

At a meeting of the West London Waste Authority held on Friday 19 January 2024 at 11.00 am at The Auditorium - Harrow Council Hub, Kenmore Avenue, Harrow, HA3 8LU.

Present:

Councillor Deirdre Costigan (Chair)

Councillor Stephen Greek, Councillor Guy Lambert, Councillor Eddie Lavery and Councillor Julia Neden Watts

In attendance: Robin Pritchard – Independent Member

88. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

89. Declarations of interest

RESOLVED: To note that no interests were declared.

90. Minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2023

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2023 be taken as read and signed as a correct record subject to the following amendment:-

Minute 84 – 2024/25 Budget – Resolution 2 to read:

That the budget for work to be met from PPP income be noted.

91. 2024/25 Budget

Members received a report which set out the 2024/25 budget proposal.

Sapna Dhanani, Finance Manager, outlined the content of the report. In response to Members comments in relation to the increase in insurance premiums and the distribution of funds back to the constituent boroughs she confirmed that these had now been clarified further within the report. She also confirmed that the West London Treasurers, Environment Directors and Members were updated during the year, through the relevant meetings, around the increase in costs and insurance premiums.

RESOLVED: That (1) the 2024/25 budget be approved;

2) the budget for work to be met from PPP income be approved;

3) the Pay As You Throw (PAYT) rates, as set out in section 15 of the officer report, and the PAYT levy made up of two components totalling of £57.4 million be approved;

- 4) the Fixed Cost Levy (FCL) of £15.2 million, as set out in section 16 of the officer report, be approved;
- 5) the recommended trade and construction prices, as set out in section 17 of the officer report, be approved and the Treasurer be authorised to change these in year should the need arise;
- 6) the new proposed capital budgets, as set out in section 18 of the officer report, be approved;
- 7) the spend of £450,000 on containers for the Social Value and Reuse programme be approved;
- 8) the target level of reserves of £18 million to act as a buffer for managing risks and avoiding supplementary levies, as set out in section 19 of the officer report, be approved;
- 9) the Medium and Long Term Financial Plan, as set out in section 20 of the officer report, be noted.

92. West London Waste Authority 2023-24 Business Plan

Emma Beal, Managing Director, introduced the report which provided an update on the strategic priorities that formed the basis for the Authority's Business Plan for 2023/24.

A Member advised that DEFRA had been in contact with a funding offer in relation to new burdens on food waste collections and that her impression was that it was not sufficient to meet the costs faced by authorities. The Managing Director reported that the deadline for responses to the consultation on the scheme was that day and was an opportunity for authorities to challenge the funding. She undertook to share a letter and methodology, which set out how boroughs could challenge DEFRA on the Scheme, with Environment Directors and indicated that each borough should respond individually if appropriate.

RESOLVED: That (1) the substantial financial risk posed by the emissions trading scheme be noted;

(2) the request for Borough savings targets to drive the priorities be noted and that the Members be requested to encourage Borough Environment Directors and Finance Directors to help shape the 2024/25 programme.

93. Contracts and Operations Update

Tom Beagan, Assistant Director Operations, introduced the report which provided an update on the Authority's waste treatment arrangements and procurements.

In response to a question in relation to the replacement of cranes, Members were advised that this was on schedule and consideration was being given as to how this could be delivered with minimal impact on operations.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

94. Finance Update November 2023

Sapna Dhanani, Finance Manager, introduced the report which provided an update on financial and operational matters.

In response to comments in relation to the food waste red key performance indicator, Peter Tilston, Projects Director confirmed that the issues with misallocated waste loads had been resolved resulting in a small adjustment to volumes. In terms of challenges with food waste, he advised that any reduction from inflationary pressures did not appear to affect the proportion of food in the residual waste and that participation rates were an issue.

Members suggested that there be a wider discussion on food waste noting that due diligence was being undertaken on the data to see if there were any patterns. This would make it easier to see if residual waste had an impact on the food waste collection service.

RESOLVED: That (1) the current financial position and forecast for 2023/24 be noted;
(2) the key performance indicators to date be noted;
(3) it be noted that there had been no delegated decisions.

95. Audit Committee - Terms of Reference

Members received a report which provided an update on proposed amendments to the terms of reference for the Audit Committee.

Sapna Dhanani, Finance Manager, outlined the proposed changes which had also been considered by the Audit Committee.

In response to a question, Ian O'Donnell, Treasurer, explained that there were two separate functions in that the Authority made the decisions and the Audit Committee provided some assurance on operations and governance. He acknowledged that there was a risk in terms of conflicts of interest in that the Authority and Audit Committee were comprised of the same Members hence there would be a reliance on the External Auditor and Independent Member. This was, however, in his view acceptable in terms of governance.

RESOLVED: That the Terms of Reference of the Audit Committee be amended as set out in Appendix 1 to the officer report.

The meeting finished at 11.39 am.

The minute taker at this meeting was Alison Atherton.