

## **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**15th November 2022**

**Present:** Councillor Marjory Bisset in the Chair

Councillors Agar, Allcott, Bayliss, Denham (Vice-Chair), Gregson, Mrs L. Hodgson, Mackay, Mitchell, Riaz, Stafford, Stanley (Vice-Chair) and Stephen

**Officers:** Mark Baldwin, Head of Finance  
David Blake, Managing Director  
Shane Flynn, Corporate Director – Finance and Resources  
Sian Stroud, Corporate Director – Planning and Governance

### **48 Appointment of Substitutes**

Councillor Stephen Hodgson for Councillor Mrs. Lucy Hodgson.

### **49 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Bayliss declared an interest in the Referral Report from Health and Wellbeing Committee - Worcester City District Collaborative (Minute 64) as Worcestershire County Council Cabinet Member for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills.

### **50 Public Representations**

None.

### **51 Minutes**

**RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.**

### **52 Quarter 2 Financial Monitoring Report 2022/23**

The Committee reviewed the financial monitoring details including budget variances and performance indicators for the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter ended 30 September 2022. The Head of Finance presented the report and highlighted the main points. He summarised the reasons for the key budget variances. The report also highlighted proposed write-offs for Quarter 2, which amounted to £33k.

Officers responded to questions and comments from Members. In the ensuing discussion, reference was made to the End of Year Forecast. It was noted that expenditure is 2% over budget, whereas inflation is running at 10%. The Head of Finance stated that more information about this can be provided in writing.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee agree to:**

- 1. note the report; and**

**2. approve the write-offs of Council Tax and Business Rates for the quarter.**

**53 Quarter 2 Performance Report For 2022/23**

The Committee considered the quarter 2 performance report for the Policy and Resources Committee. The Managing Director presented the report and highlighted the main points.

The Managing Director explained that the various Towns Fund Projects had now received final sign off and had been approved by Government. The progress in delivering the business cases for each of the individual items will henceforth appear on the performance scorecards for the relevant policy committees.

Officers responded to questions from Members.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee agree to note the Council's quarter 2 performance for 2022/23.**

**54 Corporate Risk Management Report - Quarter 2, 2022/23**

The Committee considered a report on action taken and progress made against corporate risks for quarter 2, the period of July – September 2022. The Head of Finance presented the report and highlighted the main points. Officers responded to questions from Committee Members.

In the ensuing discussion, the cost of energy at leisure centres and energy efficiency savings was raised. Officers advised that feasibility work on the installation of solar panels at Perdiswell Leisure centre is well underway and a progress report can be submitted to Income Management Sub-Committee.

With reference to Members' ICT Security, a request was made for more training and support. Officers agreed to take this forward.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee note the Corporate Risk Management Report, including associated mitigating actions.**

**55 Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2022/23**

The Committee received a Mid-Year Report, in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Services, and the Prudential Code for Capital Finance. The Head of Finance presented the report and highlighted the main points. He responded to questions from Committee Members.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee note the contents of the Mid-Year Report in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Services, and the Prudential Code for Capital Finance.**

**56 Setting of the Budget for 2023/24 and MTFP to 2027/28**

The Committee considered a report on the Budgets for the various services for 2023/24. The Head of Finance presented the report and summarised the main points, including with budgets for various services for 2022/23 and progress made

in delivering the projects included in the City Plan and City Delivery Fund that are relevant to this Committee.

Members were invited to submit suggestions of potential service improvements and/or re-prioritisation of budgets in order to continue to achieve service objectives and to deliver the aims of the City Plan relevant to this Committee, so as to be able to feed proposals into the Committee's consideration of the 2023/24 budget at its meeting in January.

