

**The minute of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 17 January 2022 for  
BOS/21/01 Draft General Fund (GF) 2022/23 and Four-year Outlook**

**BOS/21/01 DRAFT GENERAL FUND (GF) 2022/23 AND FOUR-YEAR OUTLOOK**

- 22.1 Councillor Simon Barrett introduced the report to the Committee outlining that the budget had been based on no increase in council tax, however an increase would take place if Cabinet decided it was necessary. In addition to this the emergency reserves held by Babergh would be reduced to £1million, as it had not been used during the Covid-19 pandemic. The excess of £200k would be used in the community. He also stated that the budget had shown a surplus of £403k.
- 22.2 Councillor Melanie Barrett questioned whether the cost for the leisure centre moving to a green tariff had been cost neutral. The Assistant Director - Corporate Resources responded that the Council had made the utility payments and Abbeycroft had been reimbursing these costs. The management fee was a separate cost.
- 22.3 Councillor Jane Gould questioned if the cost of CCTV had been a permanent contribution. The Assistant Director - Corporate Resources responded that it was a permanent and ongoing contribution that covered running costs.
- 22.4 Councillor Melanie Barrett queried if future vehicle costs had been included in the budget. The Assistant Director - Corporate Resources responded that the running costs of vehicles had been built into the budget as it was an in-house service.
- 22.5 Councillor Adrian Osborne questioned whether the possibility that central Government could remove garden waste charges had been taken into consideration. The Assistant Director - Corporate Resources responded that this had been proposed for the next financial year and would be looked at in the 23/24 budget.
- 22.6 Councillor McLaren questioned whether money for a new fleet of refuse vehicles had been factored in. The Assistant Director - Corporate Resources responded that the Council had money set aside for replacing most of the fleet and had monitored what vehicles would be needed in the future. Councillor Simon Barrett added that the replacement of vehicles had been set on a cycle, as shown in appendix b of the report.
- 22.7 Councillor Melanie Barrett questioned where the income for the Strategic Policy, Performance and Insight had come from. The Assistant Director - Corporate Resources responded that some of the income had come from Law and Governance, and this had been supplemented by resources from other areas, which had been paid for by reserves.
- 22.8 Councillor Jane Gould questioned the reason for the reduction of ICT costs in the future. The Assistant Director - Corporate Resources responded that costs had been higher to allow for the replacement of software that would increase the cost for the 22/23 budget.

- 22.9 Councillor Melanie Barrett questioned whether the budget covered legal costs for planning enforcement and appeals. The Assistant Director - Corporate Resources responded that these costs had been built into the budget and had been based on previous years.
- 22.10 Councillor Melanie Barrett questioned the increase of £41k for the Senior Leadership team costs and whether this had been based on the previous pay review. The Assistant Director - Corporate Resources responded that it was an allowance for the team for the whole year and had been based on a previous report to Council.
- 22.11 Councillor Jane Gould questioned whether the reserves would be reviewed. Councillor Simon Barrett responded that as the reserve had not been used during the Covid-19 pandemic, the reserve was being reviewed and reduced to 10% of the Council's overall budget.
- 22.12 Councillor Jane Gould questioned whether the Consumer Price Index was being monitored. Councillor Simon Barrett responded that it was being monitored as it effects the HRA accounts and was the basis for rent charges. The Assistant Director – Corporate resources added that for future years an allowance had been built into the budgets for CPI.
- 22.13 Councillor Melanie Barrett questioned whether the reduction of reserves would affect the interest gained on them. The Assistant Director – Corporate Resources responded that as the interest rate had been low it would have little effect on the budget.
- 22.14 Councillor Melanie Barrett questioned the catch up on the pension fund contribution and whether this had an impact. The Assistant Director – Corporate Resources responded that to overcome the deficit in the contributions the Council had made adjustments in the budget for the next year. There had also been tri-annual evaluations to review these contributions.
- 22.15 Councillor Mary McLaren questioned whether the Council still had any of the Covid fund remaining, and whether this would need to be repaid to central Government. Councillor Simon Barrett responded that there was £70,200 remaining in the reserve. The Assistant Director – Corporate Resources added that it did not need to be paid bac. However, It was unlikely that further funding would be provided by Government so the remaining funding would be needed for upcoming years.
- 22.16 Councillor Adrian Osborne queried whether the estimated reserves for the Joint Local Plan in the budget were only for Babergh or whether this had been a shared cost with Mid Suffolk. The Assistant Director – Corporate Resources responded that the costs were separate and that the costs for additional work would not exceed the reserves.
- 22.17 A short break was taken between 10:43 – 10:51am.

22.18 Councillor Melanie Barrett proposed the recommendations as follows:

- That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the General Fund budget 2022/23 and Four-year Outlook.
- That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee receives a report from Cabinet on the outcomes of the performance framework on a six-month basis.

22.19 Councillor Jane Gould seconded this motion.

By a unanimous vote.

**It was RESOLVED: -**

- 1.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the General Fund budget 2022/23 and Four-year Outlook.**
- 1.2 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee receives a report from Cabinet on the outcomes of the performance framework on a six-month basis.**