

**Minutes of:** **JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE FOR TEACHERS**

**Date of Meeting:** 8 February 2023

**Present:** Councillors G McGill (Chair), T Tariq, R Bernstein, C Birchmore, D Berry, L McBriar, S Thorpe and L Smith

Helen Chadwick – NAHT, Deirdre Quayle – NASUWT, Helena Thom – NEU, Paula Evans - NEU

**Also in attendance:** Councillor Gold – Cabinet Member for Finance and Communities, Sam Evans – Executive Director of Finance, Jeanette Richards – Director of Children’s Services, Paul Cooke – Strategic Lead, Education Services, Simon Bagley – Head of Human Resources,

**Public Attendance:** No members of the public were present at the meeting.

**Apologies for Absence:** Isobel Booter, Director of Education and Skills, Karen Hopwood – NASUWT, Carl Clayton – NASUWT, Anthony Durack - NASUWT

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**41 APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE**

Apologies of absence are listed above.

**42 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor McGill declared a personal interest in all matters under consideration in view of his wife holding a role as an NEU Trade Union representative in Rochdale.

**43 THE COUNCIL'S BUDGET 2023-24 AND THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2023-26**

Councillor Gold presented the Council’s Budget 2023-24 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-26 report and reported that the Council had previously reported at the October Cabinet a need to make savings of approximately £29m in 2023-24, this had now risen to £31.395m. By law, the Council must deliver a balanced budget; this has been achieved by using reserves, grants awarded in the funding settlement, savings and efficiencies and increases in Council Tax and Business Rates.

Following the Autumn statement A 2.99% increase in Council Tax and 2% increase in the adult social care precept can be achieved without holding a local referendum, which means there is a proposed overall increase in council tax by 4.99% in 2023-24 and 2024-25.

The largest increase in the budget was £6.857m and was due to pay inflation, a 2% increase was budgeted for in 2022-23, which has resulted in the overspend being added to the 2023-24 budget. The 2023-24 pay award has been budgeted for at the same level as the 2022-23 award.

Savings proposals of £24.261m would be required in 2023-24, although it is recognised these saving cannot be delivered all in one year, therefore £14.608m of savings have been identified, which will be delivered in 2023-24. Additional grants from the government, and reserves of £4.802m will be used to balance the budget for 2023-24. Councillor Gold advised that it has been an incredibly tough budget as there is very little to cut.

A member highlighted that it is extremely important to meet the proposed savings targets due to the budget being extremely tight and advised that it is fundamental that all the savings are achieved.

In response to a member's question around the budget proposals including an increase in pay for Bury foster carers, Jeanette Richards reported that she had made a commitment to review the foster carers package of support for existing foster carers to hope that we retain them, but also to attract additional foster carers. The success of this programme is linked into the medium term financial strategy within Children's Services. The business case is to include enhanced offers, not just in financial remuneration linked to the professional task of fostering and the retainer fees, but linked to other benefits of becoming a foster carer in Bury. The business case needs to be agreed internally and then discussions need to take place with the Fostering Forum; following these discussions it is proposed that a report will be taken to the Cabinet meeting in March 2023.

In response to a member's question around the Council providing transport for children who attend Free Schools, Paul Cooke reported that transport is a statutory duty linked to the child, their needs and eligibility regardless of the provision that the child is attending. As new provisions are brought online, there will be new Free Schools in the borough, those young people who attend will be assessed in the same way as those who attend LA maintained schools. A significant increase in demand for specialist school places, which is being responded to by creating a number of special schools within Bury, will create pressures for transport which will include financial and operational pressures such as finding vehicles, drivers and escorts. Councillor Smith reported that the Council is committed to meeting their statutory duties around school transport for children.

In response to a member's question around moving the section 22 Medication Service from the Council to the NHS, Sam Evans reported that this is only in relation to those residents who receive a call to prompt them to take their medication and do not receive any other interaction and support from the Council. Section 22 of the Care Act states that this is a responsibility of the NHS and Bury is one of the few Local Authorities who are still providing this service. There will be a phased withdrawal and this is why there will only be a partial impact in the budget in 2023-24. The service will not take on any new residents who require this service and instead they will be directed towards the NHS for support.

**It was agreed:**

1. To note the report.

## **2023-24**

Councillor Gold presented the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and Setting the Schools Budget 2023-24 report and reported that the grant is determined by a national funding formula. The details within the report had been discussed and agreed at the Schools Forum on 17 January 2023.

The budget for 2023-24 is £210.431m which is an increase of £7.822m from the 2022-23 budget. The DSG is split into 4 blocks, which consist of:

- The Schools Block which has been allocated £149.832m
- The Central Block which has been allocated £1.038m
- The Early Years Block which has been allocated £14.552m
- The High Needs Block which has been allocated £45.009m.

There is limited flexibility to move money between the blocks, but it was agreed at the Schools Forum meeting on 17 January 2023 to move 0.35% from the Schools Block to help with the pressure on the High Needs Block.

Project Safety Valve is still forecasting a deficit at the end of 2025-26.

### **It was agreed:**

1. To note the report.

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### **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

**COUNCILLOR MCGILL**  
**Chair**

**(Note: The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.30 pm)**