

EXECUTIVE CABINET

26 July 2023

Commenced: 1.00pm

Terminated: 1.30pm

Present: Councillors Cooney (Chair), Choksi, Fairfoull, Feeley, Jackson, North, Sweeton, Ward and Wills

In Attendance:

Sandra Stewart	Chief Executive
Ashley Hughes	Director of Resources (s151)
David Wilcock	Assistant Director, Legal Services (MO)
Stephanie Butterworth	Director of Adult's Services
Alison Stathers-Tracey	Director of Children's Services
Julian Jackson	Director of Place
Debbie Watson	Director of Population Health
Emma Varnam	Assistant Director, Operations & Neighbourhoods
Simon Brunet	Head of Policy, Performance and Intelligence

Apologies for absence: Councillors Kitchen (ex-officio) and Taylor.

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted by Cabinet Members.

18. MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE CABINET

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting of Executive Cabinet held on 28 June 2023 be approved as a correct record.

19. 2023/24 FORECAST OUTTURN REPORT AT PERIOD 2

Consideration was given to a report of the First Deputy, Finance, Resources and Transformation / Director of Resources, which set out the Outturn position for the 2023/24 financial year at Month 2.

It was explained that the 2023/24 Revenue Budget had a Net Expenditure Requirement of £221.397m. The Net Expenditure Requirement was financed by Council Tax, Business Rates and other general funding.

Members were advised that, despite a forecasted position that was reflective of a balanced budget, it did contain significant levels of risk, further details of which were given in the report.

At the time of drafting the report, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) measure of inflation was running at 8.7%, unchanged from April 2023. The Bank of England had responded to the 'sticky' inflationary environment with a strong monetary policy decision and increased the base rate of interest by 50 basis points to 5%. There were economic forecasts now considered that to control inflation and return it to the Government target of 2%, the base rate of interest would rise to at least 6% in the calendar year for 2023.

The key points on the forecast 2023/24 Outturn as at month 2 were presented to Members. There was a forecast underspend of £0.031m against the Net Expenditure Requirement of £221.397m.

The position included management action comprising mitigations of £9.128m and reserve drawdowns of £2.126m. The position also assumed the delivery of all savings budget reduction proposals as detailed in the MTFs, for which work was underway within Service areas.

Key cost pressures from the impact of inflationary increases were prevalent within several service areas, on contracts and placements, and detailed work would be undertaken to track the proportion of increase relating to inflation and that being driven through increased demand for certain services.

Significant increases in demand were being experienced within Housing through increases in the requirement for Temporary Accommodation and also within Adults Social Care, particularly relating to long term residential placements.

Detailed analysis would be undertaken for areas where additional funding has been held in contingency to fund potential emerging pressures and, where relevant, recommendations would be put forward to draw down appropriate budget.

The budgeted Net Expenditure Requirement of £221.397m was financed by General Funding to the same amount, in order to balance the budget. The General Funding comprised: Council Tax, Business Rates, Government Grants, and contributions from Earmarked Reserves.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the forecast Revenue Outturn position for 2023/24 and required mitigating actions, be noted;**
- (ii) It be noted that further work will be ongoing throughout the year to track the progress of management actions with further updates to the Executive Cabinet alongside the additional work at Star Chambers, held bi-monthly.**

20. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report of the First Deputy, Finance, Resources and Transformation / Director of Resources. The report updated the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The MTFS was part of the financial framework for the Council.

The last MTFS was presented as part of the 2023/24 budget proposals, which included a financial projection for the years from 2024/25 to 2027/28. The 2023/24 budget set a balanced budget with a net expenditure requirement of £221.397m. For future years, the increases to the net expenditure requirement were projected, alongside the quantum of new savings needed to balance the budget. Projected new savings were £13.993m in 2024/25, increasing to £37.465m in 2027/28.

The MTFS comprised a net expenditure requirement which was required to be balanced by the Council's General Funding, consisting of Council Tax, Business Rates, General Grants and earmarked reserves.

Following the 2023/24 budget proposals, inflation had remained stubbornly high. The Council also had available the results of the 2022/23 Outturn. There had been further Government announcements and the Council could incorporate the results of official returns and estimates for Council Tax and Business Rates. These changes were included in the updated MTFS.

The General Funding, which would be received in 2023/24, was higher than the 2023/24 budget proposals. Business Rates and Related Grants were £6.280m higher, so that an additional £6.280m could be transferred into Unallocated Earmarked Reserves.

