of Finance advised that if the Croxley Business Park proposal were agreed by Cabinet and Council, the resultant £1.9 million budget gap could be funded from reserves. In this eventuality, officers would work with the Mayor to consider ways to reduce the gap and the outturn position would be expected to change. The council would plan to set a sustainable budget in future years.

RESOLVED –

1. The Budget Panel notes the advice provided by the Director of Finance on the robustness of estimates and the adequacy of reserves
2. That Budget Panel notes the indicative budgets for 2020/21 and 2021/22

That Budget Panel has no comments or recommendations to be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration.

24

### **Finance Digest 2018/19 Period 8**

The Head of Finance introduced the Finance Digest for period 8, 2018/19. This showed the expected financial position (forecast outturn) for the current financial year, based on the actual performance at the end of November 2018 set against the latest budget. It had been circulated to Budget Panel members to inform their consideration of the Budget Report 2019-22.

RESOLVED –

that Budget Panel notes the content of the Finance Digest 2018/19, Period 8.

25      **Date of next meetings**

It was noted that the next meeting takes place on Tuesday 12 March 2019.

Chair

The Meeting started at 7.00 pm  
and finished at 7.30 pm