

FINANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

21 November 2023

Present: Councillor A Khan (Chair)
Councillor P Kloss (Vice-Chair)
Councillors K Clarke-Taylor, S Johnson, R Martins, D Walford,
D Watling and R Wenham

Also present: Mr Sean Brew, LSHIM

Officers: Chief Finance Officer
Associate Director of Property and Asset Management
Senior Democratic Services Officer
Democratic Services Officer (IS)

14 Apologies for absence

Although not a committee member, apologies had been received from Councillor Watkin, Portfolio Holder.

15 Disclosure of interests

There were no disclosures of interest.

16 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of Finance Scrutiny Committee held on 12 September 2023 were signed.

17 Executive/Scrutiny protocol

The Senior Democratic Services Officer delivered her report to the committee.

18 Training - Prudential Framework and Treasury Management

The committee heard a training presentation from the Chief Finance Officer.

19 Financial Monitoring Report - Quarter 2

The committee received the report of the Chief Finance Officer. Following this the officer responded to questions on the following issues from the committee members:

- Temporary accommodation budget.
- Ring-fenced housing grants.
- Rephasing of Hart Homes scheme as it was not viable in its current form.
- Provisional offer of £16.3 million Government grant for the Colosseum and the Innovation and Incubation Hub.
- Reasons for rephasing of various budgets.
- The £65,000 for town boundary signage (see recommendation 2 below).
- The importance of replenishing the reserve budgets.
- High risk of donating to the paddling pools, explained as target income was unlikely to be met and alternative models to generate income.

There was a very lengthy discussion on how best to ensure the Finance Scrutiny Committee properly scrutinises the council's expenditure and budget management. Members expressed a desire to have better access to costs and budget information.

ACTIONS –

1. The Chief Finance Officer to advise members of the cost to the council for each litter picker supplied by Veolia.
2. The Associate Director of Property and Asset Management to provide figures for the number of social housing units provided under the Mayoral Commitment.

RESOLVED –

1. that the Finance Scrutiny Committee has considered the Financial Monitoring Report for 2023/24 and noted both the revenue and capital forecasts for 2023/24.
2. that the Finance Scrutiny Committee recommends to Cabinet that, given the current financial position, there is a careful prioritisation of costs and that they re-examine the decision for the boundary signage.
3. that the Chief Finance Officer look at ways to improve the provision of costing and budgetary information to the committee.

20 **Exclusion of Press and Public**

The Chair moved: that, under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business as it is likely, in 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 items there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Section 100(1) of the Act for the reasons stated in the agenda in terms of Schedule 12A.

RESOLVED –

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting.

21 **Property Investment Board update**

The committee heard further details about the council’s investment portfolio, which was managed by the Property Investment Board.

22 **Croxley Park update**

The committee received an update on Croxley Park.

Chair

The Meeting started at 7.00 pm
and finished at 9.10 pm