

EXECUTIVE BOARD

WEDNESDAY, 16TH MARCH, 2022

PRESENT: Councillor J Lewis in the Chair

Councillors A Carter, D Coupar, S Golton,
M Harland, H Hayden, J Pryor, M Rafique
and F Venner

APOLOGIES: Councillor S Arif

122 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There was no information contained within the agenda which was designated as being exempt from publication.

123 Late Items

Supplementary Information – Agenda Item 6 – Energy Costs and Purchasing Strategy

With the agreement of the Chair, prior to the meeting Board Members had been provided with supplementary information in the form of an addendum to this report, which provided updated information with regard to energy purchasing for Members' consideration. (Minute No. 126 refers).

124 Declaration of Interests

There were no interests declared at the meeting.

125 Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9th February 2022 be approved as a correct record.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND CLIMATE

126 Energy Costs and Purchasing Strategy

Further to Minute No. 118, 9th February 2022, the Director of Resources submitted a report setting out the current and future financial implications for the Council in terms of energy usage, to illustrate the potential future risks of different scenarios, and which sought approval of proposed amendments to the Council's existing energy purchasing strategy in order to manage such risks most effectively.

Prior to the meeting, with the agreement of the Chair, Board Members were in receipt of supplementary information in the form of an addendum to this report, which provided updated information with regard to energy purchasing for Members' consideration.

In introducing the report, the Executive Member for Infrastructure and Climate highlighted the aims of the submitted report which were to take actions in order to help manage the current risks associated with energy costs and

purchasing. The Executive Member also provided the Board with a summary of the work being undertaken in a number of related areas including the decarbonisation agenda, the tackling of fuel poverty and the initiatives which aimed to reduce energy costs for the Local Authority.

Responding to a Member's enquiries on a number of issues, the Board received further information, as illustrated in the addendum, regarding the proportion of energy that was being purchased in advance by the Council over the coming years, with it being noted that the aim was to strike the correct balance in order to spread the risk created by the current volatile market. Also in response to an enquiry, the Board noted that energy was purchased for the Council as a whole, and therefore there was no risk in terms of an uncoordinated approach being taken across the Authority.

With regard to a Member's comments around the Council's approach towards developing greater resilience in this area and as part of that, the actions being taken by the Authority to generate its own energy, the Board noted several areas where work was being progressed which included investment being made to reduce reliance on energy usage, the development of energy generation schemes within the city and also investment in renewables external to the Council.

It was noted that dialogue on the issue of energy costs and the potential implications it could have across the sector had begun at a national level and would continue. It was undertaken that Members would be kept informed of progress made in this area.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the submitted report (including the supplementary information provided in the form of an addendum presenting updated information with regard to energy purchasing), together with the budget pressures and risks resulting from the recent significant increases in global energy prices, be noted;
- (b) That the proposals for a rolling four year forward purchasing strategy for gas and electricity, guided by external market advice, based on the following approach, be approved:-
 - 85% of the Council's requirements to be purchased in advance;
 - up to 65% of the Council's requirements to be secured through longer-term trades (i.e. between 24 to 48 months in advance of when the energy is required);
 - observing the principles, as set out in paragraph 31 of the submitted report.

LEADER'S PORTFOLIO

127 Update on Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic - Response and Recovery Plan

The Chief Executive submitted a report which outlined both the local and national Covid-19 position, including details of the ongoing recovery activity

across the multi-agency partnership, the work that continued in response to the evolving situation in the city, which included proposals to update the Leeds Covid-19 Response and Recovery Plan.

In introducing the report, the Leader noted that it had been two years since the first Covid update report had been submitted to the Board. In addition, he took the opportunity to highlight that all those from across the city who had died as a result of Covid throughout that time remained in the Board's thoughts.

Members received a brief overview of the key themes within the report, with it being noted that the intention was to bring a further update report in the Autumn of 2022, in order to set out plans for the forthcoming winter.

In response to a Member's enquiry, the Board received further information regarding the plans in place for the return of staff back into the office or their usual workplace. It was noted that, in acknowledging the changes that had occurred over the past 2 years, a period of consultation and review was ongoing which would be used to inform how staff would work moving forward. It was highlighted that the updated approach was scheduled to be implemented from June onwards and was likely to include an element of hybrid working for most. Emphasis was placed upon the importance of taking staff along with the Council as part of that transition.

In addition, the benefits of face to face working were highlighted, with officers acknowledging the request of a Member - that particular consideration be given to the support that younger, or less experienced colleagues required in order to assist with their career development.

