

At a virtual meeting of the West London Waste Authority held on Friday 22 January 2021 at 11.00 am.

Present:

Councillor Graham Henson (Chair)

Councillor Guy Lambert, Councillor Krupa Sheth and Councillor Julia Neden Watts

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Philip Corthorne

86. Chair of the Meeting

Given that whilst the Chair of the Authority, Councillor Graham Henson, was in attendance he was still recovering from illness, the Authority

RESOLVED: That Councillor Mik Sabiers, Vice Chair of the Authority, Chair the meeting.

87. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Philip Corthorne.

88. Declarations of interest

RESOLVED: To note that there were no declarations of interests made by Members.

89. Minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2020

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2020 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

90. 2021/22 Budget

Members received a report which set out the 2021/22 budget proposal following consultation with boroughs.

Jay Patel, Finance Director, reminded Members that the 2021-22 draft budget had been considered at the previous Authority meeting and advised that it had subsequently been discussed at meetings of the West London Environment Directors and West London Treasurers. The Borough Finance Directors had also provided a formal response to the budget proposals.

The Finance Director reported that the budget before the Authority had been updated in that an inflationary salary uplift had been removed following the Chancellor's announcement in December regarding public sector pay, the latest 2020-21 forecast was

set out in section 2.3 of the report and the formal feedback from borough Finance Directors was included.

In response to a Member's question as to the provision of feedback to Borough Finance Directors responses to the consultation, the Finance Director advised that, unless there were common themes, feedback was not given and but they were kept informed as it was an on going dialogue. Essentially the purpose of the formal responses was to ensure that all boroughs were aware that the budget had been set but any issues would be responded to when the Finance Directors next met.

A Member sought clarification terms of paragraph 15.7 of the officer report in that Hounslow and, to a lesser extent, Richmond, was expecting a large increase in budgeted tonnage. Whilst Hounslow's recycling figures had increased, the residual waste had increased substantially during the pandemic, and the Member expressed the view that this might lead to increased scrutiny due to credibility of the figures. In response, the Finance Director advised that the tonnage forecasts were put together by borough colleagues who would, in turn, advise on the expected service changes. Due to COVID 19, forecasting for the next financial year had been challenging and the movement in waste volumes for boroughs were disparate but this reflected some of the potential service changes and also that it had not been possible to action some of the proposed changes for the current financial year due to the pandemic. The mechanisms in place ensured that no borough paid for more waste than it was disposing of. Emma Beal, Managing Director, added that not all growth was bad growth, for example, commercial waste which would show as a disposal cost in the Authority's budget.

Following on from the Member's question, another Member indicated that whilst she was aware that the figures in terms of waste in the budget were forecasts, waste minimisation remained a crucial target. Whilst working practices had changed during the pandemic it was likely that many people would continue to work from home. In response to the Member's comment that it was unclear from the report what was commercial waste and what was household waste, the Manager Director undertook to discuss this with Finance and Environment Directors so that the different movements in the gross sums funds could be identified.

A Member suggested that consideration be given to the use of the term 'DIY' and whether it actually reflected the type of waste. There had been discussions by officers in Richmond as to whether this type of waste would be more accurately described as 'construction and demolition'.

RESOLVED: That (1) the 2021/22 budget be approved;

(2) the Pay As You Throw (PAYT) rates set out in section 15 of the officer report and the PAYT levy made up of two components totalling of £52.3 million be approved;

(3) the Fixed Cost Levy (FCL) of £12.8 million, as set out in section 16 of the officer report, be approved;

(4) the recommended trade/DIY 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;

(5) the new proposed capital budgets, as set out in section 18 of the officer report, be approved;

(6) the target level of reserves of £7.4 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.

The meeting finished at 11.17 am.

The minute taker at this meeting was Alison Atherton.