



Strategy and Resources Meeting
Thursday 7th December 2023
The Trinity Centre
7:00pm

Present:

Cllrs Ward (Chairman), Cairns, Cooper, Mackey, Parkin, Pears and Raut.

In Attendance:

Olive O'Sullivan – Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Mary Watkins – Head of Finance.

There were no members of the press or public present.

62 Apologies for Absence

The CEO had received apologies from Cllr Puri.

Resolved to accept the apologies received.

63 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

64 Minutes of the Previous Meetings

Resolved to confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee held on 14th November 2023.

65 Matters Arising

The CEO gave an update on the multi modal travel support proposal for the festive season 2023, considered by Committee in November 2023. Following further negotiations, the proposal to provide all day free parking on Saturdays in Birmingham City Council (BCC) owned car parks was declined by BCC. Cllr Parkin stated that he had asked a question at BCC Full Council on why the decision had been taken and that the cabinet member had sited that the scheme would be at the expense of the Town Council's precept payer and would undermine the two commercial car parks in the town centre. Cllr Ward responded that the Town Council was a Local Authority, elected by the precept payers to make decisions on how the funds were allocated, and that it was residents who decide if the precept had been spent wisely or not. Cllr Ward thanked the CEO for her hard work on the scheme and stated that he would write a letter to the BCC Leader to express his concerns and disappointment on the decision taken. Cllr Cairns suggested that the scheme could be used at different times of the year to drive footfall for events or bank holidays. The CEO confirmed that the Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) Passenger Incentive Programme was still available to the Town Council and could be launched next year alongside a parking scheme.



66 Questions from Members

Cllr Cooper asked if the Town Council could look to develop the management of supply and maintenance of all the Towns florals, wildflower meadows, Christmas trees and Christmas lights for 2024.

The CEO responded that there was already a direct relationship with the provider of Christmas Trees and Christmas Lights. However, the power supply for the lights on the trees and motifs must be provided through BCC. The power is supplied through lamp columns, and this is already covered by a BCC contract with Acivico and a framework set up for adherence to safety standards. There is a storage cost for the motifs, as they are stored in a huge unit by BCC and annually checked for maintenance. Cllr Ward asked if there was a risk to the service if BCC discontinued it due to the Section 114 notice, the CEO responded that all festive lights schemes across Birmingham, while delivered through BCC, are externally funded by Parish Council's, BIDS etc.

The CEO advised that an alternative quote had been sought for delivery of the wildflowers scheme in 2024 and would be presented to Planning and Highways Committee in January 2024. The costs for delivery of summer florals had been received from BCC and there would be a procurement process to obtain three quotes for delivery of next year's summer scheme.

67 Budget Proposals 2024/25

The CEO outlined the budget recommendations discussed at the previous Committee meeting that are highlighted in red on the circulated draft budget.

Cllr Pears asked if Committee should consider increasing the Legal Fees budget in anticipation of asset transfers from BCC and increasing the Road Safety budget for further traffic calming schemes. Cllr Ward responded that there was a Budget Contingency that could be utilised to move funds into these budgets as and when the need arose.

Cllr Pears asked about projects relating to Traffic Island Improvements and Signage Replacement. The CEO responded that the Town Rangers are carrying out some mowing and improvements on traffic islands but there was further work to be done to identify the length and details of existing sponsorship agreements that were already in place between commercial companies and BCC, before any significant improvements could be made. There would be future projects relating to the Welcome to Sutton Coldfield signs at gateways to the town.

The CEO reported that the potential implications for the Town Council arising from Birmingham City Council's section 114 notice and the intervention of Commissioners is not yet clear and may not be known until they set their budget for 2024/25. The Town Council does have a Devolution Deal earmarked reserve plus an annual ongoing budget allocation and any adjustments to earmarked reserves, will be considered by Committee in February.

Resolved to recommend to Full Council that the draft budget for 2024/25 be approved.

Resolved to recommend to Full Council that the indicative budgets for 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28 be approved.



68 Precept 2024/25

Resolved to note the draft Council Tax Database and formulae for calculation of the 2024/25 Precept.

Resolved to recommend the Precept Levy of £1,870,702 for 2024/25 to Full Council for approval.

69 Date of the Next Meeting

20th February 2024 at the Trinity Centre.

The meeting ended at 8:00pm.