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## **Policy and Resources Committee MINUTES**

**Of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on  
Monday, 13 June 2022 from 7.30 - 9.05 pm**

**Present:** Councillor Sarah Nelmes (Chair)  
Councillor Philip Hearn  
Councillor Chris Lloyd  
Councillor Keith Martin  
Councillor Abbas Merali  
Councillor Paul Rainbow  
Councillor Reena Ranger OBE  
Councillor Ciaran Reed  
Councillor Andrew Scarth  
Councillor Phil Williams  
Councillor Steve Drury (In place of Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst)  
Councillor Raj Khuroya (In place of Councillor Roger Seabourne)

**Also in Attendance:**

Councillor Rue Grewal and Councillor Chris Mitchell

**Officers in Attendance:**

Shivani Dave, Partnerships Manager  
Hannah Doney, Head of Finance  
Geof Muggerridge, Director of Community and Environmental Services  
Kimberley Rowley, Head of Regulatory Services  
Alison Scott, Shared Director of Finance  
Joanne Wagstaffe, Chief Executive

**External in Attendance:**

Chris Outtersides South West Herts Joints Strategic Plan

### **PR5 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Roger Seabourne with the substitutes being Councillors Steve Drury and Raj Khuroya. An apology for absence was also received from Councillor Stephen Cox.

### **PR6 MINUTES**

The minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 14 March 2022 and the Special Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 24 May 2022 were confirmed as a

correct record subject to a spelling correction of the word there to their in the minutes on 14 March 2022 on Page 10, Paragraph 2 first line and were signed by the Chair.

## **PR7 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chair advised that agenda items 9, 12a and 12b were not published 5 clear working days before the meeting but had agreed they were of sufficient urgency to be taken at the meeting the reasons for urgency being as follows:

Item 9 Discretionary Council Tax Energy Rebate Scheme – so that the rebate scheme can be agreed and the Council are able to pay out the funding.

Items 12a (Adoption of Statement of Community Involvement for the SW Herts Joint Strategic Plan) and 12b (Approval of Initial issues and options (regulation 18) consultation for SW Herts Joint Strategic plan – so that the Council can agree the adoption of the SCI and approve details for the consultation of the plan.

The Chair had agreed to take items 12a and 12b first to allow the outside speaker to be able to leave the meeting once the items were completed.

## **PR8 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest

## **PR9 JSP SCI: ADOPTION OF STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI) FOR THE SW HERTS JOINT STRATEGIC PLAN**

This report seeks agreement of a Statement of Community Involvement for the South West (SW) Herts Joint Strategic Plan (SCP), which sets out the broad parameters that will guide all consultation on the emerging strategic plan.

Chris Outterside from the SWH JSP introduced both the items to the Committee and referred to the presentation provided at the Local Plan sub-committee the week before but wished to emphasise the following key points and would cover both the reports.

The first report was on the Adoption of Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for SW Herts Joint Strategic Plan and would enable consultation to take place on the plan. A draft was received last year by the Council for approval to consult on that document. This document was effectively the adoption of that and allowed the SWH JSP to formally consult on that plan.

The second report follows on from the Adoption of the Statement of Community Involvement and required agreement to the Regulation 18 plan consultation which was the first statutory consultation phase of the SWH JSP. It would then follow to review the associated sustainability appraisal which was the technical document which sits beneath it. In terms of the content of the reports it was important to note that virtually identical documents and recommendations would be received across all the authorities in SWH. The Regulation 18 consultation would not be able to continue unless all the 5 authorities approve it. In terms of the Regulation 18 consultation it is based on a set of visions and objectives which had been formed over the last 6 months but does not consider growth options, housing numbers, Green Belt release or call for sites it is a very high level plan which looks at a series of objectives and visions for SWH. Stakeholders would be consulted on the plan with details provided in the report. There was a communication and engagement plan, which had been compiled in consultation with the LA's communication officers, which would run in parallel to this and would be very important in terms of the messaging around the plan. The consultation would largely be based online but would now start slightly later than what was proposed in the report with the consultation now extended into October following Government agreement and support and would now start in September and last for 8 weeks.

