

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

12 JANUARY 2023

The meeting commenced at 1.00 p.m. in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

Present:

Councillor: Tom Cassidy (In the Chair)

Councillors: Rachel Creevy, Peter Jackson and Sue Little.

Also Present: Councillor Mike Young as substitute for Councillor Shane Moore in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2.
Councillor Tom Feeney as substitute for Councillor Cameron Sharp in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2.

Officers: Denise McGuckin, Managing Director
Chris Little, Director of Resources and Development
Tony Hanson, Director of Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services
Kieran Bostock, Assistant Director, Place Management
Sylvia Pinkney, Assistant Director, Regulatory Services
Steve Hilton, Communications and Marketing Team
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

30. Apologies for Absence

Councillors Helen Howson, Shane Moore and Cameron Sharp.

31. Declarations of Interest

None.

32. Minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2023.

Received.

33. Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2023/24 to 2024/25 *(Director of Resources and Development and Director of Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services)*

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report was to provide an update on the MTFs and to enable the Committee to scrutinise / comment on the 2023/24 savings proposals referred from Finance and Policy Committee.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Resources and Development gave an outline of the report originally submitted to the Finance and Policy Committee on 12 December 2022 and updated Members on the subsequent impact of the Government's 2023/24 provisional settlement issued on 19 December. The Director outlined the strategy agreed by the Finance and Policy Committee to address the budget deficit the Council faced in 2023/24 and 2024/25. The Director advised members that the spending power, including the increased Council Tax and Adult Social Care precept, provided in provisional settlement was £1.188m more than forecast and it would be recommended that Finance and Policy Committee use these resources to reduce use of one off funding to balance the 2023/24 budget and put the Council's financial position on a more sustainable basis. Included in that strategy were a number of budget savings identified across all departments for 2023/24 and the report outlined those proposals that fell within the remit of this committee. The Director highlighted that the Finance and Policy Committee had requested that should any of the savings proposals not be supported by a relevant Policy Committee, that committee should forward alternative proposals to the same value as it was key that the savings proposed across the Council as a whole be met in 2023/24.

The Director of Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services outlined each of the savings proposed for services within this Committee's remit, as detailed in Appendix C to the report. Details of any comments made by the Committee to be forwarded to the Finance and Policy Committee are included in the decision below.

During the debate around the savings proposals outlined in Appendix C to the report the following comments were made and clarifications sought by Members and the public that attended the meeting.

In relation to the proposals for the Stores and Building Cleaning, Members were informed that there were no redundancies, or loss of hours attached to the proposals.

The Staff and Member Car Parking and Post 16 SEND Transport proposals were the second year of proposals agreed by Members as part of the 2022/23 budget.

While the Christmas Tree proposal would reduce the number of trees erected by the Borough Council, Parish Councils would continue (where they currently did) to have Christmas Trees in their own areas. Seaton

Carew Councillors had indicated a desire to seek external funding for a tree in their ward.

The proposals for the charging of Garden Waste bin collections engendered significant debate among Councillors and the ten members of the public present at the meeting. The Members of the Committee requested that the detailed evidence behind the calculation of the charge be shared with Members ahead of the meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee. The members of the public present objected strongly to the imposition of the charge and expressed their concerns at the potential increase in fly-tipping, the impact on low income households, the impact on the Household Waste Recycling Centre and the likelihood of garden waste being disposed of in the normal household waste bin. The members of the public also questioned the level of charge for only a limited number of collections each year when other areas offered a more enhanced service.

At the conclusion of the debate the Chair thanked all those present for their attendance and comments.

Decision

That as requested by Finance and Policy Committee the Committee considered the recommended 2023/24 savings proposed detailed in Annex A - Appendix C relating to the services within this Committees portfolio and Members made the following comments to be reported back to Finance and Policy Committee on 23th January in relation to each of the savings proposed.

Budget Reduction Heading	Budget Reduction 2023/24 £000	Neighbourhood Services Committee comments
Stores	20	No specific comments were made.
Savings to Subscriptions Budgets	4	No specific comments were made.
Building Cleaning	33	No specific comments were made.
Local Access Forum Delivery Officer	3	No specific comments were made.
Staff and Member Car Parking	4	No specific comments were made.
Post 16 SEND Transport	37	No specific comments were made.
Home to School Transport	7	No specific comments were made.
Garden Waste	250	While not rejecting the proposal the Committee sought evidence of the process behind the

		identification of the charge proposed and that this be shared with the Finance and Policy Committee. There was significant opposition to the proposal expressed by members of the public present at the meeting.
Christmas Tree	9	No specific comments were made.

34. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

None.

The meeting was informed that the next meeting on Monday 13 February was cancelled and the next scheduled meeting would, therefore, be held on Monday 13 March 2023 commencing at 3.00 p.m.

The meeting concluded at 2.40 p.m.

H MARTIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

PUBLICATION DATE: 18 JANUARY 2023