

MINUTES of a meeting of the CABINET held in the Remote Meeting using Microsoft Teams on TUESDAY, 2 FEBRUARY 2021

Present: Councillor R Blunt (Chairman)

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

In Attendance: Councillors

Officers: Mrs B Smith, Mr J Arnold, Mr A Barton, Mrs T Bingham, Miss E Warhurst, Miss A Wright, K Hiller and Mr T Delaney

**82. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

**83. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, Members declared the following interests:

Councillor N Rushton declared a pecuniary interest in item 12 - A Review of the Council's Car Parking Service and Action Plan, as a landowner and car park operator within the District, and that he would leave the meeting when this item was considered.

**84. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

No public questions were received.

**85. MINUTES**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2021. It was noted that there a minor error in the minutes in relation to the figure for the Council Tax Base.

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

RESOLVED THAT

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2021 be agreed as an accurate record of the proceedings, subject to the correction of the Council Tax Base figure from 34,798 to 34,841.

**Reason for decision:** To comply with the constitution.

**86. GENERAL FUND AND SPECIAL EXPENSES REVENUE BUDGETS PROPOSALS FOR 2021/22**

Councillor N Rushton presented the report which set out the General Fund and Special Expenses Revenue Budget proposals for 2021/22, requested Cabinet to note the assurance statement by the Section 151 Officer and recommended these budgets to Council for approval.

Since Cabinet's consideration of the draft General Fund Budget on 8 December 2020, there had been increases in the projected surplus to £1.1 million for a variety of reasons including additional funding through the provisional settlement, additional business rates funding, and additional car parking income arising from another report on the agenda.

Chairman's initials

It was proposed and supported by Members that the £6,500 provision for litter picking be enhanced to £15,000 in order to allow each Parish and Town Council (including Coalville Special Expenses) to be allocated £576 for the supply of equipment. Supporting volunteer litter pickers was highlighted as a positive and sensible solution to an ongoing problem across the District.

It was moved by Councillor N Rushton, seconded by Councillor A Woodman and

#### RESOLVED THAT

Cabinet note the Assurance Statement by the S151 Officer; and recommends to full Council that it:

- 1) Approves the amended General Fund Fees and Charges as detailed in Appendix B, subject to the inclusion of additional funding for litter picking, taking this budget to £15,000.
- 2) Approves the General Fund Revenue Budget for 2021/22 as summarised in Appendix C, subject to the inclusion of additional funding for litter picking, taking this budget to £15,000;
- 3) Approves the Special Expenses Revenue Budget for 2021/22 as summarised in Appendix D;
- 4) Freezes the District's Council Tax in 2021/22; and
- 5) Requires the budgeted surplus income over expenditure in 2021/22 to be transferred to the Self Sufficiency Reserve

**Reason for decision:** To enable the Council to set a balanced budget for 2021/22 as required by statute.

#### 87. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET FOR 2021/22

Councillor N Rushton presented the report, setting out the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget for 2021/22. The report requested Cabinet note the Assurance Statement of the Section 151 Officer and recommend Council's approval for the proposed rents and charges, and the HRA Budget for 2021/22.

It was noted that since consideration of the draft HRA Budget on 8 December 2020, the projected surplus had reduced by roughly £200,000 to a projected balanced position with a £35,000 surplus. This was resulting from a number of areas in the report where expenditures would increase. It was noted and welcomed that the planned £13 million for redemption of maturity loans remained.

Members spoke in support of the proposals and welcomed the seeking of feedback from the Tenant Scrutiny Panel, the Tenant and Leaseholder Consultation Forum, and the Corporate Scrutiny Committee. It was highlighted that all tenants had been invited to respond to the consultation on the draft budget through the monthly magazine InTouch, and as there had only been two responses, this suggested an overall satisfaction with the services provided.

A discussion was also held regarding the overall fall in complaints and demand for repairs. In addition to the impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic identified in the report, it was suggested that greater investment in recent years had led to better quality housing and therefore greater tenant satisfaction.

Chairman's initials

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

RESOLVED THAT

- 1) Cabinet note the assurance statement by the S151 officer;
- 2) Council be recommended to approve the following changes to rents and charges for 2021/22:
  - a. Increase Council House rents by up to 1.5%, as set out in the Draft Budget in December.
  - b. Reduce Fees and Charges by an average of 3.1% as set out in Appendix C,
  - c. Reduce Service Charges by an average of 3.5% as set out in Appendix D.
- 3) Council be recommended to approve the Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2021/22 as summarised in Appendix A.

**Reason for decision:** To enable the Council to set a balanced Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2020/21.

## 88. 2021/22 CAPITAL STRATEGY AND 2021/22 - 2025/26 CAPITAL PROGRAMMES

Councillor N Rushton presented the report, setting out the proposed Capital Strategy for 2021/22 and the proposed General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Capital Programmes for 2021/22 to 2025/26.

The General Fund totalled nearly £20 million for 2021/22 including £10 million on the new leisure facility and nearly £1.4 million on Coalville Regeneration projects originally planned as part of the Council's Future High Street Fund bid. The Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme totalled £15.5 million, including £4.5 million on the Council's Home Improvement Programme, £5 million on the Council New Housing Supply Programme, and a new £250,000 for a Zero Carbon programme. There were no items included on the Special Expenses Capital Programme.

