



## **MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON 23rd FEBRUARY 2023**

**PRESENT:** Councillor J Oates (Chair), Councillors T Clements, S Doyle and A Farrell

The following officers were present: Andrew Barratt (Chief Executive), Stefan Garner (Executive Director Finance), Joanne Goodfellow (Assistant Director Finance), Zoe Wolicki (Assistant Director People) and Tracey Pointon (Legal Admin & Democratic Services Manager)

Councillor D Cook, Vice Chair of Corporate Scrutiny and Councillors C Cooke and M Cook were in attendance

### **110 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Bailey, R Pritchard and M Summers

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### **111 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023 were approved as a correct record.

*(Moved by Councillor T Clements and seconded by Councillor A Farrell)*

### **112 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

### **113 QUESTION TIME:**

**QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC NO. 1 Under Schedule 4, 13, Mr H Loxton will ask the Portfolio Holder for Engagement, Civic Pride and Pride in Place Councillor T Clements the following Question:**

It was very encouraging to read about the first meeting of Lichfield District Youth Council earlier this month. The meeting was attended by 30 young people, and they will meet monthly going forwards. This gives young people a voice, allows their views to be heard and encourages engagement on decisions which impact them. It brings about an interest in local democracy, and may even see these young people go on to become councillors in the future. Bearing all that in mind, could you please confirm if there are currently any plans in place for a Tamworth Borough Youth Council?

**Councillor Clements gave the following answer:**

Thank you Mr Loxton for your question.

I too had heard and read about our neighbouring council's decision to introduce the youth council. I wholeheartedly support your comments that these young people may well be our next community leaders. Being part of a youth council is a great introduction to local politics but it is also an opportunity for the Council to engage with Tamworth youth. A youth council would give young people the chance to discuss relevant issues, engage with decision makers and contribute to improving the lives of young people within Tamworth.

So for me it is a winning situation all round. By generating interest now this will pay dividends when those youngsters become informed residents in their own right.

In my portfolio I would love to see this council bring back the youth council and I am already currently working with officers to make the necessary arrangements. This will take time and resources to establish and encourage it and then clearly it will need ongoing support.

But I am fully supportive of the reintroduction of a local youth council that would be a forum that represent the views of young people in Tamworth. It would be run by young people living in Tamworth, for young people, giving young people a voice and enabling them to make their views heard in the decision-making process.

**Mr Loxton asked the following Supplementary Question**

Really good to hear that and you are voting on the budget next week, is there any funding in the budget set aside for a Youth Council

**Councillor T Clements gave the following response.**

Not at this present time because we are only just doing this now because we are going through this now so we are going to have to look for funding for next year. That's not saying we can't get it off the ground we can look at doing something ourselves and look for funding for future years.

Report of the Chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee to update Cabinet and to make recommendations to it following consideration of matters by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee, following consideration of the outcomes of the Leaseholder Charges Communications Working Group at the Committee's meeting on 8 February 2023.

Following its consideration of the above item, the Corporate Scrutiny Committee agreed to make recommendations to Cabinet as set out below:

**RESOLVED** that the Committee recommended:

1. That the council look at using an independent assessor for works to confirm costs were correct.
2. That an assessment be done for all repairs in advance of leaseholders being asked to contribute to repairs.
3. To reinforce the council's communications when residents buy a council house, including what responsibilities and obligations were on the owner occupier.
4. That the communications relating to the leaseholder works be reviewed and simplified.
5. That the contractor hold at least two face-to-face consultation drop-ins to enable residents to understand the process.
6. That the specific 44 leaseholder roofs be assessed straight away.
7. That the council consider a mechanism such that the affected 44 leaseholders were not faced with increased costs as a result of the delay in works being commenced.

*(Moved by Councillor M Cook and seconded by Councillor S Goodall)*

Councillor J Oates thanked the three Councillors for attending and thanked the working group for the work undertaken on this piece of work.

It was decided to move each recommendation separately.

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet

1. Agreed to a one-off look for this piece of work, with an independent assessor to assess if the costs are correct

*(Moved by Councillor A Farrell and seconded by Councillor S Doyle)*

2. Agreed that the Portfolio Holder would consider the implications of assessing all repairs in advance of leaseholders being asked to contribute and bring the report back to the next available Cabinet meeting.