It was stated that the Council's Top Up grant was higher by £2.313m, following a Government announcement. The table further updated for Business Rate income and Section 31 grants, increasing the additional funding as a whole to a total of £6.280m.

With regard to general funding sources from 2024/25 to 2028/29, the Council needed to find £12.889m savings in 2024/25, slightly less than the £13.993m savings previously required. By 2028/29, the savings required was £1.495m higher. In summary, in the revised MTFS, the Net Expenditure Requirement had increased significantly largely due to inflation, but the Council's General Funding Resources had also increased.

The Council would continue to review its MTFS and savings programme going forward. The assumptions included within the report would be refreshed in September to take account of available information on Government funding decisions, as well as the macro-economic environment, and again in December. The impacts would be profiled into best- and worst-case scenarios, to create a range of potential budget gaps to ensure prudence in budget setting.

For 2024/25, targets would be issued to Directorates based upon a percentage of gross budget, which, combined, would deliver the projected budget reduction target for 2024/25. Work would be undertaken between July and September by the Service areas, supported by Finance, to identify potential projects that could be undertaken to deliver the targets in each area. Over the period September to December, those proposals would be further developed to ensure robust delivery plans were in place and work would commence, with a view to maximising the full year effect of delivery in 2024/25.

Further detailed work would be undertaken, including a review of its fees and charges policy alongside a detailed analysis of its Earmarked Reserves. In addition, the Authority was further reviewing the potential cost of introducing the Living Wage Foundation, the National Living Wage and the Fair Cost of Care.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the impact of additional inflationary and demand pressures on the MTFS from 2024/25 to 2028/29, be noted;**
- (ii) It be noted that the update identifies an additional £6.280m of General Funding in 2023/24;**
- (iii) That the proposal to increase Council Tax by an additional 1%, and the Adult Social Care Precept by an additional 1%, both in 2024/25, be noted;**
- (iv) That the overall update to the MTFS for 2024/25 to 2028/29 and the upward revisions to the savings requirement, be approved.**

21. TAMESIDE MARKETS – RENT AND SERVICE CHARGES

Consideration was given to the First Deputy, Finance, Resources and Transformation / Executive Member for Towns and Communities / Head of Estates in respect of the Rent and Service charges for Tameside Markets. In light of the budget challenges and need to achieve fairness in the cost of living crisis, the purpose of the report was to review the subsidy provided to the markets and to review the annual rent increase set out contractually in all market holder leases. The rent increase set out in lease holders contracts was due from the 1 April annually and would be backdated to this. The delay in seeking this increase had been caused by trying to find a fair balance between the market traders and taxpayers who subsidised the market operation.

It was explained that the permanent market hall traders occupied their units by way of commercial leases with rents reviewed annually and index linked to increases in RPI based on December figures. The December 2022 RPI figure which would be the reference point for April 2023 rent uplifts, was 13.44%, and this RPI uplift was assumed in the 2023/24 budget proposals.

In addition to stall rentals, traders paid a service charge to cover the direct costs of running the markets. The running costs for the markets had historically been subsidised by the Council and the draft Service Charge statements for 2022-2023 showed an estimated subsidy of £170,547 for Ashton Market Hall and a subsidy £8,244 for Hyde market. The 2023/24 budget proposals included a saving to reduce the level of Council subsidy on the service charges.

Members were advised that, if the Council were to seek to recover the £67,000 savings target in relation to the Council's subsidy and simultaneously apply the significant inflationary RPI linked increase to the rents, in the current market trading climate, it came with an inherently high risk of increasing void levels in the markets, and placing traders under additional financial pressure in what was already a challenging retail economy, with the result that it may become financially unsustainable for traders. The consequence of this would be twofold - (i) a reduction in rental income; and (ii) an increase in irrecoverable service charge expenditure.

The options available were presented to Members and detailed below (all figures based on current occupancy):

- a. to apply the contractual increase of 13.4% (RPI) which would generate an additional £0.064m of income; or
- b. to apply an increase at CPI rate of 8.7% which would generate an additional £0.042m of income.