Members spoke in support of the proposals, highlighting the carrying forward of any spending delayed by the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

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

RESOLVED THAT

- 1) Council be recommended to approve the 2021/22 capital strategy included in Appendix A, in line with the prudential code;
- 2) The forecast General Fund and HRA Capital Outturn for 2020/21 and planned financing be noted in Appendices B and C;
- 3) Council be recommended to approve the capital programmes in 2021/22 detailed in:
  - Appendix B – The General Fund Capital Programme
  - Appendix C – HRA Capital Schemes
- 4) Cabinet notes the proposed procurement routes in respect of vehicles, equipment and plant and delegates the authority to award these contracts and any associated agreements to the relevant Strategic Director in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, subject to final approval of the capital programmes in February 2021.

Chairman's initials

**Reason for decision:** To enable projects to be included in the Programmes for approval at Cabinet.

#### **89. 2021 - 2026 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLANS**

Councillor N Rushton presented the report, asking Cabinet to note the Council's Medium Term Financial Plans including the latest positions and projections for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account. These had been revised since their last consideration by Cabinet in September 2020 to align with final budgets.

Members spoke in support of the proposals, highlighting that it was a testament to the Council's financial management that, despite the heavy impact of COVID-19 over the previous year alongside many other challenges, it was still able to plan sensibly for the years ahead from a stable financial position.

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

RESOLVED THAT

Cabinet note the Council's revised Medium Term Financial Plans.

**Reason for decision:** For Members to have an understanding of the Council's medium term financial outlook.

#### **90. INVESTMENT STRATEGY - SERVICE AND COMMERCIAL 2021/22**

Councillor N Rushton presented the report, which set out the Investment Strategy – Service and Commercial 2021/22, and requested Cabinet to recommend it to Council for approval.

The Strategy set out how the Council would support local public services through lending to them or purchasing shares in them for an investment income. Alongside the strategy for the Council's commercial property investments and analysis of current investments.

It was moved by Councillor N Rushton, seconded by Councillor A Woodman and

RESOLVED THAT

Cabinet recommends the Investment Strategy – Service and Commercial 2021/22 for approval by Council on 23 February 2021.

**Reason for decision:** To ensure the Council meets the requirements of the statutory guidance issued by the government in January 2018 under section 15(1)a of the Local Government Act 2003.

#### **91. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2021/22 AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2021/22-2023/24**

Councillor N Rushton presented the report, which set out the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2021/22, the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators, and the Annual Minimum Revenue Provision. All of these were compliant with statutory, regulatory and professional requirements with regular reports on treasury management activity presented to the Audit and Governance Committee. The report therefore requested that Cabinet recommend these documents to Council for approval.

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

Chairman's initials

RESOLVED THAT

The Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2021/22, the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators – revised 2020/21 and 2021/22-2023/24 and the Annual Minimum Revenue Provision be recommended to Council for approval.

**Reason for decision:** To meet the requirements of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's 'Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice' 2017 Edition (the CIPFA Code).

## 92. MINUTES OF THE COALVILLE SPECIAL EXPENSES WORKING PARTY

Councillor A Woodman presented the report, which presented the minutes of the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party from their meeting on 15 December 2020 for noting.

The report also sought Cabinet approval for the recommendation made at that meeting to invest £4,500 as part of the Asset Management Plan to install CCTV and upgrade the intruder alarm at Scotlands Recreation Ground, in order to combat anti-social behaviour.

Councillor Woodman also wished the local group Friends of Coalville Park success with their funding applications to improve the play equipment offer at Coalville Park, and looked forward to seeing firmed up proposals in the near future on the back of a successful bid

Members spoke in support of the report and minutes, in particular welcoming the new signage placed at the site of the future Coalville and Whitwick Leisure Centre.

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

RESOLVED THAT

Cabinet notes the minutes of the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party at Appendix 1, and approves the recommendations detailed within the minutes and summarised at paragraph 3.0 of the report.

**Reason for decision:** So that the recommendations of the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party can be considered.

## 93. A REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S CAR PARKING SERVICE AND ACTION PLAN

Councillor N Rushton left the meeting having declared a pecuniary interest in the item.

Councillor A Woodman then presented the report, which set out a variety of measures with regard to the Council's Car Parking Service. These were set out in the report and proposed Action Plan at Annex A. With the aim of promoting a way forward to meet the needs of residents in the area, protect the provision of car parks, as well as promoting a zero carbon agenda going forward.

It was highlighted that the Council's parking service was important for a wide range of stakeholders including residents, businesses, shoppers, tourists, community groups, and Parish and Town Councils.

Members spoke in support of the proposals, highlighting the importance of providing new electric vehicle charging points going forward. Discussion also focused on the merits on

Chairman's initials

whether the move to contactless payments raised the possibility of introducing charges on car parks where there were currently none. It was noted that all options had been considered for each car park and introducing charges was also dependent on whether demand was sufficient to then raise sufficient income following any introduction of charges and any subsequent fall in demand.

The comments made by the Community Scrutiny Committee during its consideration of the issue on 25 November 2020 were also welcomed.

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

RESOLVED THAT

Cabinet:

- 1) Adopts the action plan for the parking service in Annex A
- 2) Agrees to the changes to the parking arrangements detailed in paragraph 2.4
- 3) Delegates authority to the Strategic Director of Place to make amendments to the parking orders.
- 4) Notes the intention of the Head of Paid Service to commence a review of staffing resources in the Environmental Protection team in line with the review of the car parking service
- 5) Brings to a close parking enforcement contracts with Leicestershire County Council for Ashby and Coalville libraries

**Reason for decision:** To seek approval from Cabinet for the plan as it is a Key Decision.

**Councillor N Rushton left the meeting at 5.37pm**

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 5.43 pm