

Thurrock Borough Council

Finance Recovery Board

Minutes – Monday 6 February 2023

Attendees

Nicole Wood – Essex County Council Commissioner (Chair)

Cllr Mark Coxshall – Leader, Thurrock Council

Cllr John Kent – Opposition Group Leader, Thurrock Council

Ian Wake – Acting Head of Paid Service, Thurrock Council

Jonathan Wilson – Acting Section 151 Officer, Thurrock Council

Mark Bradbury – Interim Director of Place, Thurrock Council

Debbie Knopp – Director of Transformation, Essex County Council

Patrick McDermott – Chief of Staff to the Commissioners, DLUHC

Luke Tyson – Chief Intervention Officer, Thurrock Council

Gary Staples – Strategic Lead – Corporate Programmes, Thurrock Council

Lorraine Surrey – Senior Project Manager, Thurrock Council

Apologies

Gavin Jones – Essex County Council Commissioner

Cllr Graham Snell – Cabinet Member for Finance, Thurrock Council

1. Welcome and Introductions

- 1.1. Nicole Wood welcomed the Board. All attendees had received papers.

2. Minutes and actions of the last meeting

- 2.1. The Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

3. Workstreams Update

- 3.1. Gareth Moss provided an update on the workstream where work is on track or complete.
- 3.2. Gareth noted that there is an opportunity post-budget to reassess resource and prioritisation. It was agreed that the outcomes of the finance awayday would inform a future discussion on deliverables at FRB.
- 3.3. In the discussion that followed, Nicole Wood raised the assurance monitoring of the s114 and spending panels. It was agreed there would be a further discussion on this at IRB.
- 3.4. Cllr Kent also raised the need for clarity when assessing the scope of spending on statutory services.

Action: Gareth Moss to review the Financial Sustainability Theme plan deliverables and dates and bring an updated version to FRB on 7 March.

Action: Team to ensure start and end dates are included on the Financial Sustainability Theme plan for all actions and sub-actions

4. Capital Governance

- 4.1. Mark Bradbury updated that due to other pressures, work on governance on the capital programme has not progressed in line with expectations.
- 4.2. Nicole Wood made it clear that this is an important issue for Commissioners and there needed to be progress to assure both intervention and DLUHC colleagues who require further monitoring and assurance of the control environment to support large projects.
- 4.3. It was agreed that progress would be made this week with a full update to come to the next meeting of the FRB.

Action: Provide a progress update on the development of the Capital Programme Governance structure (including Commissioner oversight) to FRB on 20 February.

5. Property and Assets Update

- 5.1. Mark Bradbury presented the independent report on valuations of properties received from AY.
- 5.2. In some cases insurance value had been confused with sale value and some assumptions based on the Local Plan may have been overly optimistic.
- 5.3. Based on the discussion, Nicole Wood was keen to understand the impact these valuations had on the Council's ability to achieve the asset disposal levels included in the EFS request to DLUHC. This is required ahead of budget setting.

5.4. In the discussion that followed regarding the rental position, it was agreed that lease renewals and rent reviews have not been happening and standard and this provides future opportunity. Further detail on the review will be provided to FRB.

Action: Mark Bradby to provide the following to Commissioners by 10 February ahead of budget sign off:

- a schedule of 23/24 disposals to confirm values and for audit purposes
- confirmation that the targets for this year and next year are still deliverable in line with the values in the EFS request

Action: Mark Bradbury to provide the summary schedule of asset values updated with latest intelligence and updated on sale proceeds for the latest AY valuations ahead of FRB on 20 February.

Action: Mark Bradbury to provide a report on the review of rentals to FRB on 24 April

6. Budget Update

6.1. Gareth Moss provided a verbal update on the progress and preparations for the 23/24 budget.

6.2. The Board discussed the need to ensure engagement with all members on the budget and the most appropriate timeline to achieve it.

Action: Council to take the necessary steps to delay Cabinet in order to ensure engagement with all Councillors on the budget

7. Decisions Taken

7.1. No decisions to report.

8. Any other business

8.1. There being no other business the meeting closed.