*(Moved by Councillor A Farrell and seconded by Councillor S Doyle)*

3. Review the council's communications when residents buy a council house, including what responsibilities and obligations are on the owner occupier.

*(Moved by Councillor A Farrell and seconded by Councillor J Oates)*

4. Review communications and include the information from the whole capital programme in the communications.

*(Moved by Councillor A Farrell and seconded by Councillor J Oates)*

5. Referred back to Corporate Scrutiny that the Committee look at the process for requesting at least two face to face drop ins with residents before any work commences and Scrutiny should consider whether this is for all works or works over a certain monetary threshold.

**This recommendation was not moved or seconded**

6. Agreed that if any of the 44 Leaseholders roofs haven't been assessed they will be assessed immediately.

*(Moved by S Doyle and seconded by Councillor J Oates)*

7. Agreed that the affected 44 leaseholders would not be faced with increased costs as a result of the delay in works being commenced.

*(Moved by Councillor A Farrell and seconded by Councillor J Oates)*

## **115 CORPORATE VISION, PRIORITIES PLAN, BUDGET & MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2023/24**

Report of the Leader of the Council to approve the Vision Statement, Priority Themes, Corporate Priorities and Plans and their inclusion in the Corporate Plan and to approve the recommended package of budget proposals to enable the Council to agree the:

- General Fund (GF) Revenue Budget and Council Tax for 2023/24;
- Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget for 2023/24;

- 5 Year General Fund Capital Programme (2023/28);
- 5 Year HRA Capital Programme (2023/28);
- 3 Year General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) (2023/26);  
and
- 5 Year HRA Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) (2023/28).

To comply with the requirement of the Council's Treasury Management Policy in reporting to Council the proposed strategy for the forthcoming year and the Local Government Act 2003 with the reporting of the Prudential Indicators and the requirement to prepare an annual Corporate Capital Strategy.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet

endorsed the following recommendations to proceed to Council for approval

1. the Vision Statement, Priority Themes, Corporate Priorities and Outcomes for 2023/24 (Appendix A);
2. the proposed revisions to Service Revenue Budgets (Policy Changes) (Appendix C);
3. the sum of £59,581 be applied from Council Tax Collection Fund surpluses in reducing the Council Tax demand in 2023/24 (Appendix E);
4. the sum of £260,300 be applied to Business Rates Collection Fund deficits in 2023/24 (Appendix E);
5. that on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022, the Cabinet calculated the Council Tax Base 2023/24 for the whole Council area as 23,376 [Item T in the formula in Section 31B(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")];
6. that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2022/23 is £4,602,501 (Appendix E);
7. the following amounts as calculated for the year 2023/24 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:
  - a. £48,785,510 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act (Outgoings excluding internal GF Recharges);
  - b. £44,183,009 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act (Income excluding internal GF Recharges);
  - c. £4,602,501 being the amount by which the aggregate at 7(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 7(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year (Item R in the formula in Section 31A(4) of the Act);

- d. £196.89 being the amount at 7(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (at 5 above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year;
8. the Council Tax level for the Borough Council for 2023/24 of £196.89 (an increase of £5 (2.60%) on the 2022/23 level of £191.89) at Band D;
9. an aggregate Council Tax (comprising the respective demands of the Borough Council, Staffordshire County Council, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority) of £2,012.94 at Band D for 2023/24 be noted (£1,922.11 in 2022/23) (Appendix H);
10. the Council Tax levels at each band for 2023/24 (Appendix H);
11. the sum of £1,207,869 be transferred from General Fund Revenue Balances in 2023/24 (Appendix E);
12. the Summary General Fund Revenue Budget for 2023/24 (Appendix E);
13. the Provisional General Fund Budgets for 2024/25 to 2025/26, summarised at Appendix G, as the basis for future planning;
14. minimum level for balances of £500k to be held for each of the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, General Capital Fund and Housing Capital Fund;
15. Cabinet be authorised to release funding from the General Contingency budget and that the release of funding for Specific Contingency items be delegated to the Corporate Management Team in consultation with the Leader of the Council;
16. proposed HRA Expenditure level of £17,517,810 for 2023/24 (Appendix D);
17. rents for Council House Tenants for 2023/24 be set at an average of £99.66 (2022/23 £93.14), over a 48 week rent year (including a capped 7% increase in line with the Governments updated Rent Standard for 2023/24);
18. rents for Council House Tenants due for 52 weeks in 2023/24 be collected over 48 weeks;
19. the HRA deficit of £823,480 be financed through a transfer from Housing Revenue Account Balances in 2023/24 (Appendix D);
20. the proposed 5 year General Fund Capital Programme of £10.809m, as detailed in Appendix I to the report;
21. the proposed 5 year Housing Capital Programme of £37.958m, as detailed in Appendix J to the report;
22. to delegate authority to Cabinet to approve/add new capital schemes to the capital programme where grant funding is received or there is no net additional cost to the Council;
23. the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, the Treasury Management Policy Statement, Minimum Revenue Provision Strategy and Annual Investment Statement 2023/24 (as detailed at Appendix N);