Discussion ensued in respect of the content of the report and the determination of the rent increase, including the importance of striking a fair balance between market traders and tax payers, and it was:

RESOLVED

- (i) **That a global increase to the service charge of £0.067m in total which will be prorated to individual tenants subject to the size of the stall and location of Ashton or Hyde and that this is backdated to 1 April 2023, be approved;**
- (ii) **That an increase at CPI rate of 8.7%, be applied to market rents for financial year 2023/24, (Option B in the report), and that this be backdated to 1 April 2023; and**
- (iii) **It be noted that:**
 - **the budget set at Full Council in February 2023 included an uplift to the market rents at the Retail Price Index (RPI) in December 2022.**
 - **the budget set at Full Council in February 2023 included a savings proposal to reduce the global service charge subsidy to zero, totalling £0.067m at that point in time.**
 - **the revised global service charge subsidy to the markets, driven by the year-end position on utilities and staffing costs, is £0.179m before the decision to increase service charges by £0.067m.**
 - **the Council is still subsidising the markets through its service charges by a total of £0.112m per annum using latest available information.**
 - **the options presented on increases at RPI and Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation to market rents.**
 - **the intention to eliminate the global subsidy for markets' service charges in 2024/25 onwards.**

22. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE UPDATE, JULY 2023

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Leader / Chief Executive, which provided evidence to demonstrate progress towards achievement of the Corporate Plan and improving the services provided to residents, businesses and key stakeholders within the locality.

The scorecard, which contained long term outcome measures that tracked progress to improve the quality of life for local residents, was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

A glossary providing more information about the indicators included in the Corporate Outcomes Scorecard was attached to the report at Appendix 2.

Members were advised that it was proposed to develop a new scorecard linked to the council's corporate plan that focussed primarily on measures that recorded and explained the performance of council services. That was, areas and indicators the public and regulators used to judge how well the council was run and delivering for the local community. An initial outline scope of potential

measures had been undertaken. Sources included (not exhaustive) Ofsted; Care Quality Commission; Local Government Association (LGA); and government department frameworks. It was proposed a conversation take place with each Directorate on which measures to take forward. The existing long-term outcomes measures would be kept under ongoing review by the council and partners as part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).

RESOLVED

That the content of the report, scorecard at Appendix 1, the glossary of indicators at Appendix 2, and the plan for a refresh of the scorecard, be noted.

23. GRANT FUNDING AGREEMENT FOR THE TAMESIDE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

Consideration was given to a report of the First Deputy, Finance, Resources and Transformation / Executive Member for Towns and Communities / Assistant Director, Operations and Neighbourhoods, which set out the details of the grant funding for the Tameside Community Safety Partnership and the restrictions of the funding.

It was explained that each Community Safety Partnership in Greater Manchester received an annual grant from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), who was the Deputy Mayor of Greater Manchester. The grants were received and administrated through each Local Authority in Greater Manchester.

Whilst previous years grants had all been issued on annual basis, this year the Deputy Mayor had stipulated a move towards a 3-year grant. The Deputy Mayor wrote to all the Greater Manchester Chairs of the CSPs and Local Authority Chief Executives on the 6 April 2023 to this effect. A copy of the Tameside Community Safety grant allocation letter was attached to the report at Appendix 1. This was accompanied by the Grant Agreement document, attached to the report at Appendix 2 detailing the terms of how each grant was to be spent.

The Grant Agreement document set out the following grant over the next 3 years:

Grant name	Year	Amount	Notes
Community Safety Grant	2023/24	£243,900	
	2024/25	£243,900	
	2025/26	£243,900	
Voluntary and Community Sector Grant	2023/24	£100,000	Carry forward only in exceptional circumstances
	2024/25	£100,000	
	2025/26	£100,000	
Hate Crime Grant	2023/24	£10,000	
	2024/25	£10,000	
	2025/26	£10,000	
Serious Violence Grant	2023/24	£150,000	Carry forward not permitted
	2024/25	£150,000	
Serious Violence Duty – Labour costs	2023/24	£11,182	
	2024/25	£9,858	
Serious Violence Duty – Non -Labour costs	2023/24	£15,966	
	2024/25	£8,098	

In order to accept the terms and conditions of the grant, a declaration must be signed by the following:

- Chief Executive of the Local Authority
- Finance Director of the Local Authority
- Community Safety Partnership Chair(s)

- Director of Children Services
- Director of Public Health

The monetary values above were not provided as one lump sum. Each individual grant would be provided on an annual basis.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the content of the report be noted;**
- (ii) That the funding from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) for Community Safety be accepted and a grant funding agreement entered into with GMCA;**
- (iii) It be noted that the Local Authority administers this fund on behalf of the Tameside Community Safety Partnership (CSP); and**
- (iv) It be noted that the CSP board approves projects, monitors spend and outcomes in terms of the utilisation of the fund. The CSP report back to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) on the utilisation of the spend.**

24. GAS CONTRACT RENEWAL

Consideration was given to a report of the First Deputy, Finance, Resources and Transformation / Executive Member for Environmental Services / Director of Place, which explained that the Council's gas contract was due for review.