A Member felt that the overall plan looked sensible but was very high level but asked if the plan would have any impact on people's cost of living particularly around the further restrictions on new building and the radical shift away from the car. Also would the plan further increase regulation.

It was advised that in terms of the cost of living this was a consultation on a proposed vision and objectives and was seeking people's feedback on whether they agree we should have more sustainable movement across SWH. It was not proposed to deploy the plan within the short term but follows on from the Local Plan looking to the period to 2036-2040 and then up to 2050. If people did not agree with the sustainable shift away from the car it would be something which needed to be looked at. We would like the plan to be infrastructure driven and to see how this can be delivered whether through cycle lanes or more rapid transit but would need to get Government funding put in place to make it a lot cheaper for people to use than their car.

A Member asked if all MPs could be consulted in South West Herts and also asked what was actually meant by big scale and what happens with the vision to deliver the plan by 2050 and delivering upon that and what are the steps post plan which we need to be looking forward to as a Council.

It was advised that the JSP would not replace the Local Plan. It would provide the overarching strategy which the Local Plan will rely on. At this time it was not possible to advise what is strategic and what is not. As a result of the feedback from this consultation we will be able to identify how important sustainable infrastructure is and which elements are most important.

A Member referred to the details in the plan on the economy and the impact of the international labour supply on the UK economy as a result of Brexit. The majority of people in Herts are at a skill level which forces them to commute outside the area to find work at an appropriate level. At what point do we become too high level and do not have enough labour in the area.

In response it was advised that this related again to what is strategic and what is not. In creating the document it went as far as possible without getting into issues around sizes and locations of housing in the Green Belt, it was about starting the discussion with people in SWH to seek their views and get those answers. It was about working out what was important, what were the key factors and how do we refine the document and move forward.

This was the statutory document within which any rapid transit scheme, including the MLX, can start gaining structure and which we can seek to gain Government investment to. To get to a more detailed level would be part of the next phase of work.

Councillor Chris Lloyd moved the recommendation, seconded by Councillor Andrew Scarth, but asked if the Parishes could be categorised in which Borough/District they are in. The big challenge would be getting the public to engage and understand the plan and the communication plan is going to be as important as the plan itself.

A key part of the communication would be to distribute the plan through social media and provide more user friendly questions.

#### RECOMMEND:

- 1) Agree the responses to the draft Statement of Community Involvement as set out in Appendix 2.
- 2) Approve the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) 2022 for the SW Herts Joint Strategic Plan (in Appendix 3) for adoption, with any further minor amendments to the document to be agreed by the Director of Community and Environmental

Services in consultation with the Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy.

### **PR10 JSP REG 18: APPROVAL OF INITIAL ISSUES AND OPTIONS (REGULATION CONSULTATION FOR SW HERTS JOINT STRATEGIC PLAN)**

This report sought agreement of the Policy & Resources Committee to refer the Regulation 18 consultation document for the SW Herts Joint Strategic Plan, 'Realising our Potential', and associated Sustainability Scoping Report to Full Council to approve for public consultation.

Similar approvals are being sought from the other South West Herts authorities, with consultation scheduled to take begin in August 2022.

Councillor Chris Lloyd moved, seconded by Councillor Andrew Scarth the recommendations as provided in the report.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being unanimous.

#### **RECOMMEND:**

1. That the following documents are issued for consultation:
  - a) South West Hertfordshire 2050 – 'Realising our Potential,' Issues and Options document (Appendix 1); and
  - b) Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (Appendix 2).

and

2. Delegate authority to the Director of Community and Environmental Services, in consultation with the Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy to:
  - a) Confirm detailed consultation arrangements; and
  - b) Make any minor changes to the documents referenced above before they are formally published for comment.

### **PR11 SUB-COMMITTEES OF POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

The report was being presented to the Committee to agree to re-establish the Constitution sub-committee for 2022/23 but to request that the Covid-19 Response sub-committee is not re-established.

It was proposed that the Members appointed to the sub-committee be proportional based on the number of seats each Group has on the Council. Following the election (5 May 2022) the number of seats held by each Group is: 23 Liberal Democrats; 12 Conservative and 3 Labour. The Green Party have one seat on the Council but are not a Group.

