



Leicester
City Council

Minute Extract

Minutes of the Meeting of the HERITAGE CULTURE LEISURE AND TOURISM SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: TUESDAY, 10 JANUARY 2023 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Halford (Chair)

Councillor Dr Barton

Councillor March

Also Present

Councillor Clair, Deputy City Mayor

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53. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Dawood and Shelton.

The Chair noted that the meeting was currently inquorate, the meeting could still proceed as a briefing however the Commission could not take any formal decisions while inquorate.

54. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests they had in the business on the agenda.

There were no declarations of interest.

57. COUNCIL DRAFT BUDGET REPORTS

Councillor Barton arrived partway through consideration of this item, at this point the meeting became quorate.

The Director of Finance submitted a report on the Council's Draft Revenue Budget and Draft Capital Programme budget for the financial year 2023/24.

The Head of Finance presented the Draft Revenue Budget first, it was noted that:

- The final details of the finance settlement with the Government had yet to be finalised, however is available the final details would be included in the report which went to Full Council.
- Important background context for the budget was the decade of austerity, the Covid pandemic, and the inflationary pressure on Adult Social Care Services.
- Other inflationary pressures were on energy costs, staff pay, and waste disposal.
- The Government had indicated that it would be making further spending cuts, with local government funding likely to see some of the worst cuts.
- Councils were now permitted to raise Council Tax by 5% without a referendum, this was proposed in the Draft Budget. Additional Council Tax would also be placed on furnished empty properties. Additional funding had been received to support those receiving Council Tax support, meaning that some would see a reduction in their Council Tax bills.
- The Fair Funding Review had been deferred to the next Parliament.
- The approach to achieving budget reductions was to make savings in a planned way. This had left an estimated £55m in reserves. The current budget gap was £33m, so this was the maximum that would be brought from reserves.
- Further savings were essential, present projections showed that without further savings, reserves would run out in 24/25.

In response to a Member question it was noted that the budget did not show the total spend versus income of each department and service. The budget showed the budgeted cost to the Council of each department and service after income.

In response to a Member question it was noted that savings in the budgets for Arts and Museums would not come from significant cuts to services but would instead come from a reduction in some running costs and a change in income targets.

The Head of Finance presented the Draft Capital Programme next, it was noted that:

- This was a 1-year programme, a longer-term programme was not currently possible due to the economic uncertainty.
- Spending of note for the Commission was £100k for parking spaces at Phoenix, £2.5m for supporting Multi-Use Games Areas, £340k for the purchase of and works at St Pauls Church, £185k for new heritage panels, and £50k for grants for the repair of historic buildings.
- Identifying any potential further funding streams was a continual part of the budgeting process.

In response to a Member question it was noted that the Council had been trying to work with the owners of St Pauls Church to get the necessary works

completed for many years.

AGREED:

1. That the Commission notes the Draft Revenue Budget and Draft Capital Programme for 2023/24.
2. That the Commission requests that further details of budget from each department in the Commission area be provided to the Commission, including details of income.
3. That the Commission requests further information on the purchase of St Pauls Church.