PRESENT:

Members:
Councillors Danny Thorpe (Chair), David Gardner (Vice-Chair), Christine Grice, Averil Lekau, Denise Scott-McDonald, Jackie Smith and Miranda Williams

Officers
Chief Executive, Director of Housing and Safer Communities, Senior Assistant Director - Communities Environment & Chief Operating Officer GS Plus and GSS, Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Skills, Director of Children's Services, Director of Health and Adult Social Care, Assistant Director Corporate Finance & Deputy s151 Officer (Finance), Head of Legal Services and Corporate Governance Officer

Item No.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were presented on behalf of Councillors Denise Hyland, Sizwe Janes and Chris Kirby.

2 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.
3 Declarations of Interest

Resolved -

That the list of Councillors’ Membership, as Council appointed representatives, on outside bodies, joint committees and School Governing bodies be noted.

4 Special Urgency

The Cabinet noted the reasons for urgency and the agreement from the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny.

5 Budget and Council Tax Setting 2019/20 - Business Rates

The report was presented by the Assistant Director Corporate Finance & Deputy s151 Officer (Finance) who advised Members on the London Business Rates pooling pilot and its first year arrangements. He highlighted the uncertainties around the previous model which had a number of caveats leading to a nil forecast. He confirmed that without notice new information had been received which included an up to date model allowing confidence to provide new projections. He added there were a number of threats and risks regarding this funding and as such should be treated as one-off.

The Assistant Director Corporate Finance & Deputy s151 Officer (Finance) highlighted the comments from Overview and Scrutiny:

“if it transpired that any more money was forthcoming either this year or in 2019/20, the Leader’s priority would be to put any extra funds into the Emergency Support Scheme.”

In response to a question, the Assistant Director Corporate Finance & Deputy s151 Officer (Finance) stated that the information provided along with the new data model allowed Chief Finance Officers the freedom to budget this independently. He added there a mixture of views on how to do this and that some authorities had made quarterly projections which were higher than the revised model. He continued that officers did not want to set expectations too high and reviewed the information received and consider that a prudent sum of £2m could be factored in to the 2019/20 financial position, as a one off.
In addressing the meeting, Councillor Christine Grice, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources highlighted the upcoming spending review and stated the recommendation to treat as a one-off was sensible as there was risks around the funding.

In addressing the meeting, Councillor Averil Lekau, the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Anti-Poverty shared her support for the decision to allocate the resources to the Emergency Support Scheme.

Cabinet

Resolved –

That it be noted that this report should be read in conjunction with the report considered by Cabinet on 20 February 2019

That it be noted that following receipt of new information relating to the pooling of business rates in London for 2019/20, an additional sum of circa £2m is proposed as one off resources available for 2019/20 (Section 4)

That it be agreed that £2m one off cash (Section 5) is applied in 2019/20:

- to ensure the continuity of the Emergency Support Scheme (£0.750m)
- held against overspend pressures (£1.250m)

That it be recommended to Council to agree the revised budget, including approval of the revised statutory calculation set out at Section 6 (Appendix 1).

The meeting closed at 7.42pm

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Chair