It is proposed that the sub-committee has a total number of seats of 9 and for it to be proportional the allocation of the seats be:

- 5 Liberal Democrats
- 3 Conservative
- 1 Labour

Any Member of the Council is able to be appointed as a Member of a sub-committee and any Member can be a substitute.

Members wished to thank officers for all their work during what had been very challenging times and the stress placed on them and hoped it would never happen again. This was endorsed by all Members of the Committee.

Councillor Chris Lloyd, seconded by Councillor Sarah Nelmes, moved the recommendations as set out in the report. Councillor Ciaran Reed wished to propose an amendment to one of their Group nominations to the Constitution sub-committee and would confirm to the Committee Team. It was advised that substitutes can be appointed to attend the meetings.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

To re-establish the Constitution sub-committee.

That Members appointed to the Constitution sub-committee be proportional based on the number of seats each Group has and that the allocation of seats be 5, 3 and 1 with the Members being:

Cllrs Sarah Nelmes, Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Chris Lloyd, Roger Seabourne and Dominic Sokalski, Ciaran Reed, Lisa Hudson, Debbie Morris and Stephen Cox subject to confirmation of any amendment to the nominations to the Committee Team.

That no decision making powers be delegated to the sub-committee.

That any Member of the Council can be appointed a Member of the sub-committee and all Members can be substitute Members.

To not re-establish the Covid-19 Response sub-committee for 2022/23.

## **PR12 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) GOVERNANCE**

This report seeks Member approval of a CIL Governance process. This report proposes a governance structure which will be the principal means by which CIL monies will be spent on the infrastructure necessary to support new development.

The protocols proposed will ensure that CIL is managed in an open and transparent way and in accordance with the Community Infrastructure Regulations (2010) (Regulations).

The Head of Regulatory Services introduced the report and advised that the Council had been receiving CIL money since 2015 and currently had around £7m in total although some of that money did go to the Parishes but amounts depended on whether the Parish had a Neighbourhood Plan adopted. Members may recall that there had been proposals put forward to use some of the money for a new school in Croxley Green, which was a Herts County Council request, and for play areas and there was a further request tonight for another play area. The report set out how we would advertise the funding on our website and then infrastructure providers can make a claim for that money via a request form. We would also provide details on how we would assess the requests.

A Member requested that a briefing on CIL be organised as this was a complicated but important topic although we did not know how long CIL would last and also what would be the implications with the forthcoming White Paper.

The Chair advised that any briefing would be provided virtually as Members only need to meet when making decisions and it would be more environmental to meet virtually.

A Member asked what currently happens with CIL money and how does this proposed structure differ. On the Parish money was there any accountability for them to the Council on how that money is spent and that it is spent within the rules. Clarification was sought with regard to Paragraph 2.3 and reference to the unparished area of Rickmansworth which seemed to add confusion.

The Head of Regulatory Services responded that in terms of how the money is spent currently there has not been an agreed regime in place. With any infrastructure projects the cost is substantial and as in line with other CIL authorities the money was pooled for a number of years. The Governance arrangements have been evolving and had been in discussion with the past Head of Service in Local Plans to get to this position. There has been increased pressure on that funding from Herts County Council who applied for nearly £1m of funding recently. Some of the reason for the high amount currently pooled is people are not aware that we have that funding but are becoming aware now and we will have increased pressure to provide CIL funding. This report seeks to regularise the process so that it is transparent and communicate that we are collecting monies and that they are available. From this there will be a lot more demand on the funding and we will need to make decisions with Members on how we spend the money. Officers do not envisage a time again where the Council would have this amount of funding available once people become aware of it. It had taken 7 years to pool the money. On the Parish Councils accountability more details would need to be provided but it was understood that once you pass the money to the Parishes it becomes their responsibility on how they spend the money.

A Member referred to Paragraph 5.9 where it advised that Officers will prepare a series of recommendations for the release of CIL funds and thought that once a recommendation for using the funding came to the Committee it was pretty much clear they had made a successful request and wondered how Members could earlier input in the process. They also referred to Paragraph 6.2 and the spending of the money within 5 years and that we may require them to pay back some or all and wondered what mitigating circumstances there would be to not spend the money within 5 years. On the unparished areas of which there is only Maple Cross and Mill End those residents would be able to lobby the Council directly and would have a direct link to a pot of money. It maybe that the Parishes are not advertising their money and they have no accountability on the spending of their money and the residents may not feel they have the same ability to use that CIL money or exercise their right to apply for the money.