In the ensuing discussion a request was made for information on the status of current projects. The Managing Director explained that Officers will look at projects where activity has not yet started, and whether it is appropriate to consider not commencing. This information can be provided to Members.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee agree to note:**

- 1. the Budgets for the various services identified for 2022/23; and**
- 2. the progress made in delivering the projects included in the City Plan and City Delivery Fund that are relevant to this Committee and confirms the programme of work resourced.**

## **57 Bus Services Within City Boundaries**

The Committee considered a report on costs and options for the provision of either free or reduced price bus services within the city boundaries during December, in pursuance of a Notice of Motion which was agreed at the Council meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2022. The Managing Director presented the report and explained the work and research which had been undertaken by Officers. The information received in the amount of time available was limited but sufficient to give an indication of the feasibility and potential costs of the proposal. The report set out a number of options and the financial implications. The recommended option was to offer free travel during Saturday of the Christmas Fayre. The estimated cost was £14k - £17k. There were no existing earmarked reserves available and, should the proposal be taken forward, other existing reserves would need to be repurposed to implement the scheme.

Further research would be necessary to establish the practicalities and also to put in place formal contractual agreements.

Committee Members proceeded to debate the various options, including the offer of free car parking. The Corporate Director – Planning and Governance advised that the information contained in the report was sufficient to enable the Committee to consider whether free car parking should be included in the offer. A broad estimate of the financial impact of previous Christmas parking schemes in 2019, 2020 and 2021 was included in the report. A comparison of the free periods during December 2021 and the same period during November indicated that income was lower in the month by approximately £15,000, but this must be regarded as a very loose estimate.

It was noted that, at outturn stage 2020/21, £50,000 was set aside from the year-end surplus to support free parking at Christmas as part of the Covid recovery strategy.

In the ensuing discussion, a range of views were expressed with regard to the detail of the free bus offer and also discounted car parking. Several proposals were put forward. Some Members expressed the view that the free bus service date should not coincide with the Christmas Fayre. Members spoke both for and against offering discounted car parking for the Christmas period.

In conclusion, it was proposed and duly seconded that a free bus service should be offered on one Saturday in December, the date to be decided by the Managing Director in consultation with Chair and Vice-Chairs.

Members proceeded to vote and expressed support for this proposal.

It was further proposed that the same car parking offer should be made this year as in 2019 and 2020. The vote on this proposal was lost.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee agree:**

- 1. that a free bus service should be offered on one Saturday in December; and**
- 2. the Committee delegate to the Managing Director authority to decide the date, in consultation with Chair and Vice-Chairs.**

In accordance with Committee Procedure Rule 7.2, the following Members requested to be recorded as voting for proposal for car parking:

Councillors Bayliss, Stephen Hodgson, Mackay, Mitchell, Stafford and Stanley

## **58 Salary And Grading Competitiveness Review**

The Committee considered a report on the outcome of a review of the competitiveness of the Council's salaries for all job roles below the level of Head of Service. The Corporate Director – Planning and Governance presented the report and explained the background to the review and the key findings. In summary, there were clear examples of pay inequality, compared to comparator roles, in the lowest grade, and it was proposed to take actions to address this.

The other measure that had been considered was the impact of the Council's pay spine having fallen behind the NJC pay spine in 2011, when a pay freeze was applied in order to achieve some savings for the Council. To recover and bring the Council fully in line with the NJC pay rates would mean applying an overall circa 0.8% pay increase to all spinal column points which are affected.

All of the proposals were discussed with the Joint Consultative and Safety Committee, and the Committee agreed to support them. Therefore, the report recommended these changes be approved, with an implementation date of 1 December 2022.

The Committee also considered a supplemental paper to the main report. It addressed a specific question that had arisen following the recent agreement of the national pay award. In summary, the Council had been advised by West Midlands Employers (WME) that it is customary for most local authorities to pay

the backdated pay award to leavers. It was recommended that this policy is approved for the 2022 pay award and reviewed in future years.

The financial implications of all the above proposals were set out in the respective reports.

