

Minutes

Policy, Resources & Economic Development Committee Wednesday, 8th February, 2023

Attendance

Cllr Hossack (Chair)	Cllr Naylor
Cllr Poppy (Vice-Chair)	Cllr Mrs Pearson
Cllr Kendall	Cllr Russell
Cllr Lewis	Cllr White
Cllr Mynott	

Also Present

Cllr Aspinell
Cllr Gelderbloem
Cllr Parker

Officers Present

Phoebe Barnes	- Director - Assets & Investments
Justin Booij	- Senior Planning Officer (Dunton Hills Garden Village)
Greg Campbell	- Director - Policy and Delivery
Phil Drane	- Director - Place
Laurie Edmonds	- Corporate Manager - Economic Development
Zoey Foakes	- Governance & Member Support Officer
Andrew Hunkin	- Interim Director - People & Governance
Jonathan Stephenson	- Chief Executive
Steve Summers	- Strategic Director
Tim Willis	- Interim Director - Resources
Sam Wood	- Corporate Manager - Finance
Emily Yule	- Strategic Director

LIVE BROADCAST

[Live broadcast to start at 7pm and available for repeat viewing.](#)

328. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies of committee members.

329. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Policy, Resources and Economic Development meeting held on 23rd November 2022 were approved as a true record.

330. Vary the order of the agenda

Cllr Hossack **MOVED** to vary the order of the agenda and was **SECONDED** by Cllr Poppy to take Item 9 of the agenda – SAIL Quarterly Update at the beginning of the Agenda.

331. EXEMPT APPENDIX - SAIL Quarterly Update

The public were excluded from the meeting for the item of business on the grounds that the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 was involved.

The report presented the Seven Arches Investments Limited (SAIL) quarterly update to shareholders and provided management updates on the owned and managed commercial properties.

This item was for Information only.

332. Corporate Peer Challenge Review Update

Brentwood Borough Council invited the Local Government Association to conduct a Corporate Peer Challenge in November 2021. The Peer Team issued their Feedback Report on 23 February 2022. Alongside a number of positive reflections, the report included a series of recommendations for the council to implement. Subsequently, at Ordinary Council on 16 March 2022, (min 367 refers), an Action Plan to deliver the Peer Team's recommendations was agreed.

The Peer Team returned on 14 December 2022 to review progress. This report updates members on the outcome of this review of our actions from the original Peer Review outcome.

This Item was for information only and no voting was required.

333. UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2023-2025

On 13 July 2022, the Policy, Resources and Economic Development (PRED) Committee granted delegated authority to the Strategic Director, in consultation with the Chair of PRED Committee, to prepare and submit an Investment Plan for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). On 1 August 2022, Brentwood Borough Council submitted its UKSPF Investment Plan. On 5 December 2022, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) confirmed that they had concluded the validation of the Brentwood Investment Plan.

Due to tight time constraints, a paper for decision was taken to the Community, Environment and Enforcement (CEE) Committee on 19 December 2022 to delegate authority to the Strategic Director to accept the 2022/23 UK Shared Prosperity Fund grant of £51,262 and to delegate authority to the Strategic Director, in consultation with the Chairs of the CEE and PRED Committees, to allocate funding for 2022/23 in line with the council's submitted UKSPF Investment Plan.

A memorandum of understanding was subsequently signed by the council's Chief Executive and returned to DLUHC on 20 December 2022 to accept the 2022/23 UKSPF grant of £51,262.

An **AMENDMENT** was **MOVED** by Cllr Lewis and **SECONDED** by Cllr Naylor for the deletion of the words "*Chair of*" for Recommendation 1 and 2. After a discussion, the amendment was withdrawn by the mover and seconder.

Members were asked to:

R1. Delegate authority to the Strategic Directors to accept the 2023/24 UKSPF grant of £102,524 and the 2024/25 UKSPF grant of £846,214.

R2. Delegate authority to the Strategic Directors, in consultation with the Chair of PRED Committee, to distribute funding from 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2025 in line with the council's submitted UKSPF Investment Plan.

R3. Delegate authority to the Strategic Directors, in consultation with the Chair of PRED Committee, to revise UKSPF budgets as required between 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2025.

After a full discussion, Cllr Hossack **MOVED** and Cllr Poppy **SECONDED** the recommendation in the report. A vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**.

334. Business Improvement District for Brentwood, Shenfield and Ingatestone

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) are business led partnerships which are created through a ballot process to deliver additional services to local businesses. They can be a powerful tool for directly involving local businesses in local activities and allow the business community and local authorities to work together to improve the local trading environment.

Following the High Streets Conferences held on 11 January and 21 March 2022, the council commissioned a BID feasibility report. The report provided a series of recommendations for potential formation of a BID for Brentwood, Shenfield and Ingatestone, subject to the outcome of a ballot in summer 2023. At the 10 January 2023 Brentwood Business Partnership (BBP) meeting, the board voted unanimously to write to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and the Chief Executive of Brentwood Borough

Council to give notice that BBP is asking the billing authority (Brentwood Borough Council) to put a BID Proposal to ballot on 29 June 2023.

Cllrs Poppy, Hossack, Kendall and Pearson declared a non-pecuniary interest as they are members or attend meetings of Brentwood Business Partnership.

Members were asked to:

R1. Approve that Brentwood Borough Council adopts the role of the Brentwood, Shenfield and Ingatestone BID Body, subject to the submission of a final BID business plan by the Brentwood Business Partnership on 17 May 2023 and the outcome of a BID ballot on 29 June 2023.

R2. Note that the Brentwood Business Partnership will become the BID advisory group, subject to the outcome of a BID ballot on 29 June 2023.

After a full discussion, Cllr Hossack **MOVED** and Cllr Poppy **SECONDED** the recommendation in the report. A vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED**.