The Director of Community and Environmental Services said it was important to remember that the Parish Councils are still covered by the CIL regulations and could be held to audit by members of the public. On the point raised about clawback there can be things like a pandemic which can cause you to delay works but officers would look into that.

The Head of Regulatory Services pointed out at Paragraph 6.2 it stated that if an applicant does not spend CIL money within five years of receipt or does not spend it as agreed then the Council may require them to repay some or all of those funds or provide details of the mitigating circumstances why it had not been spent and this would be looked at on a case by case basis. Some of the funding will go to large scale infrastructure projects with the money for the project applied for at a very early stage. The project could easily take 5 years to start due to the form of development but details will be included in the legal agreement that they have to sign up to.

A Member was surprised to see so much funding accumulated but asked if there was a breakdown of where the funding had come from and which development projects and could this be broken down by Wards. The point of having CIL money was to spend on projects in the immediate area or wider area as a result of development. Was the intention to spend the CIL money on projects in proportion to where the CIL monies were received? Had any funding been allocated to the Parishes so far and what percentage of the money had been spent so far?

The Chair advised that the money was spent where it was needed and is over the whole District and not just in one place.

The Director of Community and Environmental Services emphasised that the Council deliberately wanted a pool of money to be built up in the first instance. If we were advertising and trying to spend it as soon as it first came in there would only have been small amounts available for small projects and it would have constantly been used up. The idea was to build

up a sufficient amount so that it could contribute to strategic projects. It had taken slightly longer to get to this point as the pandemic had held up some of the work. Officers can make reports available to Members showing where the money had come from but it does not mean it had to be allocated in exactly that way. The whole point of CIL is that it is for larger projects as well as smaller projects. It does not just mean if you raise "x" in one area that money must be spent in the area it was raised. It may be that projects overlap different areas so there needs to be flexibility. The previous regime of just having Section 106 money was far more restrictive and you could only pool certain amounts which meant it was not being as effective and could only be used for strategic projects.

The Head of Regulatory Services said on the neighbourhood pots of money it would go to the Parishes to be spent on local projects but for the unparished area the Council will hold the money and details would go through Ward Members. Funding is allocated to the Parishes twice a year. It was not possible to provide a figure on the percentage of the funding spent so far but 15-25% of the funding received would go to the Parishes/Community Council.

A Member welcomed the report as they had wanted to see the money spent but we had received very few applications. Members may recall that in the last 12 months some applications had come forward to the Committee. If you want to see what your local Parish/Community Council are doing Members should contact the Clerks as there may be things they would like to do in partnership with the District.

Councillor Chris Lloyd moved the recommendation, seconded by Councillor Raj Khuroya. The Councillor was aware that Chorleywood Parish Council had been receiving 25% of the CIL money twice a year.

On a question raised by a Member outside the Committee on why Watford Rural was zero rated, the Director of Community and Environmental Services advised that the level was set at zero in order that the regeneration project be viable because if CIL had been set at the time the regeneration programme would not have been able to take place. CIL money for leisure facilities had been allocated to the area already but a review of the CIL Charging Schedule would take place as part of the Local Plan review.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being unanimous.

#### RECOMMEND:

That the Committee recommend to approve the CIL Governance arrangements as set out in paragraphs 5.3 to 6.2 of this report.

### **PR13 PROPOSALS FOR SPENDING OF THE HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND**

The Partnerships Manager introduced the report and advised that Herts County Council had been provided with a further £6.172m of funding towards the household support fund. This was previously allocated from October to March but another round of funding had been allocated until the end of the September. This allocation had changed slightly from the previous one where this funding support will have 32% go to Pensioners which would be retained by Herts County Council therefore the funding the Council get is reduced to £55,000 in total. The report had broken down what partner allocations will be awarded to spend which had been varied slightly from the previous report based on what partners were able to administrate on our behalf and for which they had demand from the residents. All residents can apply directly to the Council in order to access the funding support. The recommendations were to agree to the breakdown of the spending but also to agree, as there is future fund, that future allocation decisions are delegated to the Leader and Executive Head of Service in order to prevent any delay on decisions. We had received feedback from partners that they were disappointed that there had been delays in receiving the funding.

