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CABINET

Monday 4 February 2019 at 5.00 pm

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Cabinet Members:

Councillor Matthew
Bennett
Councillor Jennifer
Brathwaite
Councillor Edward Davie

Portfolio:

Cabinet Member for Planning, Investment & New Homes
Deputy Leader of the Council (Children and Young People)
Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care (job share)
Cabinet Member for the Voluntary Sector, Partnerships and
Community Safety (job share)
Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care (job share)
Cabinet Member for Housing
Cabinet Member for Environment and Clean Air
Leader of the Council
Cabinet Member for the Voluntary Sector, Partnerships and
Community Safety (job share)
Cabinet Member for Finance
Cabinet Member for Equalities and Culture

Councillor Jim Dickson

Councillor Jacqui Dyer

Councillor Paul Gadsby

Councillor Claire Holland

Councillor Jack Hopkins

Councillor Lib Peck

Councillor Mohammed
Seedat

Councillor Andy Wilson

Councillor Sonia Winifred

Apologies for absence

Also present:

Councillor Donatus Anyanwu and Councillor Pete Elliott

1. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were none.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 January 2019 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of the proceedings.

3. REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET 2019/20 – 2022/23

In introducing the report the Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Andy Wilson, explained that:

- This was a time of major uncertainty for the UK due to Brexit and for local councils due to the Government's austerity agenda.
- Jobs and the economy were at risk due to the Government's failure to deal with Brexit.
- The budget meant that the Council continued to provide services to vulnerable residents.
- Even though the budget was balanced there was still uncertainty on any future finance settlement from the Government.
- This budget protected the most vulnerable residents and delivered on an ambitious manifesto pledge, for a better, fairer Lambeth.

He further stated that:

- Over the next year £500,000 would be invested into tackling serious youth violence with a further £1 million the year after.
- A business rates discount scheme would be introduced for local firms that follow Lambeth Council's lead and pay the London Living Wage.
- Spending was protected on child and adolescent mental health (CAMHS), benefits advice, and violence against women and girls (VAWG) services.
- As a result of considering the views of 4,000 residents who responded to the budget consultation, plans to make savings in the library service were scrapped.
- As part of the commitment to continuing to invest in the borough despite austerity, £131 million would be invested over the next two years in roads and pavements, parks and homes.
- Cabinet were committed to delivering the policy to double the council tax on empty homes.

Councillor Wilson also summarised the responses from the budget consultation sent out to residents and highlighted:

- The key findings, 46% of residents agreed/strongly agreed with the Council's saving proposals, with 22% disagreed/strongly disagreed.
- 40% agreed/strongly agreed, with 23% disagreed/strongly disagreed, that the budget proposals would enable the Council to achieve its priorities.
- Residents placed services for children, tackling youth violence and community safety as their top three areas for the Council to prioritise.

Councillor Donatus Anyanwu, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny, addressed Cabinet and noted that both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Children's Scrutiny Sub-Committee considered the budget proposals in great detail and advised that:

- Assurance was needed that the proposed income on fees and charges was realistic, and the Committees would continue to monitor this.
- Raising the reserve from 7% to 10% would have an impact on frontline services and

Scrutiny Members were concerned about this.

- Agency staff needed to be reduced otherwise savings would be difficult to achieve.
- There was concern on the service changes proposed in Children's Services and Adult Social Care and the impact these could have on the borough's most vulnerable residents, as well as the feasibility of delivering the savings proposed.

Councillor Pete Elliott, Green Party Councillor, gave the following representation:

- All public services should be properly funded by central Government, and the most vulnerable should be put first.
- He was surprised there was no review of the estate demolition plans, as the programme would destroy hundreds of council homes with no new housing.
- The estate demolition plans were undermined by the lifting of the borrow cap on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
- It caused concern to local residents that Lambeth Labour did not change their stance on estate demolition.
- Lack of spending on temporary accommodation and the projected overspend in Children Services were signs that residents and those most vulnerable were not being prioritised.

The Interim Strategic Director for Finance and Investment and the Council's Section 151 officer added:

- The settlement was received from central Government and there were no changes in relation to the budget.
- There was continuation in the London pilot pool on business rates although with some changes.
- Fees and charges had been achieved in previous years and was a realistic target.
- Lambeth was the third lowest in London in terms of reserves, and as the Section 151 officer she was recommending an increase to the reserves to manage the risks the Council was facing.
- It was reported previously to Cabinet that the lifting of the borrowing cap on the HRA would not create any additional funding for Lambeth.

The Strategic Director for Children's Services, Annie Hudson and Interim Strategic Director for Adult's and Health, Fiona Connolly, responded to some of the points raised and advised that:

- The savings were deliverable and set out some examples highlighted in the report on how this this would be achieved.
- Redesigning services so they were more effective with users in mind and enhancing commissioning arrangements were some of the ways they would deliver the savings target.
- Programme management arrangements had been adopted to ensure that saving targets were on track and reassured Cabinet that there was no threat to the service provided to children and service users.
- Many of the proposals had been developed over a considerable period, and while they were challenging it did offer many opportunities to improve services. The proposals were developed with the impact to service users not being affected.
- There would be greater integration with the local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and NHS which would contribute to delivering the savings targets.

Cabinet Members made the following observations and comments:

- The issue raised by Councillor Pete Elliott, Green Party, on the lifting of the borrowing cap had already been dealt with at Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny, and was unclear why the issues were being raised again when the Council's position had been made clear.

- Green Councillors had wrongly assumed that the massive savings target passed down from central Government could be made up by efficiency savings.
- There was a number of inaccuracies in the submission made by Councillor Pete Elliott and there was investment in housing, temporary accommodation and dealing with rough sleepers.
- Cabinet were satisfied that the Youth Offending Service was one of the best funded services in London, and there would be no negative impact on front line staff in this area.

Councillor Lib Peck thanked all those residents who took part in the consultation and to Councillor Andy Wilson.

Councillor Lib Peck also welcomed Councillor Jack Hopkins as the Leader-elect of the Council, and Members thanked the outgoing Leader of the Council for her service and commitment to Lambeth.

The meeting ended at 5.55 pm

CHAIR
CABINET
Monday 4 March 2019

Date of Despatch: Friday 8 February 2019

Call-in Date: Friday 15 February 2019

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