Members were advised that Tameside Council currently utilised Crown Commercial Services (CCS) framework for gas supplies. Under the CCS contract, there were a number of 'basket' purchasing options available. The current basket arrangement was L6 and referred to the 6-month purchasing window that traders could purchase the commodity prior to 1 April each year. The recommended L12 basket had a longer (10-month) purchasing window prior to the start of delivery each April.

The current arrangements under the L6 basket with CCS meant that the Council were required to serve termination notice prior to 15 September each year in order to leave the contract the following April, otherwise the contract rolled on for another year.

The purpose of the report was to seek approval to continue procuring under a contract with CCS for gas supplies, and sought approval to enter into a medium term strategy to procure gas under a L12 basket with CCS and to provide notification to move basket by 15 March 2024 in readiness to commence in April 2025.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the ongoing procurement of gas via the CCS framework be approved, and**
- (ii) That a medium-term strategy be entered into, to move to a L12 basket with CCS at the next available date (to provide notification to move baskets by 15 March 2024). Buying of the commodity would then commence in April 2024 (12 months ahead) in readiness to for April 2025 contracted rates (L12). Noting the longer notice period for leaving the contract after transition.**

25. NEW CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE DELIVERY MODEL - UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member, Towns and Communities / Director of Place / Assistant Director, Operations and Neighbourhoods, which provided a further update 12 months after the new model had been operational to ensure quality of service; that vulnerable residents were able to access appointments; and that it met demand, whilst at the same time being affordable and cost effective.

It was reported that since the launch of the new model in March 2022, demand had increased from 821 appointments in 2021/22 to 3338 appointments in 2022/23. Libraries were dealing with more footfall from customers dropping in for Level 2 support, which had enabled customer services to

operate on less staff whilst providing a high quality service targeted at Level 1 support that met demand.

The option to book appointments via all libraries during staffed hours had ensured that residents not digitally connected or who were vulnerable, had been able to access the service with 249 people accessing in this manner. Consistent communications would continue to go out so that people knew about the different ways to access the service and how to make an appointment.

More customers were visiting Tameside One in person to make an appointment, although it was acknowledged that this could be related to the economy opening up and more people visiting Ashton following the easing of Covid restrictions. The reception offer provided a professional welcome and support to make appointments, particularly to vulnerable residents, as well as directing people to the library depending on the type of enquiry.

Customer feedback revealed waiting times for appointments and quality of service was positive. There were some early issues around customers knowing how to contact the service, however this had significantly improved as a result of consistent communications going out.

Overall, the new service model appeared to be working well with referrals monitored each day along with staffing levels to ensure customers were seen promptly and by the channel of access that best suited their needs.

RESOLVED

That the progress made on the implementation of the new customer service centre delivery model and future developments, be noted.

26. FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROVISION OF ADAPTATIONS FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member, Adult Social Care, Homelessness and Inclusivity / Director of Adult Services, seeking approval for the establishment of a framework of approved contractors for adaptations for disabled people.

It was explained that, on 24 August 2022, Executive Cabinet gave permission for the procurement of a new framework of approved contractors for the delivery of adaptations for people in Tameside with disabilities. The new framework would provide suitable contractors to deliver adaptations over a 4 year period. STaR Procurement would lead the process to procure suitable contractors on the framework to provide the required works based upon the establishment of a minimum quality threshold.

Members were advised that a procurement exercise was carried out earlier in 2023 with STaR Procurement and Tameside Commissioning Services within Adult Social Care for the provision of the following: Major Adaptation Works (Lot 1A & Lot 1B), Minor Adaption Works (Lot 2 & 3), Extensions to residential properties (Lot 4) and Disrepair works for homeowners over 65 years and other vulnerable residents (Lot 5).

If approved, the new contracts with each provider for inclusion on the framework would commence on 1 September 2023 for 4 years to 31 August 2027.

Once the framework commenced, the intention was for individual packages of work to be specified and either approved using the fixed costs process within Lot 1A, or work would be compared with prices submitted by providers as part of the tender and works offered to those providing best value subject to their respective workloads for Lot 1B. Other works in Lot 2 and Lot 3 would be allocated to the contractor offering the best price. Works in Lot 4 and Lot 5 would be subject to a competitive quote exercise within the framework.

