



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON 22nd FEBRUARY 2024

PRESENT: Councillor T Jay (Chair), Councillors S Smith (Deputy Chair), T Clements and P Thompson

The following officers were present: Andrew Barratt (Chief Executive), Rebecca Smeathers (Executive Director Finance (S151)), Joanne Goodfellow (Assistant Director Finance), Tina Mustafa (Assistant Director Neighbourhoods), Tracey Pointon (Legal Admin & Democratic Services Manager) and Tracey Smith (Democratic Services Assistant)

126 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A Cooper Councillor J Oates and M Summers.

127 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meetings held on 25th January 2024 and 1st February 2024 were approved and signed as a correct record.

(Moved by Councillor T Clements and seconded by Councillor S Smith)

128 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

129 QUESTION TIME:

None

130 MATTERS REFERRED TO THE CABINET IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES

None

131 CORPORATE VISION, PRIORITIES PLAN, BUDGET & MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2024/25

Report of the Leader of the Council, Finance and Governance to approve the recommended package of budget proposals (attached at Appendix 2) to enable the Council to agree the:

- General Fund (GF) Revenue Budget and Council Tax for 2024/25;
- Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget for 2024/25;
- 5 Year General Fund Capital Programme (2024/29);
- 5 Year HRA Capital Programme (2024/29);
- 3 Year General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) (2024/27); and • 5 Year HRA Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) (2024/29).

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 (attached at Appendix 3) and the requirement to prepare an annual Corporate Capital Strategy (Appendix A of the MTFS).

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

endorsed the following recommendations to proceed to Council for approval:

1. the proposed revisions to Service Revenue Budgets (Policy Changes) (Appendix E of the MTFS);
2. the sum of £27,070 be applied from Council Tax Collection Fund surpluses in reducing the Council Tax demand in 2024/25 (Table 16, Section 7.8 of the MTFS);
3. the sum of £1,151,630 be applied to Business Rates Collection Fund deficits in 2024/25 (Table 16, Section 7.8 of the MTFS);
4. that on 14 December 2023, the Cabinet calculated the Council Tax Base 2024/25 for the whole Council area as 23,479 [Item T in the formula in Section 31B(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")];
5. that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2023/24 is £4,759,193 (Appendix F and Appendix H of the MTFS);
6. the following amounts as calculated for the year 2024/25 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:
 - a. £4,759,193 being the amount 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);
 - b. £202.70 being the amount at 6 (a) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (at 4 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;

7. the Council Tax level for the Borough Council for 2024/25 of £202.70 (an increase of £5.81 (2.95%) on the 2023/24 level of £196.89) at Band D;
8. 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 £2,107.68 at Band D for 2024/25 be noted (£2,012.94 in 2023/24) (Appendix H of the MTFS);
9. the Council Tax levels at each band for 2024/25 (Appendix H of the MTFS);
10. the sum of £1,134,859 be transferred from General Fund Revenue Balances in 2024/25 (Appendix F of the MTFS);
11. the Summary General Fund Revenue Budget for 2024/25 (Appendix F of the MTFS);
12. the Provisional General Fund Budgets for 2025/26 to 2026/27, summarised at Appendix F of the MTFS, as the basis for future planning;
13. 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;
14. Cabinet be authorised to release funding from the General Contingency budget and that the release of funding for Specific Contingency items be Page 16 delegated to the Corporate Management Team in consultation with the Leader of the Council;
15. proposed HRA Expenditure level of £18,674,610 for 2024/25 (Appendix J of the MTFS);
16. rents for Council House Tenants for 2024/25 be set at an average of £107.50 (2023/24 £99.66), over a 49 week rent year (including a 7.7% increase in line with the Government's updated Rent Standard for 2024/25);
17. rents for Council House Tenants due for 53 weeks in 2024/25 be collected over 49 weeks;
18. the HRA surplus of £1,053,800 be transferred to the Housing Revenue Account Balances in 2024/25 (Table 18, Section 8.8 of the MTFS);
19. the proposed 5 year General Fund Capital Programme of £6,120,580, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the MTFS;

20. the proposed 5 year Housing Capital Programme of £45,436,220, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the MTFs;
21. 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;
22. the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, the Treasury Management Policy Statement, Minimum Revenue Provision Strategy and Annual Investment Statement 2024/25 (as detailed at Appendix 3);
23. the Prudential and Treasury Indicators and Limits for 2024/25 to 2026/27 contained within Appendix 3 to the MTFs;
24. the detailed criteria of the Investment Strategy 2024/25 contained in the Treasury Management Strategy; and
25. the Corporate Capital Strategy and associated Action Plan (as detailed at Appendix 1 of the MTFs).