Responding to a Member's comments regarding service provision, assurance was provided that the effectiveness of Council services should not be compromised by the ways in which staff were working, and where services needed to be delivered in person to run effectively, then those services should now be doing so.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the updates made to the Leeds Covid-19 Response and Recovery Plan, as presented at Annex A to the submitted report, be noted, which details ongoing recovery, response, service pressures and wider risks as the Council plans for the remainder of 2022;
- (b) That Annex B to the submitted report, which details the latest Covid-19 Dashboard providing information across the seven themes, be noted, together with Annex C: the updated Leeds Local Outbreak Management Plan, and Annex D: the summary of changes to restrictions announced by the Government, as part of living with Covid-19 safely;
- (c) That it be noted that the next Covid-19 report is planned for September 2022, unless there are significant local or national changes, with it also

being noted that the September report will outline the latest position and plans for winter 2022/2023.

RESOURCES

128 Financial Health Monitoring 2021/22 – January 2022 (Month 10)

The Chief Officer (Financial Services) submitted a report presenting the current position on the financial health of the Authority in respect of both the General Fund revenue budget and the Housing Revenue Account, as at month 10 of the current 2021-22 financial year.

In presenting the report the Executive Member for Resources highlighted the key themes. Specifically, it was noted that for 2021/22 the Authority was forecasting a balanced position, as at the end of January 2022 (month 10 of the financial year). In addition, Members' attention was drawn to the lower than expected collection rates for Council Tax and Business Rates, with it being noted that this was a matter that continued to be monitored.

Responding to a Member's comments regarding the potential impact of energy costs upon the Authority's financial position moving forward and the reporting mechanisms that would enable Board Members to be kept informed of developments in this area, assurance was provided that the Board would receive regular updates on such matters, as appropriate. As part of this discussion, the Board also received further information on the levels of energy which had been purchased in advance by the Council for use over the coming months.

In response to a Member's enquiry, the Board received an update on the progress being made to meet the targets within the Children and Families directorate budget action plan, as detailed at Appendix 2 to the submitted report, with it being noted that progress continued to be made by the directorate in this area. Specifically, it was noted that as part of the actions being taken, dialogue continued with health partners regarding contributions towards placements and similarly, discussions continued with other Local Authorities in relation to the potential income that could be brought into the Council as part of the Strengthening Families programme.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the projected financial position of the Authority, as at the end of January 2022 (Month 10 of the financial year), together with the projected impact of COVID-19 on that position, as detailed within the submitted report, be noted;
- (b) That for 2021/22, it be noted that the Authority is forecasting a balanced position, as at the end of January 2022.

COMMUNITIES

129 Tackling Inequality and Disadvantage in Communities: Locality Working

The Director of Communities, Housing and Environment submitted a report which provided an update on the work that has taken place to date on the city's new Locality Working approach and which presented and sought the Board's support for the next stages of the approach's development, which included the proposal to expand the Locality Working approach to increase the priority neighbourhood footprint in Leeds' most disadvantaged communities to cover all the 12 (1%) most disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

In presenting the report the Executive Member for Communities highlighted the involvement of the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board in the development of the proposed approach, and also that of Community Committee Chairs. In addition, an overview of some of the key actions taken in communities over recent years was provided and the Executive Member extended her thanks to all those who had been involved in the development of this locality working approach to date. In conclusion, the Executive Member highlighted the desire to continue to engage with Elected Members as part of this approach, including through Community Communities and Scrutiny Boards.

Responding to Members' enquiries regarding the methods of evaluating the success and effectiveness of the approach and the allocation of resources for its delivery, the Board received further detail on such matters.

With regard to the approach proposed to be taken in those communities outside of the priority neighbourhoods, Members received an overview of the evolving approach proposed to be taken in those areas and each community across the city, with the aim of prioritising and addressing the bespoke needs which existed in each locality. Specific examples included the development of the role of Community Committees and Community Committee 'Champions', further embedding collaborative relationships with partner organisations and also via the development of Local Area Delivery Plans. Further detail was also provided on the role of the Neighbourhood Improvement Board as part of the strategic approach being taken.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the continued development of the Locality working approach, be supported, and that the evolving whole city approach towards Locality Working around the more targeted, seasonal and responsive approach, be endorsed;
- (b) That the upscale of the Locality Working approach to increase the priority neighbourhood footprint in Leeds' most disadvantaged communities to cover all the 12 (1%) most disadvantaged neighbourhoods, be supported; with support also being provided for retaining a focus at the Ward level in the city's 6 priority Wards to enable greater impact and outcomes, through a collective focus to

tackle inequality and poverty and build more thriving and resilient communities;

- (c) That work with Elected Members and Community Committees to explore how the role and responsibilities of Community Committees could be even further enhanced through the new Locality Working approach, be supported.

ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING

130 Capital Housing Investment Programme Update

The Director of Communities, Housing and Environment submitted a report providing an update on the improvement work which had been undertaken and which was planned for delivery to improve the quality of Council housing stock across the city.

In presenting the report, the Executive Member for Environment and Housing provided an overview of the key investment activity which had been undertaken in the Council Housing stock across the city and the criteria which was used to deliver such investment.

Responding to a Member's enquiry regarding potential charges incurred by leaseholders of properties in high rise buildings as a result of improvement works undertaken, the Board received further detail in relation to this, with officers undertaking to provide the Member in question with a further breakdown of the information requested.

Also in response to a Member's specific enquiry, the Board received an update on a proposed scheme which was being developed regarding investment in a number of system built properties.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the submitted report, including the investment activity underway to improve the quality of council housing across the city, be noted;
- (b) That the forward programme of investment, which will be implemented by the Head of Strategy and Investment, and which will continue decarbonising the Council housing portfolio and improving the quality of homes in Council ownership, be supported.

ECONOMY, CULTURE AND EDUCATION

131 Outcome of the Consultation on a Proposal to Decommission the Resource Provision at Gledhow Primary School

The Director of Children and Families submitted a report presenting the outcomes from the consultation undertaken on a proposal to decommission the Speech and Language Resource Provision at Gledhow Primary School with effect from August 2022. The report summarised the consultation responses received and sought approval for the publication of a statutory

notice on a proposal to decommission the Resourced Provision from August 2022.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That having noted the outcome of the informal consultation undertaken, the publication of a statutory notice on a proposal to decommission the Resourced Provision at Gledhow Primary School from August 2022, be approved;
- (b) That it be noted that the responsible officer for the implementation of such matters is the Head of Learning Inclusion.

132 Future Talent Leeds

The Director of City Development submitted a report which presented details of the work undertaken to date to develop a new Talent Plan for Leeds and which sought approval of the proposed Future Talent Plan and delivery approach, including the vision and overarching action framework, as detailed at appendix 1 to the submitted report, which set out the high level action areas proposed to be used to shape the specific projects and initiatives of the Council and its partners.

In presenting the report, the Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education highlighted the key challenges currently being faced in the labour and skills market both locally and nationally and provided an overview of how the proposed plan looked to address such challenges.

Responding to a Member's enquiry, the Board received further detail on the processes which would be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed plan. Information was specifically provided on how outcomes were currently measured in terms of those initiatives delivered by the Council, where Council resource or Council obtained grants were being utilised by partner organisations and via the continued use of data sources in the field of employment and skills. Members also noted the progress being made towards the adoption of the Social Progress Index, which it was noted would be a further source of relevant data.

Also in response to a Member's enquiry, the Board received further detail on the initiatives in place to support existing members of the workforce who were seeking employment or a change in career, with a specific example being provided on initiatives in place to support that cohort in entering expanding industries in Leeds such as the digital sector.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the Future Talent Plan and delivery approach, be approved, with the plan being developed online and launched in May 2022;
- (b) That the responsibility for the implementation of the Future Talent Plan be delegated to the Director of City Development, with the exception of any projects or initiatives identified that sit under the delegated

authority of the Director of Resources which will be their responsibility to implement;

- (c) That it be noted that responsibility for any projects or initiatives included in the plan which are to be delivered by the Council's partners in the city will remain with them.

133 Leeds Museums & Galleries Strategy 2022-27

The Director of City Development submitted a report presenting for the Board's consideration and approval the proposed new Leeds Museums and Galleries Strategy entitled, '*Deepening Connections, Widening Impact*', for the period 2022-2027.

In presenting the report, the Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education highlighted that the proposed strategy was made up of six key outcomes, with six objectives per outcome. In addition, the Executive Member provided an overview of the key aspects of the Leeds museums and galleries estate, which was spread across nine venues.

Members welcomed the proposals detailed within the submitted report.

RESOLVED – That the new Leeds Museums and Galleries Strategy, as detailed at appendix 1 to the submitted report, be approved, and that responsibility for the implementation of the strategy be delegated to the Head of Service, Leeds Museums and Galleries via the Director of City Development, from March 2022.

DATE OF PUBLICATION: FRIDAY, 18TH MARCH 2022

LAST DATE FOR CALL IN OF ELIGIBLE DECISIONS: 5.00 P.M., FRIDAY, 25TH MARCH 2022