RESOLVED

That approval be given under the Council's Procurement Standing Orders and the Financial Regulations to establish and use a framework of approved contractors to carry out adaptations and other works in residential properties for disabled and vulnerable people, namely:

- **ABM (Lancashire) Ltd**
- **Accessibility Bathrooms**
- **Jackson & Taylor**
- **KPDodd Construction**
- **M&R Heating Services**
- **Rivergate Developments**
- **Structec (NW) Ltd**

27. GMCA GRANT FUNDING AGREEMENT FOR A BED FOR EVERY NIGHT (ABEN) AND COMMUNITY ACCOMMODATION TIER 3 (CAS3)

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Homelessness & Inclusivity / Assistant Director, Operations and Neighbourhoods, which explained that the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) had prepared a joint grant funding agreement, which outlined the funding support it proposed to provide Tameside MBC, to deliver the following Greater Manchester programmes within Tameside:

- "A Bed Every Night" (ABEN) Homelessness Programme
- The Community Accommodation Service [Tier 3] (CAS3)

ABEN and CAS3 were 2 homelessness programmes, which provided vital accommodation for those who were at imminent risk of rough sleeping and who had no interim statutory accommodation options open to them. The programmes were key to prevent rough sleeping in Tameside.

Members were advised that the grant funding agreement was developed months before the GMCA had reached a final decision on their budget. Therefore the funding details from 1 April 2023 onwards, were indicative, for planning purposes only, and subject to formal approval by the GMCA as part of its annual budget. The GMCA had now formally approved their budget for the year 2023-2024 and had informed Tameside Council that they would be awarded in 2023-2024, £260,000 for the ABEN Homeless Programme and £202,116 for CAS3.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the GMCA Grant Funding be accepted and that the Authority enters in to the GMCA Grant Funding Agreement; and**
- (ii) The indicative funding for the year 2024-2025, as detailed in the report, be noted.**

28. REVIEW OF SUPPORTING FAMILIES DELIVERY

Consideration was given to a report of the Deputy Executive Leader, Children and Families / Assistant Director for Early Help and Partnerships, setting out the business case to terminate the contract between Tameside Council and Active Tameside for 'The Supporting Families Services' funded through the Supporting Families Grant (The Grant) and to bring the service back into the Local Authority control to provide better oversight and assurance around the quality of provision and to ensure value for money through the efficient use of grant. The proposition had been in consideration for some time before the recent announcement regarding closure of facilities and was not a reflection on the Trust, but a continuation of the children's improvement journey.

It was explained that whilst the performance of the provider had been consistently good, there was a need to bring about a more joined up service that was in line with the overall improvement journey in Children's Services. A critical part of the improvement journey was the Early Help Transformation programme that had seen a new Thresholds Framework developed across the partnership; a refreshed Early Help Partnership and Strategy, and further investment in case work using the Grant

which had provided the opportunity to review the efficacy of the provided service, particularly around management oversight of case work and value for money. Bringing the management of the service back into the local authority would provide the regular, operational oversight required to make further improvements in whole family support in Tameside.

The new Family Help Service was very much focussed on supporting the whole family network for as long as was needed, to prevent their needs escalating with long term ambition for families to access universal services. The focus had shifted considerably from providing time-limited interventions to more long-term support to prevent needs escalating leading to families requiring statutory services.

The new ways of working were already embedding and performance was improving steadily. It had also lead to the planned co-location of Family Help Teams with Children's Social Care locality teams to enable the smooth transition of children and families between levels of threshold. This was done in real time by Team Managers from the respective teams on a weekly basis. The practice would require the staff employed by Active to be more integrated in these teams so that their cases could be regularly reviewed by Team Managers to ensure the families were getting the right support from the right place. This renewed focus on strengthened management oversight and the transition of cases between Family Help and Children's Social Care meant that all staff who were working directly with children and families needed to be working together under single management arrangements. The transfer of the service back into Local Authority control would provide robust oversight as well as providing value for money and efficient use of the Grant.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the Local Authority serve three months' notice on 1 August 2023, as per the terms and conditions of the contract, to terminate the contract for 'The Supporting Families Services'; and**
- (ii) That those staff, where applicable, be TUPE transferred to Tameside MBC.**

29. URGENT ITEMS

The Chair reported that there were no urgent items for consideration at this meeting.

30. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED

It be noted that the next meeting of Executive Cabinet is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 30 August 2023.

CHAIR