(Moved by Councillor T Jay and seconded by Councillor P Thompson)

132 REVIEW OF FEES & CHARGES 2023/24

Report of the Leader of the Council, Finance and Governance to seek approval for the proposed fees and charges payable with effect from 1st April 2024.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

1. Implemented the annual inflationary increase (5%) for the fees and charges where appropriate.
2. Endorsed 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 T Jay and seconded by Councillor S Smith)

133 WRITE OFFS 1ST APRIL 2023 TO 31ST DECEMBER 2023

Report of the Leader of the Council, Finance and Governance to endorse the amount of debt written off for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st September 2023.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

Endorsed the amount of debt written off for the period of 1st April 2023 to 31st December 2023 (Appendix A-E).

(Moved by Councillor T Jay and seconded by Councillor S Smith)

134 QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT

Report of the Leader of the Council, Finance and Governance to provide Cabinet with an overview of Council performance for the third quarter of the 2023-24 financial year (October to December 2023). It reports the Council's position in relation to progress with strategic corporate plan projects and updates on the financial position, corporate risks, audits, information governance and complaints. The report was considered by Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 7th February 2024.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

Endorsed the contents of this report.

(Moved by Councillor T Jay and seconded by Councillor S Smith)

135 EMERGENCY PLANNING AND CIVIL CONTINGENCIES

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Health and Community Partnerships to set the current progress on the Council's preparedness for Emergency and Business Continuity planning, as required by Civil Contingencies legislation, regulations, and directions.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

1. Acknowledged and Supported the Emergency Planning & Business Continuity Improvement Plan – RAG rated and shown at Annex 1;
2. Endorsed the Local Government Association's 2018 Guidance document titled 'A Councillor's Guide to Civil Emergencies' when dealing with major incidents and emergencies and shown at Annex 2; and
3. Delegated authority to the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Health and Community Partnerships, in conjunction with Assistant Director Neighbourhoods, for the development of member FAQs and communications guidance on handling emergency planning situations - supporting Member seminar(s) and onward training material via the Council's MemberZone.

(Moved by Councillor S Smith and seconded by Councillor P Thompson)

136 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN 2023-2053

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning to present the updated baseline assessment and financial projections for the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) covering the 30-year period 2023/4-2053/4. A detailed financial analysis, supported externally, is shown in Annex 1 and incorporates revised budgets and assumptions.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

1. Approved the baseline and HRA investment forecast shown at Annex 1;
2. Endorsed the financial modelling at Annexes 1 and 2, evidencing that the HRA balances in the medium term. But from 2042/43, the longer-term horizon scan shows that the plan is not financially sustainable;
3. Agreed to consultation with Tenants and Leaseholders on the proposed scenarios around service efficiency to support interventions longer term to balance the HRA budget as shown at Annex 3;
4. Delegated final approval, of the detail, in the full and summary HRA Business Plan working papers to the Portfolio Holder Housing and Planning, in consultation with the Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods shown at Annex 4;
5. Approved the creation of a HRA Business & Viability Planning Project within the Social Housing Regulatory Programme to ensure oversight, scrutiny and monitoring of the consultation and progression of the service review opportunities identified;
6. Delegated Authority to the Portfolio Holder of Housing and Planning, in conjunction with the Council's S151 Officer, to write to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to set out the financial challenges and further impact of government intervention on rent setting regarding the Council's ability to invest in its stock achieving environmental ambitions particularly around decarbonisation; and
7. Endorsed continued financial support and modelling with Housing Finance Associates supporting the Council's HRA business planning, costs met from existing budgets.

(Moved by Councillor S Smith and seconded by Councillor T Clements)

137 LOCAL PLAN PROGRESSION OPTIONS

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning sought Cabinet approval of the revised approach to the delivery of a new local plan for Tamworth resulting from Government's proposed changes to the planning system, and for the publication of associated documents.

Resolved that Cabinet

1. Approved the revised approach to the development of the new local plan for Tamworth
2. Approved the publication of the updated Local Development Scheme and Statement of Community Involvement.

(Moved by Councillor S Smith and seconded by Councillor P Thompson)

Members thanked the Anna Miller, Richard Powell and the team for an in depth and informative report.

Leader