

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **Policy & Finance Committee** held in the Civic Suite, Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, Notts NG24 1BY on Monday, 21 February 2022 at 6.00 pm.

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

Councillor Mrs R Holloway, Councillor R Jackson, Councillor P Peacock
and Councillor T Wendels

APOLOGIES FOR Councillor R White (Committee Member)

ABSENCE:

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

There were no declarations of interest.

312 DECLARATIONS OF INTENTION TO RECORD THE MEETING

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

313 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 JANUARY 2022

The minutes from the meeting held on 27 January 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

314 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2022/23

The Business Manager – Human Resources & Training presented a report which sought to review the content of the Pay Policy Statement for 2022/2023 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 & Sherwood District Council are 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 the year were highlighted in the report. The changes included the removal of the requirement for Directors and Business Managers to progress on the pay scale subject to performance review; the Living Wage Foundation rate increase to £9.90 per hour from 1 October; and some Business Manager posts being regraded.

It was also reported that no pay claim had been submitted by the Trades Unions for 2022/2023 but the Council had budgeted for a 2% pay increase across all grades. Furthermore, the pay negotiations for 2021/22 had still not been settled, therefore the pay scales shown were as of 1 April 2020. It was noted that the Chief Officers' Pay Negotiations had been settled at 1.5% and that the Statement would be updated prior to consideration at the Full Council on 8 March 2022.

AGREED (unanimously) that the Pay Policy Statement 2022/2023 be recommended for approval by the Full Council at their meeting to be held on 8 March 2022.

Reason for Recommendation

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

315 2022/23 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 General Fund revenue budget in 2022/2023. 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 2022. The revenue budget had been prepared in accordance with the Council's Budget Setting Strategy for 2022/23 which had been approved by the Policy & Finance Committee on 24 June 2021.

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 16 December 2021 with the final settlement being announced on 8 February 2022.

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%.

AGREED (unanimously) that the Committee recommends to Full Council at its meeting on 8 March 2022 that:

- (a) the following amounts be now calculated by the council for the 2022/23 financial year, in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Localism Act 2011:

- (i) £47,563,170 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 2022/23);
 - (ii) £32,027,260 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 2022/23); and
 - (iii) £15,535,910 being the amount by which the aggregate at (a)(i) above exceeds the aggregate at (a)(ii) above, calculated by the council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Net Budget Requirement for the year;
- (b) the figures shown as (i) and (iii) above to be increased only by the amount of Parish Precepts for 2022/23;
 - (c) the budget amounts included in the report be the Council's budget for 2022/23; and
 - (d) the fees and charges shown in Appendices E1-E21 be implemented with effect from 1 April 2022.

Reason for Recommendations

To enable the Policy & Finance Committee to make recommendations to 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 2022/23 financial year.

316 2022/23 TO 2025/26 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

The Business Manager – Financial Services presented a report concerning the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2022/23 to 2025/26. 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 showed that the Council was able to set a balanced budget for 2022/23, though would need to reduce expenditure and or increase income to pay for service delivery in future years.

AGREED (unanimously) that the Committee recommends the 2022/23 to 2025/26 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for approval by the Full Council at their meeting to be held on 8 March 2022.

Reason for Recommendation

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

317 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022/23 TO 2025/26

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 8 March 2022.

In respect of the general fund capital expenditure the Council intended to spend £74.719m from 2022/23 to 2025/26 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 £54.326m from 2022/23 to 2025/26. This was made up of £28.220m on existing property investment and £26.106m on additional Affordable Housing. The HRA property investment and development programme were set out in Appendix B to the report.

AGREED (unanimously) that the General Fund schemes set out at Appendix A to the report, and the Housing Services schemes set out at Appendix B to the report, be recommended to Full Council on 8 March 2022 as committed expenditure in the Capital Programme for 2022/23 to 2025/26.

Reason for Recommendation

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 full Council.

318 NEWARK CASTLE - CONDITION SURVEY

The Business Manager – Heritage & Culture presented a report advising Members of the results of the condition survey undertaken at Newark Castle and requesting that the schedule of work required be added to the Capital Programme for 2022/23.

The condition survey report was received in January 2022, and gave a matrix of repairs which had been RAG rated. The red items required immediate repair, amber to be placed on a five year schedule for completion by 2026, and green items which were for review post 2026. The report set out the impact the required repairs were having to the Castle's operations, what works were necessary and the costs thereof.

It was proposed to add £570,000 to the capital programme to complete the urgent repairs, to protect the legacy of the Castle, to ensure the safety of the public visiting the site and to enable the grounds and green space to remain accessible to the public. It was also proposed that the Business Manager – Heritage & Culture reviews the past ten years' repairs in conjunction with Corporate Property to assess the level of investment that had been made previously and better understand the future impact to the Council.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the inclusion of this work in the 2022/23 Capital Programme for £570,000 be approved, to be funded from borrowing; and
- (b) the Business Manager - Heritage & Culture works with the Corporate Property Team to develop a management and maintenance plan to include all amber and green items from the condition survey, with any revenue implications to be picked up as part of 2023/24 revenue budget setting.

Reason for Recommendations

To ensure the preservation of Newark Castle, ensuring that the Castle and Gardens remain safe and accessible for residents and to mitigate the risk of unforeseen emergency work as the Gatehouse Project progresses.

319 PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY AND SPORT & RECREATION FACILITIES IMPROVEMENT PLAN REVIEWS

In accordance with Section 100(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chairman agreed to take this item as a late item of business in order to ensure that the proposed budget provision of £25,000 was included within the Revenue Budget proposals for 2022/23.

The Health Improvement & Community Relations Manager presented a report which sought approval to appoint an external consultant to deliver an updated Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) and Sport & Recreation Facilities Improvement Plan (S&RFIP) through the Sport England Active Environment Framework to ensure that the Council had up to date strategy documents.

The current PPS and S&RFIP had last been reviewed and refreshed in 2017 and 2019 respectively, but due to changes to the current sport and leisure landscape locally over the last 5 years, the strategies were no longer considered to be in accordance with Sport England advice and guidance. It was noted that updated strategy document would provide a sound basis on which to develop policy and make informed decisions for sports development and investment in facilities. Such an approach would assist the Council to meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework. It would also provide a clear and strategic approach to future sports provision and investment together with providing an evidence base to support bids for external funding.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the Playing Pitch Strategy and Sport & Recreation Facilities Improvement Plans be reviewed and refreshed; and
- (b) a budget provision of £25k, to commission consultants to develop the strategies in association with the Council's project team, be approved and added to the 2022/23 budget report to be approved at Full Council on 8 March 2022.

Reason for Recommendations

To ensure that the Council has current and accurate strategy documents that it could rely on as a robust evidence base of provision of sport and recreation facilities across the District.

Meeting closed at 6.40 pm.

Chairman