Councillor Ciaran Reed moved an amendment to the recommendation. The Councillor said in terms of the mechanism on future allocations and given that the Council recently passed an amendment on how emergency decisions are agreed could the details be notified to all Group Leaders which allows for everyone to know what is happening.

The Chair agreed with the amendment but proposed that the normal urgent decision process be used.

The Chief Executive advised that the recommendation could be that future allocation decisions be delegated to the Executive Head of Service in consultation with the Group Leaders. The Chair and Proposer agreed with the proposal.

A Member asked how the agencies are identified, how do they bid for the funding and do they have any admin charges or does the full amount go to the recipients.

The Partnership Manager advised the agencies are decided on who our most frequent partners are which we work with and engage with. The agencies do not need to bid for the money although a couple of organisations who we don't normally work with have approached us to access some of this funding and we are happy to provide some funding. The admin cost had been retained by the Council with £5,000 of the total allocation being admin.

The Chair asked if other agencies take off some money for admin too. The Partnerships Manager advised that they don't take money off for admin.

A Member said the mechanism had changed from the previous report with the County Council now keeping back a third for pensioners. They felt the system before was better as it was all being administered locally at Three Rivers. How can we guarantee that the pensioners of Three Rivers actually get the third? Councillor Chris Lloyd was happy to move the recommendations.

The Partnerships Manager advised that the County Council had tried to change the scheme as well. Within our allocation 50% had to be spent on families and the other 50% can be spent on individuals so pensioners who are not able to access the funding at the County can approach us for support locally.

A Member asked on the £5,000 admin cost would the money be split between all the partners or is that just for TRDC? If residents apply to us directly for funding do we signpost them to the partners or do we provide the money directly. If one partner ran out of money could they receive funding from another partner or is it ring fenced.

The Partnership Manager advised that we have an entry route for all the applications so we encourage with our partners to refer their clients directly into the Council and the team will manage that process and then sign post the residents, with their consent, to the partners to receive the funding. The Council retain the £5,000 for administration costs as it is the community partnerships team doing the work. On the allocation of the funding to partners that all goes directly to the partners for the residents. Monthly monitoring is carried out with each partner to find out how much they are spending in order to make sure it is not being spent within the first month and is staggered across the timeframe we have for the funding. We are able to ask for some money back as we have had partners who have not been able to spend it within the timescale and we have been able to allocate it to others. The funding we have back we can look at allocating that funding out to other partners.

The Chair advised that the partnerships the community partnerships team have with the partners are long standing, well formed and well created.

On being put to the Committee the motion with the amendment was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being unanimous.



**RESOLVED:**

Agreed the plan for spend of the Household fund so that funds can be accessed by vulnerable people during the winter to the end of September 2022 in Three Rivers through a range of partners as identified above.

Agreed that future allocation decisions be delegated to the Executive Head of Service in consultation with the Group Leaders.

**PR14 CIL SPENDING APPLICATIONS**

The Head of Regulatory Services advised that the report seeks agreement to allocate a total of £29,979 of CIL funding to local infrastructure projects to support growth in Three Rivers. The funding was for the Barton Way Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) and would be match funded by the Parish Council who would also pay towards the works.

Councillor Chris Lloyd said there had been a long standing agreement between the Parish and the District, although would like to know how long, and moved the recommendation to support the allocation as an upgrade is required. This was seconded by Councillor Phil Williams.

A Member asked if there was a formula for how much the Council put in and how much the Parish put in and how do we ensure equity across the District. The Lead Member for Leisure advised that this was a contractual arrangement agreed a long time ago. The MUGA needed to be repaired but does not set a precedent for what other Parish/District percentages might be as it is an historic agreement.

The Head of Regulatory Services advised the agreement with the Parish was made in 2004 with the Parish. Looking at CIL and how we spend it, it does not specify that it has to be proportionately spread across the District or Parish areas. Every application is assessed on its merits. Officers will be mindful of the scale of development and under the CIL regulations there is a list of criteria which includes details on whether there is match funding and what other funding is being used from external partners to allow the scheme to happen. Any other funding coming in does put the project higher up the priority rating. There still needs to be some work done on how we prioritise the schemes but there is no requirement under CIL to make it equal across the District or Parish or who contributes what, it will be on a case by case basis and a decision finally for Members.

