



Leicester
City Council

MINUTE EXTRACT

Minutes of the Meeting of the NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: WEDNESDAY, 15 JANUARY 2020 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Thalukdar (Chair)

Councillor Ali
Councillor Govind

Councillor Aqbany
Councillor Solanki

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33. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Joshi and Councillor Khote.

The Chair wished Councillor Khote a speedy recovery.

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

38. GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2020/21 TO 2021/22

The Director of Finance submitted a report setting out the City Mayor's proposed budget for 2020/21 to 2021/22. Members of the Commission were asked to consider the proposed budget that would be proposed at Council in February.

It was noted that the proposed budget was set for a year and the General Fund Budget was proposed on a year on year basis. Fundamental proposed changes were pushed through Parliament last year, but the funding review was side lined due to the uncertainty with Brexit. The gap going forward, and the level of uncertainty was unprecedented with cost drivers such as rurality and deprivation having a huge impact on the budget. However, the Councils strategy of having a well-managed reserve, had allowed the Council to be prepared for uncertain times.

In relation to this particular Commission the Director of Finance noted that the Revenues and Benefits division were under financial constraints as the Department for Work and Pensions continued to cut the grant provided to administer the work load. The service was able to integrate roles within staff to meet the demand and reduce cost. Channel shifting the service online was also a means of meeting the service demands.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services noted that the area currently delivers 28 services such as Community Safety, Waste Management, 2 Household Waste Recycle Centres and others. The funding received through the General Revenue Fund Budget, paid for and delivered a lot in the city. The service was living within its means and had still been able to achieve an effective delivery of services. The past year had seen a food-outlets with a hygiene rating of 5 double, a 90% satisfaction levels of neighbourhood buildings and a 14.9 reduction in fly tipping cases. Although nationally fly tipping cases were on a rise, the city were able to reduce the number of local fly tipping cases as a result of a robust strategy and the great facilities the service had on offer, including the weekly waste collection service and a further recruitment for two additional City Wardens.

During discussions, members were concerned with what impact the proposed budget would have on the delivery of service and how the increase in Council Tax would benefit the service. It was suggested that channel shifting was part of the strategy to reduce cost and still maintain the level of service. The increase in Council Tax which was slightly under 4% was a means of recuperating the 50% loss in government funding. It was noted that business rates were set by a national multiplier and 50% of these rates were retained locally.

Members of the commission were assured that there were not specific areas that would see improvements rather it was a transformation process and all areas would see continuous improvements to existing services.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted;
- 2) That the director of Finance be requested to consider the comments made by Members of the Commission;
- 3) That the minute extract be shared with the Overview Select Committee and Council; and
- 4) That the Information on the Council's website regarding Council Tax increase for properties that have added extensions and planning advice to inform of possible increases to Council Tax to be shared with Councillor Ali.