

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of Cabinet held at Thorpe Lodge, 1 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich, on Tuesday 7 February 2023 at 6.00pm.

Cabinet Members Present: Councillors: S Vincent (Chairman), T Mancini-Boyle (Vice-Chairman), J Copplestone, J Emsell, J Leggett and F Whymark.

Officers in Attendance: The Managing Director (T Holden), the Director for Resources (D Lorimer), the Director for People and Communities (J Sutterby), the Chief of Staff (Monitoring Officer) (E Hodds), the Assistant Director of Finance (R Fincham), the Assistant Director for Individuals and Families (M Pursehouse), the Capital and Treasury Accountant (D Slowther), the Housing and Benefits Manager (L Sayer), the Health and Wellbeing Partnerships Officer (A Langley) and the Democratic Services Officer (J Overy).

80 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 10 January 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

81 REVENUE BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2023/24

The Assistant Director for Finance introduced the report, which set out the proposed Revenue Budget and Council Tax for 2023/24.

Cabinet was advised that the key message for this budget was that the Government settlement had been slightly better than expected with all councils receiving an increase of at least three percent in their core spending power. Even so, this would not be enough to keep up with the inflationary pressures in areas such as staffing costs, waste collection, energy prices and temporary accommodation, which the Council faced.

However, despite these pressures the efficiencies being implemented by the Council would ensure that no draw on general fund reserves was required for a balanced budget and Council Tax could be kept at the current level of £129.91. It

was also proposed that there be no change in special expenses for street lighting for 2023/24.

In an update to the report Cabinet was advised that the final Government Settlement had been received. This had shown an increase in the Service Grant of £4,598 and a reduction in the Funding Guarantee Grant of the same amount, so overall the funding position of the Council was as set out in the report.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance noted the very difficult financial climate, but that despite this Broadland had one of the lowest levels of Council Tax in Norfolk and was the only local authority to freeze Council Tax for the last two years. She also noted the gap in the Medium-Term Financial Plan, but she remained confident that this could be addressed through efficiencies and savings. She also stated that the approach taken by Cabinet was to work on the basis of not wanting to increase Council Tax. She thanked her fellow Portfolio Holders and the Finance Team for putting together the budget and proposed the recommendations in the report with an amendment to recommendation one to take account of receipt of the finalised Local Government Finance Settlement.

The Leader concurred with this view and noted that this demonstrated how proactive the Council had been in setting strategies that placed it in such a good financial position.

Following a show of hands, it was:

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

1. The approval of the 2023/24 base budget.
2. That the Council's demand on the Collection Fund for 2023/24 for General Expenditure shall be £6,252,179, and for Special Expenditure shall be £121,962.
3. That the Band D level of Council Tax be £129.91 for General Expenditure, and £2.53 for Special Expenditure.
4. Changes to the proposed fees and charges as set out in section 5.

RESOLVED

To note:

1. The advice of the Section 151 Officer with regard to section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, contained in section 10 of this report.
2. The Medium-Term Financial Strategy projections.

Reasons for Decision

The report was a factual account.

82 CAPITAL STRATEGY AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24 TO 2027/28

The Capital and Treasury Accountant introduced the report, which detailed the Council's proposed Capital Budget for 2023/24 and the Capital Programme to 2027/28.

The Capital Programme totalled £25.3m over the next five years. Expenditure for the programme would be funded from reserves, grant funding and capital receipts. There would be no requirement to borrow to fund the programme.

Budgets included works to the waste depot, the purchase of properties for temporary accommodation and £7m for loans to fund Broadland Growth Ltd developments.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance informed the meeting that the Council was in a good position to fully fund a number of significant projects during these difficult times. In particular she looked forward to seeing projects progressed through Broadland Growth Ltd.

The Leader noted the ambitious projects scheduled in the Capital Programme, which would serve to enhance the District going forward.

Following a show of hands, it was unanimously:

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

To approve:

1. The Capital Strategy (***Appendix A in the Cabinet Agenda***); and
2. The Capital Programme for 2023/24-2027/28 (***Appendix B in the Cabinet Agenda***).

Reasons for Decision

The report was a factual account.

83 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2023/24

The Capital and Treasury Accountant introduced the report, which set out the Council's approach to the management of its borrowings, investments and cash flows.

The Strategic Statement was required to be approved annually by Council. There had been no major changes for 2023/24, but revised Treasury Management and Prudential codes published by the Chartered Institution of Public Finance and Accountancy had been incorporated for the first time.