The Director of Community and Environmental Services said the amount of money the Parish have would depend on whether they have a Neighbourhood Plan, whether they would have had 15% contribution or 25% and how much development would have taken place in that Parish. If you had too rigid a structure you could be preventing the Parish from enabling some of these things to go forward. The Governance arrangements approved tonight will go some way forward to making the process more formal but with a degree of flexibility as the point is to encourage things to happen and not to have the funding sitting there for ever and enable it to be spent in the District.

A Member said it would be good to receive details on how well used the play areas/pitches are being used as part of the application so that it can be prioritised.

In response to a question on the amount being asked for the Head of Regulatory Services advised that it was not possible for CIL to cover consultancy costs and could not pay for the sign, it could only pay for the infrastructure costs. The CIL regulations provided details on what the CIL money can and cannot be spent on.

**RECOMMEND:**

That Members:

- (i) approve CIL funding for the following schemes detailed in Table 1 of this report and summarised in the table below for 2022/2023:

Applicant & Project Name	Infrastructure	CIL Amount
TRDC Leisure Team  Barton Way, Croxley Green Multi Use Games Area	Full refurbishment of the MUGA – surfacing and 3 sides of fencing	£29,979

AND

- (ii) any changes to the scheme proposals or variation of the financial requirements by up to 25% of the agreed commitment to be delegated to the DCES to determine in consultation with the Lead Member.

### **PR15 DISCRETIONARY COUNCIL TAX ENERGY REBATE SCHEME (DCTER)**

The Government had announced a package of support known as the Energy Bills rebate to help households with rising energy bills.

This included discretionary funding for billing authorities to support households who are in need but are not eligible for the Council Tax Rebate scheme.

The Shared Director of Finance advised that the funding of the scheme totalled £205,000. The Discretionary scheme intended to support energy bill payers who are not eligible under the terms of the core scheme. The scheme can also be used to provide targeted ‘top-up’ payments to the most vulnerable households in Bands A-D. We have until to September to get the money paid out and the proposed scheme was based on our Council Tax Support (CTS) Scheme where we had already completed the benefit analysis on people to establish the poorest residents in the District. The scheme proposed £150 payment for anyone in Band E-H who is in receipt of CTS and a top up payment of £40 for everyone in Band A-D.

The Chair advised that the Council have a Council Tax Reduction Scheme which is already in place and is means tested so this was an effective way of getting to the right people because we know they are in receipt of means tested benefit.

The Shared Director of Finance advised that as soon as we receive applications with bank details from residents we are then able to pay them and to try and make sure we help as much as we can. We are inviting people in to complete the application forms if they are not able to complete online or over the telephone. We are not emailing people as there had been a lot of scamming and we would not be asking for bank details. We would ask Members to get the message out to residents to apply. It was about trying to get the money out to the people who need it most within the timescales. If we had any money left by September it would need to go back to the Government.

Councillor Sarah Nelmes moved, seconded by Councillor Phil Williams, the recommendation as set out in the report.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED the voting being unanimous.

The Chair wished it be noted that all of the schemes which came out during Covid and the grants which needed to be paid out the Revenue and Benefits had to work really hard to organise all the payments and they should be thanked for all their hard well and the team had done heroically.

RESOLVED:

Agreed the DCTER scheme criteria as detailed in 3.1 and 3.1.1 of this report.

## **PR16 SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL YEAR END POSITION FOR 2021/22**

This report shows the year end position for the financial year ending on 31 March 2022 for both revenue and capital and makes the following recommendations:-

- to carry forward to 2022/23 certain unspent revenue budgets and;
- to rephase those capital budgets that require completion in 2022/23

The report focused on the variation between the latest agreed budget and the final expenditure and income for the financial year. This comparison provides an indication of the accuracy and robustness of financial control and the achievement of the strategic objective to manage resources to deliver the Council's strategic priorities and service needs.