Committee Members expressed support for the Officer recommendations.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee approve:**

- 1. the following changes to the Council's salary structure and pay policy, to take effect from 1 December 2022:**
  - 1.1 Delete the bottom 2 spinal column points of OPS/BS1 (SCP 3 and SCP4);**
  - 1.2 Introduce SCP7 as the top spinal column point of OPS1/BS1;**
  - 1.3 Adjust up to SCP 5, any existing appointments made on SCP3 or SCP4;**
  - 1.4 Appoint all new permanent staff on SCP5 as a minimum;**
  - 1.5 Appoint all casual staff on a spot salary which is SCP5 as a minimum;**
  - 1.6 Amend Worcester City Council's independent pay spine to match the National NJC pay spine, applying an overall increase of circa 0.8% to all of the relevant pay scales;**
  - 1.7 Engage with the trade unions through the collective agreement mechanism as appropriate to incorporate the above changes in employees' contracts of employment; and**
- 2. the principle, for 2022's national pay award, that employees who have left the Council's employment since 1 April 2022 shall be paid their pro-rata element of the pay award on request.**

**59 Review of Staff Disciplinary Policy**

The Committee considered a report on proposed amendments to the Disciplinary Policy. The Corporate Director – Planning and Governance presented the report and explained that it had been intended to present the Policy to the Personnel and General Purposes Sub-Committee at its October meeting. However, as there were no other substantive items on the agenda, with the agreement of the Chair and Vice-Chair, the meeting had been cancelled and the Policy was therefore being presented to this Committee.

The report summarised the proposed amendments to the Policy, which had last been reviewed in 2018. The amendments were not considered to be material in nature, nor did they alter the balance of responsibilities between the Council and employees. However the amendments were considered a necessary step to ensure the Policy remains effective.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee approve the amendments to the Disciplinary Policy, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.**

**60 Local Government Boundary Commission for England: Electoral Review - Warding Agreements Further Consultation**

The Committee considered a report on the Local Government Boundary Commission's proposals for warding arrangements in Worcester, which had been published on 1 November 2022. These were appended to the report, together with a summary document. The Corporate Director – Planning and Governance presented the report and explained that the Commission had now commenced a period of consultation on these proposals, following which it was expected to present a final report in March 2023 before submitting its proposals into the Parliamentary process. There was no requirement for the Council to submit a response; however any agreed response which the Council is able to submit would be helpful for the Commission's review and would give the Council the opportunity to have what will probably be a final say.

The preferred option was for officers to work with the Political Group Leaders to produce a consultation response on behalf of the Council, for review at November's full Council meeting. This did not prevent Political Groups or individuals from supplementing the Council's submission with their own responses to the Commission.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee:**

- 1. note the proposed warding arrangements for Worcester City Council, published for consultation by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England; and**
- 2. agree that the Political Group Leaders should work with officers to produce a draft consultation response on behalf of the Council which can be considered at the full Council meeting on 29 November.**

**61 Appointments to Outside Bodies**

The Committee considered a report on appointments to a number of outside bodies. The report explained that some appointments had been left vacant at the meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2022. Meanwhile, for some charity appointments, the term of office expires later in the year and these were therefore due for consideration. Group Leaders had made nominations for a number of appointments.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee agree the following appointments:**

**Disablement Information Advice Line: Elena Round**  
**St Martin's United Charities: Atif Sadiq**  
**Transition Worcester: Councillor Lewing**  
**Worcester City Parish Relief in Need Charity: Adrian Couper**  
**Health & Wellbeing Board: Councillor Denham (Deputy Councillor Stephen Hodgson)**  
**Herefordshire & Worcestershire Integrated Care Partnership Assembly: Councillor Denham (Deputy Councillor Stephen Hodgson).**

## **62 Referral Report from Communities Committee - Procurement of Housing First Service**

The Committee considered a referral report from Communities Committee.