335. Dunton Hills Garden Village Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Delivery of Dunton Hills Garden Village will contribute to growth that meets the borough's housing and employment needs, whilst providing supporting infrastructure and facilities, consistent with the borough's village character. It is a corporate priority to deliver the new community and an essential part of the council's recently adopted local plan.

The strategy for growth set out in the local plan includes site specific policies to deliver Dunton Hills in line with garden community principles, among other things. Ensuring that an entirely new garden village community can be delivered in line with relevant policies requires accompanying master planning and design guidance. A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been prepared to provide additional guidance help shape how the garden village should be delivered.

Work started on the creation of design coding/guidance during 2020 following completion of the Dunton Hills Garden Village Framework Masterplan Document (FMD), which provides mandatory spatial design principles for the site. More detailed design guidance in the form of a draft SPD was approved for public consultation by the Policy, Resources and Economic Development (PRED) Committee on 17 March 2021 alongside the FMD. Eventual adoption of an SPD will hold material weight when determining planning applications for the garden village.

Following consultation several amendments to the SPD have been made. The report provided members with the final proposed version of the SPD for approval / adoption (Appendix A). In addition, to inform the recommendation a record of the consultation process (Appendix B) and SPD amendments (Appendix C) are provided. The latter two documents would be included with the publication of the SPD as part of an "adoption statement".

Mr Drane introduced the report and confirmed that the SPD is the starting point for how development should be delivered at Dunton Hills Garden Village, but that the currently live planning application for the site has in some cases progressed beyond the starting point of the SPD design guidance. For example, plans for the school to be delivered in the Dunton Waters neighbourhood of the garden village had evolved further following discussion with Essex County Council as local education authority. This highlighted the fact that once a planning permission is established it would take precedent over the SPD.

After a full discussion, Cllr Hossack **MOVED** and Cllr Poppy **SECONDED** the recommendation in the report. A vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**.

Members were asked to:

R1. Adopt the Dunton Hills Garden Village Supplementary Planning Document (Appendix A).

Reasons for Recommendation

The Council's local plan includes policies for the delivery of a new community at Dunton Hills Garden Village that require growth to be brought forward through a masterplanned approach. This reflects the size and complexity of bringing forward a garden village, which will be the borough's largest development project in living memory. Detailed design guidance set out within the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is essential to interpret the higher-level requirements of policy and principles set out in the Framework Masterplan Document.

The related planning application for delivery of the garden village (Ref. 21/01525/OUT) is currently being determined, due for presentation to the council's Planning Committee for decision once outstanding matters have been resolved. It is important that the design guidance set out within the SPD has material weight in the decision-making process.

336. Budget 2023/24 and Medium Term Financial Strategy

At 9.00pm, a vote was taken on Standing Orders and it was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** to extend the meeting for a further 30 minutes.

The report and appendices set out all the relevant information in support of the Council's Budget for General Fund services and Council Tax for 2023/24, together with financial forecast information through to 2025/26. Also included is information on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2023/24 and the Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2025/26.

- (i) Appendix A - The General Fund budget proposals for 2023/24 to 2025/26.
- (ii) Appendix B - The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget proposals for 2023/24 onwards.
- (iii) Appendix C - The Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2025/26.
- (iv) Appendix D – Fees & Charges Schedule 2023/24.
- (v) Appendix E - Pay Policy Statement.
- (vi) Appendix F - Section 151 Officer's Assurance Statement and useful information.
- (vii) Appendix G - Corporate Strategy Budget Summary.

The Policy, Resources and Economic Development Committee is required to consider the proposals and make recommendations to Ordinary Council for approval on 1 March 2023.

The report summarised the detailed service budgets, together with known adjustments including the impact of the provisional central government grant funding.

The key elements of the proposed budget are:

General Fund

- 1) A proposed 3% increase in Council Tax for 2023/24 for Brentwood Borough Council services.
- 2) Earmarked Reserves to set aside appropriate balances to mitigate future
- 3) Future uncertainty of Local Government Financing.

Housing Revenue Account

- 1) For 2023/24 a budget that delivers a surplus of £26k.
- 2) Proposed increase in rents of 7% per annum.
- 3) Continued investment in the delivery of Decent Homes and development of Housing within the Borough.
- 4) Significant investment in the Strategic Housing Delivery Programme ensuring the 30-year business plan is sustainable.

Capital

- 1) Total capital investment of £36.3 million (General Fund) and £22.0 million (HRA) in 2023/24.
- 2) Subsequent investment of £20.2 million (General Fund) and £50.3 million (HRA) from 2024 to 2026.

At 9.30pm, a vote was taken on Standing Orders and it was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** to extend the meeting for a further 30 minutes.

After a full discussion, Cllr Hossack **MOVED** and Cllr Poppy **SECONDED** the recommendation in the report. A vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED**.

Members were asked to:

R1. Approve the General Fund Budget 2023/24 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy as set out in Appendix A.

R2. Approve a proposed Council Tax increase of 3% for 2023/24, the charge of Band D property increases to £204.58 per annum for Brentwood Council services only.

R3. Approve the HRA budget 2023/24 including the 30-year HRA Business Plan within Appendix B.

R4. Approve a proposed increase to rents of 7% for 2023/24.

R5. Approve the Capital Programme in Appendix C.

R6. Approve the Fees & Charges Schedule in Appendix D.

R7. Approve the Pay Policy Statement in Appendix E.

R8. To note the Section 151 Officers Assurance Statement in Appendix F.

Reasons for Recommendation

Effective financial management underpins all the priorities for the Council and will enable the Council to operate within a sustainable budget environment.

The Council is required to approve the Budget as part of the Budget and Policy Framework

337. Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business and the meeting concluded at 9.35pm.