

CABINET

MINUTES OF MEETING Thursday 25th February 2021

PRESENT: Councillor Brett (Chair); Councillors Daalat Ali, Neil Emmott, Emsley, Iftikhar Ahmed, Blundell, Heakin, Rowbotham and Wardle

OFFICERS: Steve Rumbelow (Chief Executive), Mark Widdup (Director of Neighbourhoods), Andrea Fallon (Director of Public Health and Wellbeing), Claire Richardson (Director of Adult Care), John Searle (Director of Economy), Julie Murphy (Chief Finance Officer), Asif Ibrahim (Assistant Director – Legal, Governance and Workforce), Sam Smith (Deputy Chief Finance Officer), Andrew Storey, Chris Woods, Graeme Douglas and Helen Walton (Neighbourhoods Directorate) and Alison James (Resources Directorate)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Dearnley

98 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

99 URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

The Chair indicated that he had accepted a late item onto the Agenda - Discretionary Fees and Charges – Planning which was to be considered with the budget items as Item 7a.

100 MINUTES

Resolved:

1. That the Minutes of the Meetings of Cabinet held on 26th January 2021 and 9th February 2021 be approved and signed as correct records.

101 A UNIVERSITY FOR ROCHDALE

Consideration was given to a report of the Leader of the Council/Director of Neighbourhoods which informed Cabinet that here is an aspiration to improve Rochdale's higher education offer in an attempt to address Rochdale's earnings, education and skills gap.

The report was to inform Members of the steps which are currently being undertaken with a view to establishing a University Campus or University Centre in Rochdale and to seek approval for the Council to work in partnership with Hopwood Hall College to achieve this.

Alternatives considered:

The Council could abandon this aspiration to address the gap in education, earnings and skills by the establishment of a university and continue with the current situation or attempt to establish other means to address the education and earnings gap.

Resolved:

1. That the actions and discussions which are in progress be noted and that the Council's intention to work in partnership with Hopwood Hall College to deliver on the joint aspiration for a university be approved.

Reasons for the decision:

To improve Rochdale's higher education offer in an attempt to address Rochdale's earnings, education and skills gap.

Eligible for call in - yes

102 DISCRETIONARY FEES AND CHARGES 2021/22

Consideration was given to a report of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Delivery / Chief Finance Officer which advised that Discretionary Fees and Charges are reviewed on an annual basis. At Cabinet on 28th July a 2% general increase in Discretionary Fees and Charges for 2021/22 was agreed for planning purposes, subject to exemptions to be agreed.

Following consultation, the report details the proposed Discretionary Fees and Charges for 2021/22 and details those charges proposed to be exempt from the general 2% increase.

Alternatives considered:

The alternative is not to review or increase our fees and charges. This would potentially reduce the income available to the Council and make it more difficult to achieve a balanced budget.

Resolved:

1. That the updated Discretionary Fees and Charges for 2021/22, following consultation be approved;
2. That the charges exempt from the general 2% increase, as set out in paragraph 4.3. of the report be approved;
3. That the updated charge for Taxi Vehicles Annual fee, as detailed in paragraph 4.4. of the report be approved.

Reasons for the decision:

The fees and charges in the report have been proposed by each Directorate, taking into account the 2% general uplift in Discretionary Fees and Charges as agreed at Cabinet on 28th July 2020.

It is recommended not to apply a 2% increase to the fees and charges detailed in paragraph 4.3. of the report.

Eligible for call in – no

103 DISCRETIONARY FEES & CHARGES - PLANNING

Consideration was given to the report of the Cabinet Member for A Thriving Economy/ Director of Economy which advised that following budget savings proposals provisionally agreed by Cabinet on 1st December 2020, the Planning Service has been requested to identify ongoing savings to be realised from income generation. The proposed Discretionary Fees & Charges

for Planning have since been reviewed to realise a further £30k budget saving through additional income generation during 2021/2022.

Alternatives considered:

The alternative is to apply the previously agreed 2% uplift in line with inflation. This would compromise the ability of the Directorate to achieve the provisional budget saving during 2021/22, creating a budget pressure.

Resolved:

1. That the updated Discretionary Fees and Charges for Planning Services for 2021/22 be approved.

Reasons for the decision:

To meet the Council's requirement to set a balanced budget, the fees and charges in this report are proposed by Planning Services to realise a £30k budget saving through additional income generation during 2021/2022.

Eligible for call in – no

104 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Consideration was given to a report of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Delivery / Chief Finance Officer which sought approval for the 2021/22 Treasury Management Strategy (TMS) set out in Appendix 1 of the report, which outlines how the Council will meet the requirements of the relevant legislation, codes of practice and guidance that form the Prudential Framework.