24. adopt the revised clauses from, and the CIPFA *Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice* and *The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities* as updated in 2021;
25. the Prudential and Treasury Indicators and Limits for 2023/24 to 2025/26 contained within Appendix N;
26. adoption of the Treasury Management Practices contained within ANNEX 8;
27. the detailed criteria of the Investment Strategy 2023/24 contained in the Treasury Management Strategy within ANNEX 4; and
28. the Corporate Capital Strategy and associated Action Plan (as detailed at Appendix O).

*(Moved by Councillor J Oates and seconded by Councillor A Farrell)*

## **116 QUARTER THREE 2022/23 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Report of the Leader of the Council to provide Cabinet with an overview of Council performance, risk and financial health-check towards achieving the strategic projects detailed within the Corporate Plan and Medium-Term Financial Strategy. The information contained within the report covers performance for the third quarter of the financial year (October to December 2022). Corporate Scrutiny considered the report on 8th February 2023.

**RESOLVED:** that Cabinet endorsed the contents of the report and

Remove the Corporation Street Gateway Project as a corporate project and review that project as a gateway.

*(Moved by Councillor J Oates and seconded by Councillor T Clements)*

## **117 FHSF QUARTERLY UPDATE**

Report of the Leader of the Council to update the Committee on the progress of the Future High Streets Fund programme.

**RESOLVED:** that Cabinet endorsed the report.

*(Moved by Councillor J Oates and seconded by Councillor S Doyle)*

## **118 REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES 2023/24**

Report of the Leader of the Council to seek approval for the proposed increase to fees and charges payable and introduce some additional fees, affecting two or more Wards and involving income over £100k.

**RESOLVED:** that Cabinet

1. implement the annual inflationary increase for the fees and charges and implement new charges commencing on 1st April 2023 as detailed in Appendix 1;
2. endorse increases in the charges applied for goods sold through the catering bar and shops throughout the year as these are based on cost price plus a margin.

*(Moved by Councillor J Oates and seconded by Councillor S Doyle)*

## **119 COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS COMPLAINTS AND MANAGING UNREASONABLE CUSTOMER BEHAVIOUR POLICIES**

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Risk and Customer Services to seek Cabinet approval for the Compliments, Comments and Complaints and Managing Unreasonable Customer Behaviour Policies.

**RESOLVED:** that Cabinet

1. approved the Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy for implementation on 1 April 2023;
2. approved the Managing Unreasonable Customer Behaviour Policy for implementation on 1 April 2023.

*(Moved by Councillor S Doyle and seconded by Councillor T Clements)*

## **120 WRITE OFFS 1 APRIL 2022 TO 31 DECEMBER 2022**

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Risk and Customer Services for Cabinet to endorse the amount of debt written-off for the period 1st April 2022 to 31st December 2022.

Councillor Doyle thanked Mike Buckland for the work on the report.

**RESOLVED:** that Cabinet

endorsed the amount of debt written-off for the period of 1st April 2022 to 31st December 2022 (Appendix A-E) and approved the write-off of irrecoverable debt for Business Rates of £83,075.98 (Appendix F).

*(Moved by Councillor S Doyle and seconded by Councillor T Clements)*



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Leader