The Head of Finance advised that the Council do have a significant underspend on revenue of £1.4m with a carry forward request of £602,000 which would leave a surplus of £786,000 to return to balances at year end subject to the recommendations being agreed. A couple of points were highlighted to Members which had contributed towards that position. We had some unplanned housing grant of £127,000 and also recycling credits of £147,000 which were received from County very late in the year. We also have an underspend on our Leisure contract which includes £96,000 of additional funding which was agreed in the year to support the Leisure provider which they did not need in 2021/22 but we do need to carry forward to support them in 2022/23. On capital there was a significant carry forward request of just over £11m but highlighted that the majority of that (£10.47m) related to investment in Pre-Emption sites. We put that into the budget in February anticipating that we would be able to complete on the purchase of the land by 31 March but unfortunately that had not been possible due to the legal process which needs to be progressed. So that budget had been requested to carry forward into 2022/23.

A Member said spending less than budgeted was not normally a bad thing and it had been explained the reasons for the Leisure underspend but noted the underspend for corporate climate change was significant as well and wanted to understand the constraints that the Council face. When you asking to defer amounts into the next year to what extent are they necessary as opposed as going into savings. The Member also picked up on a lot of funds going into agency workers for waste management.

The Director of Community and Environment Services advised on waste management we have had a lot of vacancies and it had been very difficult to employ people on a permanent basis particularly HGV drivers and loaders as there are other opportunities particularly during the pandemic when there has been a lot more delivery activity and more demand for drivers and we have had difficulty filling posts. We have reviewed salaries and have applied bonuses and as from the beginning of July we have another HGV driver and 3 more loaders due to start with us and are just going through the DBS checks. This will get us closer to be being fully staffed again. On some of the reasons why the project work had not happened had been due to the pandemic as staff have been ill or have been seconded to other work in the Council but we are looking to get the work back on track in the coming financial year which was why some of the money is being carried forward.

The Head of Finance said on climate change there was more detail provided in Appendix 1 of the report which highlighted why there had been delays. In terms of the carry forwards which had been requested on the whole that was work which had already commenced and if we don't carry that funding forward those projects would need to cease and a decision had been made to complete the project and deliver on the outcome. We will do a Q1 report to the Committee in September and with inflation being where it is we are already starting to look at the pressures on the budget and the fact that we do have an underspend going into balances at year end is positive in the light of the pressures to the budget during 2022/23 and onwards.

In response to a question on the salary contingency budget the Head of Finance advised that this budget was there to fund the pay award. We had put 2% aside but received 1.75% pay award so there is a balance left. Details had remained in the budget to make it more transparent. It is held as a contingency as it is a guess at the time of the setting the budget and is held centrally instead of distributing out to services so that we have more control.

Councillor Chris Lloyd moved the recommendations and wished to thank officers for the report and with all the things that had happened it had made it quite complex, seconded by Councillor Sarah Nelmes.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED the voting being 8 For, 0 Against and 4 Abstentions.

**RECOMMEND:**

That the favourable revenue outturn variance after carry forwards of (£785,638) to be noted.

That the capital outturn as summarised in paragraph 2.6 and Appendix 3 be noted.

To approve to carry forward the unspent service budgets from 2021/22 to 2022/23 which total £601,970 to enable completion of projects as detailed at Appendix 2.

To approve the rephasing of capital projects from 2021/22 to 2022/23 which total £11,336,915 as detailed at Appendix 4.

#### **PR17 WORK PROGRAMME**

The committee received its work programme

**RESOLVED:**

That the work programme be noted

#### **PR18 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The Chair moved, duly seconded, the following motion:  
“that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined under paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act. It has been decided by the Council that in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.”

On being put the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED the voting being unanimous.

**RESOLVED:**

Agreed to move into Part II business.

#### **PR19 HERTFORDSHIRE BUILDING CONTROL**

The Committee received a report.

**RECOMMEND:**

Agreed the decision but that public access to the decision and report be denied until the matter is resolved.

**PR20 LEISURE FACILITIES MANAGEMENT CONTRACT - REPROFILING OF MANAGEMENT FEE**

The Committee received a report.

**RECOMMEND:**

Agreed the decision but that public access to the decision and report be denied until the matter is resolved.

**CHAIR**