Alternatives considered:

There are no feasible alternatives – all proposals are in accordance with the revised CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, which has been formally adopted by the Council and with Government guidance regarding the Treasury Management Strategy.

Resolved:

1. That the annual Treasury Management Strategy for 2021/22 be recommended to Council for approval with particular reference to:
 - The objectives of treasury management contained in section 2 and Appendix A of the report;
 - The forecasted capital financing / borrowing requirement in section 3.1.1 (table 2) and 3.1.2 (table 3) of the report;
 - The Operational Boundary and Authorised Limit for debt contained in section 3.1.3 (table 4) of the report;
 - That delegated authority given to the Chief Finance Officer to approve a breach in these boundaries where it would be advantageous to the Council, and limits are placed on the borrowing powers delegated to Officers (3.1.3) of the report;
 - The Council's criteria for assessing the creditworthiness of counterparties for investments contained in section 3.2.1 of the report with an emphasis on security of capital over return, noting the increased institutional investment limits in Table 8 (3.2.4) of the report. The criteria in this report are to be adopted with immediate effect rather than waiting until the new financial year.

- The additional Prudential and Treasury Indicators identified in section 3.4. of the report;
- The Minimum Revenue Provision Policy contained in section 3.5. of the report;
- That delegated approval be given to the Chief Finance Officer to temporarily suspend or amend the Council's own creditworthiness criteria adjusting limits with individual counterparties, if appropriate, in response to significant and sudden changes (such as the Covid19 pandemic) or changes to financial institutions' ratings as a result of global industry changes to the ratings system (paragraph 3.2.1) of the report;
- Include un-rated Building Societies (3.2.3) and Pooled Investment Funds (including Property) as an Investment option (3.2.6) of the report.

Reasons for the decision:

The report is produced to gain Cabinet Members' approval of the Treasury Management Strategy for submission to Full Council and to ensure that Cabinet Members are informed of and ensure adherence to the requirements of the Prudential Framework.

Eligible for call in – no

105 CAPITAL INVESTMENT & DISPOSAL STRATEGY

Consideration was given to a report of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Delivery / Chief Finance Officer which sought approval for the 2021/22 Capital Investment and Disposal Strategy ('The Strategy') set out in Appendix 1, which outlines how the Council will meet the requirements of the relevant legislation, codes of practice and guidance that form the Prudential Framework, MHCLG Guidance on Local Authority Investments, and Public Work Loan Board (PWLB) Lending Terms.

Alternatives considered:

There are no feasible alternatives – all proposals are in accordance with the revised CIPFA Prudential Code, which has been formally adopted by the Council and with Government guidance regarding Local Authority Investments.

Resolved:

1. That the annual Capital Investment and Disposal Strategy for 2021/22 be recommended to Council for approval with particular reference to:
 - The objectives of the Strategy contained in section 2 and Appendix 1 of the report;
 - The approach to and governance arrangement around property investment/development contained in section 5 of the report;
 - The Council's risk appetite and quantitative indicators set out in section 6.3 of the report;
 - The report of the Chief Finance Officer in terms of the affordability and risks associated with the Capital Investment and Disposal Strategy, as set out in paragraph 5.2.of the report.

Reasons for the decision:

The report is produced to gain Cabinet approval of the Capital Investment and Disposal Strategy for submission to Council and to ensure that Cabinet Members are informed of and ensure adherence to the requirements of the Prudential Framework, MHCLG Guidance on Local Authority Investments, and PWLB Lending Terms.

Eligible for call in – no

106 RESERVES POLICY

Consideration was given to a report of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Delivery / Chief Finance Officer which outlined the proposed Reserves Policy including the premise for holding the policy.

Alternatives considered:

No alternatives were put forward to having a reserves policy.

Resolved:

1. That Council be recommended to approve the Reserves Policy appended to the report.

Reasons for the decision:

The Council is bound to demonstrate sound financial management and deliver a balanced budget by 11th March 2021.

Having a strategic approach to setting the required level of reserves for future resilience of the Council is a key part of setting a balanced budget and ensuring longer term sound financial management.

Eligible for call in – no

107 SAVINGS PROGRAMME POST CONSULTATION UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Delivery / Chief Finance Officer which provided an update on the results of consultation on the proposed Savings Programme 2021/22 to 2022/23.

Alternatives considered:

The Council is legally obliged to set a balanced revenue budget. The budget setting process is complex and must be undertaken in a planned way. Whilst budgets are prepared in accordance with the approved guidelines a number of alternative options relating to savings proposals and budget pressures are considered as part of the overall budget setting process.

Consideration was given to a number of options in putting forward the savings proposals contained in the report to Cabinet 1st December 2021 and the report

outlined any alternatives. To do nothing was not considered to be an option as the Council is legally required to set a balanced budget.