At its meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022, the Communities Committee considered a proposal to jointly commission a new contract to support homeless people, commencing 1 April 2023, with Bromsgrove District Council, Malvern Hills District Council and Wychavon District Council. The Worcestershire Housing First service had been contracted with St Pauls Hostel since February 2020, with the current contract running to 31 March 2023. The contract was held jointly between all six district Councils with Worcester City Council as the contract lead.

The Committee had approved the procurement of a 5-year contract with a total annual contract value of £349,810. It was proposed that the Worcester City contribution for the new contract is funded through the successful Rough Sleeper Initiative 2022-25 bid to the DLUHC of £43,898 and the Homeless Prevention Grant funding of £56,048.

Subject to the agreement of this Committee, the Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Corporate Director - Operations, Homes and Communities in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of Communities Committee, to award the contract to the successful tenderer on behalf of Worcester City Council.

Funding is only secured for the first two years at this stage. It is proposed that a 5-year contract is tendered, with the option of break points beyond the end of year two, so that the councils can review the funding and performance of the contract.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee agree to fund Worcester City Council's contribution, being £99,946 per annum for the first two years of the contract, from the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Grant Funding and Homeless Prevention Grant, and to receive subsequent reports to identify future funding for the rest of the contract term.**

## **63 Referral Report from Communities Committee - Procurement of the Single Person and Childless Couples Homeless Prevention Support Service**

The Committee considered a referral report from Communities Committee.

At its meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022, the Communities Committee considered a report on the procurement of a 5-year contract for the single homeless and childless couples' homeless prevention support service with a total annual contract value of £301,500, with Worcester City Council's contribution being £65,646 per annum, funded from the Homeless Prevention Grant.

Funding from Worcester City Council for two years was required, amounting to £131,293. There were sufficient funds from the Homelessness Prevention Grant to meet this. Funding from all the councils was only secured for the first two years at this stage. It is proposed that a 5-year contract is tendered, with the option of break points beyond the end of year two, so that the councils can review the funding and performance of the contract.

Subject to the agreement of this Committee, the Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Corporate Director - Operations, Homes and Communities in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of Communities Committee to award the contract to the successful tenderer on behalf of Worcester City Council.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee agree to fund Worcester City Council's contribution, being £65,646 per annum for the first two years of the contract, from the Homeless Prevention Grant, and to receive subsequent reports to identify future funding for the rest of the contract term.**

**64 Referral Report from Health and Wellbeing Committee - Worcester City District Collaborative**

The Committee considered a referral report from Health and Wellbeing Committee.

At its meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022, the Health and Wellbeing Committee considered a report on the aims and priorities of the newly formed Worcester City District Collaborative. The Committee had approved match funding an application from the Worcester City District Collaborative to Worcestershire County Council Public Health Service for increased mental health support for children and young people for a 2-year period. The funding requirement was £160,000.

It had been intended to meet the funding from the COVID-19 COMF Reserve and COVID-19 Community Recovery Strategy Enabling Budget. However, the Head of Finance explained that the Covid-19 COMF Reserve may not be available and it was recommended that the Corporate Director – Finance and Resources be authorised to work with the Chair and Vice-Chairs to agree an alternative funding source.

The Committee agreed to proceed on this basis.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee agree to:**

- 1. approve funding of £160,000 to match fund an application from the Worcester City District Collaborative to Worcestershire County Council Public Health Service for increased mental health support for children and young people for a 2-year period; and**
- 2. delegate to the Corporate Director – Finance and Resources authority to work with the Chair and Vice-Chairs to agree the funding source.**

**65 Any Other Business**

Two items were raised with the consent of the Chair.

Reference was made to the length of the agenda. Officers agreed to take this into account as part of future agenda planning.



The Chair proposed that a steering group should be established, to include one Member from each political group, to work with Officers to look at the City Centre Transport Strategy. It was concluded that this needs discussion by Group Leaders in the first instance.

**Duration of the meeting:** 7.00p.m. – 9.45p.m.

Chair at the meeting on  
13th December 2022

This page is intentionally left blank