

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **Policy & Finance Committee** broadcast from the Civic Suite, Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, Notts NG24 1BY on Monday, 22 February 2021 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor D Lloyd (Chairman)
Councillor K Girling (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor R Jackson, Councillor P Peacock and Councillor R White

APOLOGIES FOR Councillor T Wendels
ABSENCE:

The meeting was held remotely, in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

197 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS AND AS TO THE PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest.

198 DECLARATIONS OF INTENTION TO RECORD THE MEETING

The Chairman advised that the proceedings were being audio recorded and live streamed by the Council.

199 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 JANUARY 2021

The minutes from the meeting held on 21 January 2021 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

200 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman presented his report beginning with details of actions taken by the Council with regard to the deadline for applying for the EU Settlement scheme before the 30 June. EU residents living and working in the UK were required to apply under the scheme, which was free, to ensure that they could remain in the UK. He advised that the Council intended to undertake targeted advertising and direct mail information to those EU citizens on the Electoral Register.

The Chairman also reported that the rate of Covid-19 cases within Newark and Sherwood was slightly higher in people of working age than it was across the rest of the County. He added that the Council were working hard to address this and referred to the walk in test centre which was now operational at the Newark Sports and Fitness Centre, and the continuing good rates of uptake of the vaccine within the District.

201 FORWARD PLAN OF POLICY & FINANCE ITEMS

The Committee noted the Forward Plan items to be considered by the Committee over the next 12 months.

202 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2021/22

The Director – Governance & Organisational Development presented a report which sought to review the content of the Pay Policy Statement for 2021/22 and subject to any necessary revisions to recommend the Statement to the Council for approval.

In accordance with Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011, Newark and Sherwood District Council were required to produce a Pay Policy Statement for 2012/13 and for each financial year thereafter.

The Pay Policy Statement must set out the authority's policies for the financial year relating to:

- the remuneration of the authority's lowest-paid employees (together with a definition of "lowest-paid employees") and the reasons for adopting that definition;
- the relationship between remuneration of Chief Officers and that of other officers (pay multiples); and
- the remuneration of Chief Officers.

The minimal changes that had been made to the Policy for this year were highlighted in the report. These changes included the addition of an Assistant Director Post and changes to reflect the transfer of housing services back into the Council. In respect of the pay claim for 2021/22, the Director – Governance & Organisational Development reported that the employers side were to consider the trade unions request following the elections to be held in May 2021.

AGREED (unanimously) that the Pay Policy Statement 2021/22 be recommended for approval by Full Council at their meeting to be held on 9 March 2021.

Reason for Decision

To ensure compliance with Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011.

203 YORKE DRIVE REGENERATION UPDATE

The Growth and Regeneration Lead Officer presented a report detailing the implications of the Council failing to secure Affordable Homes Programme grant funding from Homes England following confirmation that they were unable to support the project. The Business Manager - Financial Services confirmed that monies had been allocated for the project and included in the Capital Programme on the basis of receiving no grant funding, and the Council were also seeking alternative sources of funding for the Regeneration Project. A revised Business Plan for the project would be brought to the Policy and Finance Committee in November 2021.

Members were agreed that the announcement from Homes England was extremely disappointing, especially given the amount of work by Officers and within the local community. The Committee also considered the impact of the loss of this grant funding on the Council's 30 Year HRA Business Plan. It was noted that further modelling following the removing of this grant funding, had shown that the current HRA Capital Programme, including the future years of the development programme, remained affordable within the overall HRA Business Plan.

AGREED (unanimously) that the progression of the Yorke Drive Project, within the existing financial approvals and cost envelope, as agreed by the Policy and Finance Committee on 2 April 2020, without the inclusion of grant funding, be approved.

Reason for Decision

To ensure delivery of the Yorke Drive Regeneration Project

204 2021/22 PROPOSED GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET

The Business Manager – Financial Services presented a report which enabled Members to consider spending proposals and recommendations to the Council for the budget in 2021/2022. The budget proposals had been formulated in accordance with the framework set out in the Council's Constitution, and built on the draft budget reports which were presented to each functional committee in January 2021. The revenue budget had been prepared in accordance with the Council's budget setting strategy which had been approved by the Policy & Finance Committee on 25 June 2020.

The Local Government Finance Settlement provided key figures for Government Grant that formed part of the Council's budget. The provisional settlement was announced on 17 December 2020 with the final settlement yet to be announced.

The Business Manager – Financial Services reported that the assumed Council Tax increase within the proposed revenue budget was an increase in the Band D equivalent of 1.94%. The Committee also noted the current uncertainties around the retention of Business Rates for 2021/22.

AGREED (unanimously) that the Committee recommends to Full Council at its meeting on 9 March 2021, that:

i. the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the 2021/22 financial year, in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Localism Act 2011:

1. £47,936,380 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for items set out in Section 31A(2)(a) to (f) of the Act (the District Council's gross expenditure for 2021/22);
2. £32,055,440 being the aggregate of the amounts which the council estimates for the items set out in Section

31A(3)(a) to (d) of the Act (the District Council's gross income for 2021/22); and

3. £15,880,940 being the amount by which the aggregate at (b)(i) above exceeds the aggregate at (b)(ii) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Net Budget Requirement for the year;

ii. the figures shown as i.1. and i.3. above to be increased only by the amount of Parish Precepts for 2021/22;

iii. the budget amounts included in the report be the Council's budget for 2021/22; and

iv. the fees and charges shown in Appendices C to W be implemented with effect from 1 April 2021.

Reason for Decision

To enable the Policy & Finance Committee to make recommendations to Full Council of the amounts to be calculated in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended by the Localism Act 2011, for the purposes of setting Council Tax levels for the 2021/22 financial year.

205 2021/22 TO 2024/25 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

The Business Manager – Financial Services presented a report concerning the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2021/22-2024/25. A copy of the MTFP was attached as an appendix to the report.

The MTFP provided members and officers with a clear financial framework for delivering the Council's Community Plan objectives over the next four financial years and maintaining the Council's MTFP was an essential pre-requisite to the annual budget setting process for future years. The MTFP demonstrated that the Council was able to set a balanced budget for 2021/22, whilst being able to contribute to reserves in order to mitigate future anticipated shortfalls in funding.

AGREED (unanimously) that the 2021/22 to 2024/25 Medium Term Financial Plan be recommended for approval by the Full Council at their meeting to be held on 9 March 2021.

Reason for Decision

To provide a framework to support the Council's future spending plans.

206 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021/22 TO 2024/25

The Business Manager – Financial Services presented a report which detailed the available capital resources, the Council's existing committed Programme and the priority schemes identified. In accordance with Financial Regulations the Policy & Finance Committee was required to consider the Capital Programme and recommend

to Council the final Programme on 9 March 2021.

In respect of the general fund capital expenditure the Council intended to spend £59.639m from 2021/22 to 2024/25 on the schemes as set out in Appendix A to the report. In respect of the Housing Revenue Account expenditure the Council intended to spend £56.895m from 2021/22 to 2024/25. This was made up of £21.839m on existing property investment and £35.056m on Affordable Housing. The HRA property investment and development programme were set out in Appendix B to the report.

AGREED (with 4 votes for and 1 abstention) that the General Fund schemes set out at Appendix A to the report, and the Housing Services Scheme set out at Appendix B to the report be recommended to Full Council on 9 March 2021 as committed expenditure in the Capital Programmes for 2021/22 to 2024/25.

Reason for Decision

To enable the Capital Programme to be considered by the Policy & Finance Committee in accordance with Financial Regulation 6.2.3 prior to its submission to Council.

Meeting closed at 7.18 pm.

Chairman