Cabinet Members could decide not to implement these proposals and provide alternative options to enable a balanced budget to be achieved

Resolved:

1. That the outcome of consultation as detailed in section 4.2 and appendix 2 of the report and the private agenda item appendices be noted;
2. That the comments of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny regarding proposals included within Workforce and Business As Usual as detailed in appendix 3 and section 4.2. of the report be noted;
3. That Cabinet approve the following savings proposal be submitted to Council for approval:
 - ASC-2021-22-005 Changes to Adult Care Charging Policy.
4. That the following savings proposals be withdrawn:
 - NH-2021-22-006 Review of Neighbourhood Cohesion and Community Centre Engagement Officer Post;
 - NH-2021-22-007 Review of Town Centre Enforcement Warden Posts;
 - EC-2021-22-003 Shopmobility.

Reasons for the decision:

Cabinet Members are required to recommend a balanced Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2021/22 to Council and provisional budgets for 2022/23 to 2023/24. The Council is required to set a balanced budget for 2020/21 the by 11th March 2020.

Eligible for call in - no

108 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2003

Consideration was given to a report of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Delivery / Chief Finance Officer which advised that it is a legal requirement under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 for this report to be presented to Council for consideration immediately prior to setting the Budget and Council Tax. The recommendations aim to ensure that Council is aware of the opinion of the Chief Finance Officer regarding the robustness of the budget as proposed and the adequacy of general balances and reserves. This report will outline the robustness of the budget, the key risks and the level of reserves to support the Council's financial resilience.

Alternatives considered:

The conclusions of the report are that the proposed budget is robust and that the proposed level of general balances and reserves are adequate. An option to reduce the level of balance/reserves is not recommended given the risk assessment outlined in the report.

Resolved:

1. That Cabinet recommends to Council:
 - That the content of the report be considered prior to the approval of the Revenue and Capital Budgets, and Members endorse the approach to General balances included in the report;
 - That the General Fund Balances for 2021/22 be set at £17m.

Reasons for the decision:

In order to comply with the Local Government Act 2003 the Chief Finance Officer is required to provide Council with an opinion as to the robustness of the Budget being presented to Council and to ensure the adequacy of general balances and reserves. The Chief Finance Officer reports formally on the following issues:

- a) An opinion as to the robustness of the estimates made and the tax setting calculations.
- b) The adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.
- c) Consideration of the overall affordability of the capital programme when determining the prudential indicators.
- d) The production of longer-term revenue and capital plans.

The Council is required to take account of this report when determining its budget.

Eligible for call in – no

109 BUDGET REPORT AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2021/22

Consideration was given to a report of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Delivery / Chief Finance Officer which provided the proposed Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Council Tax 2021/22 for recommendation to Budget Council 3rd March 2021. The information contained in the report is subject to the approval of the Mayor of Greater Manchester Council Tax precepts for 2021/22.

The report also outlined the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22 to 2025/26. The Medium Term Financial Strategy provides the latest budget position for the Council, sets out the key financial challenges and issues which will be faced over the period, and provides details of the assumptions and estimates which underpin the budget. The strategy also takes account of the latest known developments both regional and at a local level.

Alternatives considered:

No alternatives were presented.

Resolved:

1. That Cabinet recommends to Council:
 - The proposed revenue budgets outlined in Appendix 1, based on a budget requirement of £235.984m for 2021/22;
 - Subject to confirmation of the Mayor of Greater Manchester precepts:
 - a) A Council Tax for district purposes of £1,727.37 for Band D properties (4.99% increase) for 2021/22;
 - b) A Council Tax (including precepts) of £2,036.62 for Band D properties (4.74% increase);
 - To note the position in relation to Education Services Grant and Schools Funding. Cabinet delegate the decision regarding any changes to the final allocations for the Dedicated Schools Grant to the Director of Children's Services and the Chief Finance Officer in

consultation with the Cabinet Members for Getting a Good Start and Corporate Delivery;

- To note the approval at Cabinet 1st December 2020 to earmark £0.5m of one off funds in contingency, which will be allocated to Adult Care Service in 2021/22 if additional demand pressures materialise;
- To note that any final balance on the 2020/21 budget will be transferred to the Equalisation Reserve;
- To approve the updated Budget Carry Forward policy, as detailed in Appendix 3. of the report;
- To approve the proposed Capital Programme for 2021/22 to 2025/26 as detailed at Appendix 4 of the report, noting that some of the assumed external funding included in the programme is still subject to clarification from Government and in some cases may involve bids for funding. It is therefore recommended that all approvals are subject to confirmation of funding allocations;
- To approve that the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Delivery, be given delegated authority to finalise the 2021/22 Discretionary Business Rate Relief Policy following the Government's 2021 Budget which will take place on 3rd March 2021;
- To approve that new spending proposals requiring additional revenue and capital resources should only be considered during the financial year, in extreme circumstances as determined by the Budget and Policy Framework. The proposals would need to be reported to the next available Council meeting in accordance with the Budget & Policy Framework;
- To approve the Council's updated Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22 to 2025/26, as provided at Appendix 6 of the report;
- To approve the Pay Policy Statement, as detailed in the report of the Head of Workforce & Organisational Development at Appendix 5 and the publication of the Pay Policy Statement before the 31st March 2021.