The new codes emphasised that any authority borrowing should be for local projects, rather than for purely commercial ventures. This was not an issue for the Council, as the Council was not proposing any purely commercial ventures and no borrowing would be required to fund the Capital Programme.

Members were advised that the three key treasury management principles remained security, liquidity and yield.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance noted the increase in return on investments, which was the positive aspect of inflation and that there had been no breach of prudential indicators, no need to borrow and that the Council's investments remained ethically sound.

The Leader noted the very healthy financial position, which emphasised the strength of the Council.

Following a show of hands, it was unanimously:

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

To approve:

1. The Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2023/24;
2. The Treasury Management Policy Statement 2023/24; (***Appendix 1 in the Cabinet Agenda***)
3. The Annual Investment Strategy 2023/24; (***Appendix 2 in the Cabinet Agenda***)
4. The Treasury Management Practice (TMP1); (***Appendix 3 in the Cabinet Agenda***)
5. The Treasury Management Scheme of Delegation; (***Appendix 4 in the Cabinet Agenda***)
6. The Prudential Indicators; (***Appendix 5 in the Cabinet Agenda***)
7. The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement. (***Appendix 6 in the Cabinet Agenda***)

Reasons for decision

The report was a factual account.

84 COUNCIL TAX ASSISTANCE SCHEME 2023/24

The Housing and Benefits Manager introduced the proposed Council Tax Assistance Scheme 2023/24, which would reduce Council Tax bills to more affordable levels for low-income households.

It was explained that the Council was required by the Government to review the scheme on an annual basis. However, there were no changes proposed for 2023/24, as a comprehensive review had been undertaken last year to increase the efficiency of the assessment and future-proof the scheme in the face of the introduction of Universal Credit.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance acknowledged that there was no requirement to change the scheme at this stage and emphasised that the Council had a discretionary Hardship Fund to provide financial assistance for residents in need.

Following a show of hands, it was unanimously:

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND COUNCIL

To approve the Council Tax Assistance scheme for 2023/24.

Reasons for decision

To ensure that the Council continued to provide support to residents in need.

85 HEALTH AND WELLBEING PARTNERSHIPS FUNDING DELEGATIONS

The Health and Wellbeing Partnership Officer introduced the report, which proposed approval of delegations to accept and distribute funding for the Broadland Health and Wellbeing Partnership.

The Broadland Health and Wellbeing Partnership was part of the structure of the Integrated Care System that had been established in 2022. The Partnership was chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Housing and Planning and brought together colleagues from local government, health services, voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations and other partners, to focus on improving the health and wellbeing of residents in the District.

Norfolk County Council had provided £300,950 in Covid Recovery Funding for the Partnership. Delegation of this funding had already been given to the Director of People and Communities and the relevant Portfolio Holder, under existing COVID delegations and this money had been allocated to a number of wellbeing initiatives by the Partnership.

In addition, Adult Social Care had now allocated £82,000 of recurring funding from

the Better Care Fund to further its wellbeing objectives. However, before this money could be released authority was required to spend and allocate the funding, as intended.

A further finding stream of £204,750 across two years from Norfolk Public Health was expected for the Partnership in April 2023.

The Portfolio Holder for Communities, Housing and Planning noted how successful the Partnership had been and the importance of its work in delivering projects going forward. He also proposed amending recommendations one and two to ensure greater financial transparency by delegating authority to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, rather than the Director for People and Communities and the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Housing and Planning. He also proposed accepting the recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that regular reports be made to the Committee on the activities and spending of the Partnership.

The Managing Director emphasised that the changes to the scheme of delegation would bring the funding streams in line with the others that related to the Partnership and that the Council was only the holder of this funding pot, which was then allocated by the Partnership.

Following a show of hands, it was unanimously:

RESOLVED

1. To delegate authority to accept moneys offered to Broadland District Council by the Health and Wellbeing Partnerships to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance.
2. To delegate the spend of any Health and Wellbeing Partnership money allocated to Broadland District Council to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance.
3. Subject to regular reports on the activities and spending of the Health and Wellbeing Partnership being made to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Reasons for decision

To facilitate the receipt and allocation of funding by the Health and Wellbeing Partnership.

86 FORWARD PLAN

Cabinet noted the Forward Plan.

87 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining items of business because otherwise, information which is exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, would be disclosed to them.

88 EXEMPT MINUTES

The exempt minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 10 January 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

(The meeting concluded at 6.36pm)

Chairman