

GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2024-25 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2024-25 TO 2026-27 – EXTRACT FOR EXECUTIVE

A report regarding the General Fund Budget 2024-25 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2024-25 to 2026-27 was before the Joint Executive Advisory Board (JEAB) for consideration at its meeting held on 11 January 2024. The report was introduced by the Lead Councillor for Finance and Property and presented by the Joint Executive Head of Finance and S151 officer, who sought councillors' views thereon.

The following points arose from related discussion, comments and questions for forwarding to the Executive:

1. In terms of the long-term empty dwelling levy, the current number of long-term empty dwellings in the Borough was unknown and the officers would obtain that information from the Revenues and Benefits Lead and circulate it to the JEAB.
2. The JEAB was advised that the Asset Register was publicly available and a link to it would be circulated to councillors to enable them to contact the project lead, the Joint Executive Head of Assets and Property, with any comments, queries or issues.
3. The Asset Disposal Programme was not yet finalised and a valuation expert and another property expert were revaluing the assets on the short list with a view to arriving at a final list. The Programme would be subject to approval through the formal processes in due course.
4. The freezing of councillors' allowances for 2024/25 was supported.
5. Climate Change was a consideration when letting any contract, in particular the Council's energy supply contract, which would fall due for renewal next year. This exercise would include looking at whether, as part of the Council's Climate Change commitments, green energy could be utilised. This would depend upon price differentials quoted in contract tenders received.
6. With regard to parking charges, although the package in terms of the overall amount of income the Council was seeking to raise had been agreed, further details were to be added to the report prior to its submission to the Executive and Council.

7. It was assumed that the fly tipping fine of £400 was set nationally. However, enquiries would be made to ascertain whether there was any local discretion to increase the amount to deter culprits.
8. In response to a request, the JEAB was advised that the capital cash flow could be added to the report to aid understanding.
9. With regard to the submission of Monitoring Reports to the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee, the Period 8 report would be received next week whilst the Period 6 and 7 reports would be published on the Council's website, together with the Period 8 report following its reporting to the Committee. The Period 9 report was almost ready for publishing. It was hoped that the availability of this information to councillors and the public would assist with answering some of the budget queries raised.
10. The addition of greater context to the report to assist the public to understand it was welcomed.

The JEAB was invited to comment on seven recommendations which would be considered by the Executive at its meeting on 25 January 2024. The JEAB indicated its support for all seven recommendations and agreed that its above comments be forwarded to the Executive.