Reasons for the decision:

Cabinet members are required to consider and recommend to Budget Council before the 11th March 2021:

- a) A balanced Revenue Budget for 2021/22 and provisional budgets for 2022/23 to 2023/24.
- b) The Council Tax increase for 2021/22.

The Medium Term Financial Strategy provides a key part of the budget setting process.

Eligible for call in – no

110 FINANCIAL UPDATE ON THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Consideration was given to a report of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Delivery / Chief Finance Officer which provided an update on the forecast financial position relating to the impact of Covid-19 on the Council.

Alternatives considered:

Nor applicable, the report is for information only.

Resolved:

1. That the financial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Council and the funding provided by the Government to help mitigate this be noted.

Reasons for the decision:

To update Members on the use of the emergency Government funding to mitigate the additional expenditure/loss of income resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Eligible for call in – no

111 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:

That the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following four items of business, in accordance with the provisions of Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

Reason for the Decision:

Should the press and public remain during the debate on the following items, there may be a disclosure of information that is deemed to be exempt under Parts 1 and 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

112 SAVINGS PROGRAMME - CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Resolved:

1. That the private appendices detailing the consultation responses to the proposed Savings Proposals as detailed on the public Agenda be noted.

113 HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE TERM SERVICE CONTRACT 2022 ONWARDS

Consideration was given to the report of the Cabinet Member for Quality of Place/Director of Neighbourhoods which presented three options for the renewal of the Highway Maintenance Term Service Contract from 1st April 2022.

The Contract delivers the following highway services:

- a) Revenue Funded Work
 - Reactive/Routine Highway Repairs
 - Drainage Maintenance
 - Winter Maintenance
 - Out of Hours Call Out
- b) Capital Funded Work
 - Planned Maintenance Works

Alternatives considered:

Three alternative options for the renewal of the contract were presented within the report and appendices.

Resolved:

1. That Option 2 – to deliver the whole of the revenue funded service in-house and capital funded works via procurement compliant frameworks as detailed within the report be approved.

Reasons for the decision:

Three options were considered to deliver the highway maintenance service when the current contract expires. The assessment of all three options was presented in detail in the appended Options Report.

Taking into account all the advantages & disadvantages for each option, Option 2 was chosen.

Eligible for call in - yes

114 CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT CONTRACT

Consideration was given to the report of the Cabinet Member for Quality of Place/Director of Neighbourhoods which advised that Rochdale Council has powers to undertake Civil Parking Enforcement within the borough. Rochdale Council have used Service Providers to undertake the issuing of Penalty Charge Notices since Parking Enforcement was decriminalised and the power given to Highway Authorities in 2004.

Alternatives considered:

The contract could be re-procured on different terms, there is currently no budget set aside for a procurement such as this.

Resolved:

1. That the Council legally formalise the current Shared Contract to provide civil parking enforcement and parking management services and to add the Shared Contract to the Council's contract register;
2. That the Council exercise the option in the current Shared Contract to extend the period for the provision of civil parking enforcement and parking management services for a further period of two years.
3. That the Assistant Director (Legal, Governance & Workforce) be authorised to prepare appropriate legal documents and execute such documents on behalf of the Council as required to implement the decision.

Reasons for the decision:

To enable the current shared contract to be formally legalised and extended for a further period of two years.

Eligible for call in - yes

115 CEMETERY AND CREMATORIA NEW FEES AND CHARGES

Consideration was given to the report of the Cabinet Member for Quality of Place/Director of Neighbourhoods relating to the introduction of new fees and charges for Cemetery and Crematoria.

Alternatives considered:

The alternatives to each proposal were outlined within the report.

Resolved:

1. That the new Memorial Options as detailed within the report be approved for implementation from 1st April 2021;
2. That the proposed fees and charges relating to current service provision as detailed in the report be approved as a basis for consultation and be included in the council's fees and charges from 1 April 2021;
3. That final approval of the proposals taking into account the outcome of the consultation process be delegated to the Director of Neighbourhoods in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Quality of Place.

Reasons for the decision:

The council wishes to offer a choice of memorials for families to remember loved ones.

Fees and charges relating to current service provision have been reviewed.

Eligible for call in – yes