

MINUTES of a meeting of the CABINET held in the Remote Meeting using Microsoft Teams on TUESDAY, 8 DECEMBER 2020

Present: Councillor R Blunt (Chairman)

Councillors R Ashman, R D Bayliss, T Gillard, N J Rushton and A C Woodman

In Attendance: Councillors D Harrison

Officers: Mrs B Smith, Mr J Arnold, Mr A Barton, Mrs T Bingham, Miss E Warhurst, Mr T Delaney, Ms C Proudfoot, Mr P Sanders and Mrs M Scott

58. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

59. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

60. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

No public questions were received.

61. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meetings held on 10 November and 26 November 2020.

It was moved by Councillor N Rushton, seconded by Councillor T Gillard and

RESOLVED THAT

The minutes of the meetings held on 10 November and 26 November 2020 be confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.

Reason for decision: To comply with the constitution.

62. GENERAL FUND AND SPECIAL EXPENSES REVENUE BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2021/22

Councillor N Rushton presented the report, as amended in the additional papers. The report set out the proposals for the General Fund and Special Expenses Budget for 2021/22 and asked Cabinet to endorse them for statutory consultation, before final approval by Cabinet and Council in February 2021.

Key features of the proposals included:

- A projected surplus of £49,000 on the draft General Fund Budget, this was better than previously anticipated due to deferral of local government funding reforms to April 2022 due to COVID-19.
- Staff salary increases were only included for those staff earning below £24,000 a year in line with recent Government Spending Review.
- Reduced income from planning fees, car parking charges and the sale of recyclable materials, partly due to the impact of COVID-19 on these income streams.
- The rebasing of the Journey to Self Sufficiency savings with the Year 1 programme targets of £570,000 included for the following year.

Chairman's initials

- Six new service development proposals including, continuation of food waste trials, additional expenditure on monitoring of air quality and installation of surveillance cameras to assist in detecting fly-tipping following a request by Members at Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 11 November 2020.
- The twelfth consecutive year without a rise in the Council's portion of Council Tax, although more income would still be collected due to housing growth in the District, alongside growth in Business rates.
- The receipt of two years' worth of historic reward payments under the New Homes Bonus scheme and a new bonus payment, totalling £660,000 more received than had been anticipated.
- £330,000 in additional funding had been received from Government to mitigate the financial pressures of COVID-19.
- The draft Special Expenses Budget included proposed increases in the precept for the next financial year to fund planned maintenance, the phasing out of the Localisation of Council Tax Support Grant and to maintain a balanced position.

It was advised that funding estimates would be revised following approval of the council tax and business rates bases in January 2021 and receipt of the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement.

Members spoke in support of the proposals set out in the report. In particular the ability of the self-sufficiency fund to respond to any unforeseen pressures, the proposal to keep the District's portion of Council Tax frozen, and the service development proposals in Community Services which were praised as important work that would hugely benefit the District and its communities.

It was moved by Councillor N Rushton, seconded by Councillor R Blunt and

RESOLVED THAT CABINET

- 1) Agrees the 2021/22 General Fund and Special Expenses Budget Proposals for statutory consultation; and
- 2) That the Assurance Statement by the Section 151 Officer be noted.

Reason for decision: Required as part of the 2021/22 budget process.

63. DRAFT HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2021/22

Councillors N Rushton and R Bayliss presented the report. The report asked Cabinet to agree the Housing Revenue Account Budget proposals for 2021/22 for statutory consultation, before final approval by Cabinet and Council in February 2021.

Key features included:

- The draft budget showed a projected surplus of £229,000 surplus.
- The proposal to increase rents by 1.5% in line with the Government's National Rent Increase Policy, equating to an average increase of £1.66 a week.
- A new Tenancy Support Officer role as part of a new approach to supporting tenants in managing arrears.
- The passing on of savings in service charges to tenants for services such as grounds maintenance that were unable to be carried out due to the first COVID-19 lockdown.
- A £3.7 million transfer to the capital programme to support acquisition, build and maintenance of new and existing council homes.
- The Housing Revenue Account continued to have adequate reserves and continued to maintain the £13 million set aside for the redemption of self-financing loans, which were due for repayment in March 2022.

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Following queries by Members, the Head of Finance advised that the £13 million set aside for redemption of self-financing loans left £58 million outstanding of the original £71.7 million.

It was moved by Councillor N Rushton, seconded by Councillor R Bayliss and

RESOLVED THAT CABINET

- 1) Note the Assurance Statement by the Section 151 Officer; and
- 2) Approve the Draft HRA Budget Proposal, including the 1.5% rent increase, as detailed in the report and associated appendices for consultation.

Reason for decision: Required to enable officers to consult with tenants on the changes to the HRA budgets.

64. 2021/22 - 2025/26 DRAFT CAPITAL PROGRAMMES

Councillor N Rushton presented the report, setting out the proposed capital spending plan of £32 million for 2021/22 and a further £61 million between 2022 and 2016. To be agreed by Cabinet for statutory consultation, followed by final approval by Cabinet and Council in February 2021.

Key features included:

- £10 million on the continued building of the new leisure facility.
- Nearly £1.4 million combined on the Future High Street Funding expenditure, subject to success in the bid sent to government.
- There were no items included on the draft Special Expenses Capital Programme.
- The draft Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme was £11.8 million, including £4.5 million on the Home Improvement Programme, £5 million on the New Housing Supply programme, and a new £250,000 provision for a Carbon Zero Programme.

Members spoke in support of the proposals. The plan to invest £50,000 for the installation of a gate at Breedon Church was praised as an achievement resulting from collaboration across all levels of local government to help reduce anti-social behaviour.

Thanks were also expressed to all staff in the finance teams, and particularly the Head of Finance, for their hard work on behalf of the Council, the outcomes of which were demonstrated in the funds available to make a direct impact in people's lives.

It was moved by Councillor N Rushton, seconded by Councillor R Bayliss and

RESOLVED THAT CABINET

- 1) Notes the estimated General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Outturn for 2020/21 and planned financing in Appendices A and B
- 2) Approves for consultation the Draft Capital Programmes in 2021/22 detailed in:
 - Appendix A: General Fund Capital Schemes
 - Appendix B: HRA Capital Schemes and in 2022/23, these schemes only.
 - £526,000 for the Vehicle replacements as detailed in Paragraph 5.10
- 3) Notes the proposed procurement routes in respect of vehicles, equipment and plant and delegates the authority to award these contracts and any associated

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agreements furtherance of the project to the relevant Strategic Director, in consultation with the relevant portfolio Holders, subject to the final approval of the Capital Programmes in May 2021

Reason for decision: To enable projects to be included in the programmes for consultation.

65. REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF THE CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES TO INSTRUCT PARLIAMENTARY AGENT

Councillor R Ashman presented the report. As legislation relating to Phase 2B of HS2 was likely to be considered by Parliament in mid to late 2021 it was considered appropriate that Parliamentary Agent services be sought so the Council would be represented at this initial stage and beyond.

The report set out the role of a Parliamentary Agent, and the reason why a Waiver of the Contract Procedure Rules was required to award a contract for Parliamentary Agent services directly to Sharpe Pritchard LLP.

Members spoke in support of the proposals, although the costs were not insignificant there were sufficient funding available from the named reserves and it was important that the Council be represented when the legislation was considered by Parliament.

It was moved by Councillor R Ashman, seconded by Councillor N Rushton and

RESOLVED THAT CABINET

Agrees to waive the Standing Orders at Clause 5 of the Contract Procedure Rules in order that a contract for the provision of Parliamentary Agent Services in relation to HS2 be directly awarded to Sharpe Pritchard LLP.

Reason for decision: To waive the Council's Contract Procedure rules in order that a direct award of a contract to Sharpe Pritchard LLP to provide Parliamentary Agent Services in relation to HS2 can be made.

66. AIR QUALITY UPDATE

Councillor D Harrison was welcomed to the meeting and presented the recommendations put together by the Air Quality Task and Finish Group and approved by Community Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 25 November 2020, found at Appendix 2 of the report. In doing so, he highlighted the cross-party nature of the work and the importance of further air quality monitoring as a means to improve the health outcomes of the people living in the District.

Councillor A Woodman then presented the report, referencing the background of the report, the work undertaken by the Air Quality Task & Finish Group and Community Scrutiny Committee, the Leicestershire Air Quality and Health Action Plan 2020-2024 recently agreed by Leicestershire County Council's Cabinet and the proposed Air Quality Delivery Plan.

Thanks were expressed to the work undertaken by Scrutiny and it was proposed to accept the majority of the recommendations set out in Appendix 2, with the exception of the specific sites for extra monitoring named in the fourth of the Scrutiny Committee's recommendations.

It was moved by Councillor A Woodman, seconded by Councillor R Ashman and

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RESOLVED THAT CABINET

- 1) Notes the Report on the Future Provision of Air Quality.
- 2) Accepts the recommendations made by Community Scrutiny Committee listed in Appendix 2, with the exception of the specified locations for additional monitoring in the fourth recommendation. With monitoring of PM_{2.5} to instead be agreed and delivered in a more strategic approach under the direction of the Public Health team.
- 3) Adopts the Air Quality Delivery Plan in Appendix 5, subject to Council Approval at its Meeting in February 2021.
- 4) Recommend that Council approve the costs identified in the financial implications and resources in the Budget for 2021/22 & future years.

Reason for decision: Following Cabinet on 10 December 2019, the Environmental Protection team agreed to return to a future Cabinet meeting with an update on the air quality delivery review including the proposed delivery plan.

67. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was proposed by Councillor T Gillard, seconded by Councillor A Woodman and

RESOLVED THAT:

In pursuance of Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that the business to be transacted involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act and that the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Reason for decision: To enable the consideration of exempt information.

68. NEWMARKET REFURBISHMENT CONTRACT UPDATE

Councillor A Woodman presented the report, which updated Cabinet on the work undertaken on refurbishment of the Newmarket site since Cabinet had considered the issue on 23 July 2020, and set out the proposed actions to progress the project.

The report also set out that the Chairman of the Council had agreed to a waiver of call-in on the decision, so that the proposed actions could be commenced in a timely manner

Members spoke in support of the proposals as an appropriate course of action given the current circumstances surrounding the site.

It was moved by Councillor A Woodman, seconded by Councillor R Blunt and

RESOLVED THAT CABINET

Agrees the recommendations as set out in the report.

Reason for decision: The reason for this decision(s) is to allow the Council to complete the works on site.

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The meeting commenced at 5.05 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 6.00 pm