

CABINET

**Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 17 February 2022
at 9.30 am in Telford Room, Third Floor, Addenbrooke House,
Ironmasters Way, Telford, TF3 4NT**

PUBLISHED ON WEDNESDAY, 23 FEBRUARY 2022

(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: MONDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 2022)

Present: Councillors R A Overton (Vice-Chair), A J Burford, E M Callear, L D Carter, R C Evans, K Middleton, S A W Reynolds, P Watling and S Davies (Chair).

Also Present: Councillors N A Dugmore (Conservative Group Leader) and W L Tomlinson (Liberal Democrats / Independent Group Leader)

Apologies: Councillor C Healy

CAB- Declarations of Interest **131**

None.

CAB- Minutes of the Previous Meeting **132**

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 January 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

CAB- Leader's Announcements **133**

For the second time in a week, the local NHS Trust had declared a critical internal incident, with more than a dozen ambulances queuing outside the hospital. The Council would do all it could to support the NHS but they had to be transparent about what was needed and the Borough's Members of Parliament had to stand up for the Borough's health services.

CAB- 2021/22 Financial Monitoring **134**

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance and Customer Services presented the report of the Director: Finance & H.R. (Chief Financial Officer).

Despite sound financial management, there had been increased costs in supporting for a number of services, including Adult Social Care and Children's Safeguarding. The projected outturn position was expected to be over budget by £1.14m at year-end, a deterioration of £0.079m. Covid-19

support funding from the government was a one off and had largely ended. In cases such as the income guarantee scheme, only a portion of the shortfalls faced by the Council, and only for part of the year, had been compensated.

The capital programme totalled £73m for 2021/22; at the time of the reports compilation, the projected spend was 88% of the budget allocation. Some slippage was anticipated as a result.

Cabinet Members and the leaders of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat groups thanked the finance team for their work.

RESOLVED – that Cabinet

- (i) Note the 2021/22 revenue budget position;**
- (ii) Note the position in relation to capital spend; and**
- (iii) Note the collection rates for NNDR, council tax and sales ledger.**

CAB- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23
135

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance and Customer Services presented the report of the Director: Finance & H.R. (Chief Financial Officer).

The report being presented was broadly the same as that presented at the 6 January 2022 meeting with the addition of an updated risk register, details of the Council's tax reduction policy, pay policy, and efficiency strategy. It was accompanied by previously agreed strategies with updated budgets and schemes of work; these included the capital strategy that set out the long-term context of decision-making, supported by detailed programme reports covering building investment and highway and transport programmes. The final part of the report included a prudential indicator report together.

Members' attention was drawn to Appendix 17. The document was a variation to the West Mercia Energy Joint Agreement that would provide more equitable distribution of surpluses. This would have a minimal impact on the Council.

Members welcomed the report and thanked staff for their hard work. The Council continued to invest in the Borough and strived to improve the lives of residents at what was a challenging time for many across the country,

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group welcomed the report and stated his Group's support for the budget. Support was noted in particular for NuPlace and the Borough's growth fund.

The Leader of the Conservative Group stated concern at the level of the Council's debt. In response, the Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance and Customer Services stated that there were a number of documents in the

report that advised on this matter, such as the prudential indicators report. The Council's borrowing had been sensible and prudent.

RESOLVED – that Cabinet

Approve the following recommendations for consideration by full Council on 3 March 2022:-

- 1. To approve the MTFS for 2022/23 – 2025/26 and the budget framework for 2022/23 set out in this suite of reports.**
- 2. To approve a 2 year freeze of the general Council Tax level.**
- 3. To apply the Government's 1% Adult Social Care Precept in 2022/23.**
- 4. To approve the investment of a further £5.16m into Adult Social Care in 2022/23 rising to £6.96m in 2023/24.**
- 5. To approve net investment of £1.31m in to Children's Safeguarding in 2022/23.**
- 6. To approve the budget savings listed in Appendix 13 totalling £5.656m in 2022/23 rising to £8.34m (after "leakage") in 2023/24.**
- 7. To approve the continuation of work with partner organisations, including Town & Parish Councils and Voluntary Sector and Community Groups to seek to identify ways to mitigate the impact of some of the cuts to services that we can no longer afford and to note the availability of the Invest to Save/Capacity Fund which is available to support partnership working.**
- 8. To approve the base budget in Appendix 6.**
- 9. To approve the use of £0.220m special fund balances for works at Castle Green Cemetery**
- 10. To approve the use of £250k from the Invest to Save/Capacity Fund to support the development of "shovel-ready" schemes to maximise the Council's ability to receive funding from national challenge funding opportunities.**
- 11. To approve the policy framework for Reserves and Balances and their planned use outlined in Appendix 9.**
- 12. To note the CFO's robustness statement in Appendix 10.**
- 13. To approve the Risk Register included at Appendix 3.**

- 14. That Cabinet endorses the Council Tax Reduction Scheme a link to which is included within Appendix 14, for adoption by Full Council on 3 March 2022, ready for implementation from 1 April 2022.**
- 15. That Cabinet approves the continuation of a Council Tax Reduction Hardship Assistance Policy within Appendix 14.**
- 16. To approve the revenue implications of the medium term capital programme for the period 2021/22 - 2025/26 set out in the Capital Strategy and Programme reports also on this agenda.**
- 17. To approve a delegation to the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Leader, to allocate the Capital Investment Fund to individual schemes and to incur associated expenditure.**
- 18. To grant delegated authority to the Director: Finance & Human Resources, after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance and Customer Service to action any virements required following the final allocation of the Dedicated Schools Grant and other Grants and following completion of NNDR1 and final estimates of Business Rates Income as long as they are within the budget and policy framework.**
- 19. To grant delegated authority to the Executive Director: Adults Social Care, Health Integration & wellbeing after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health, Integration and Transformation, to enter into appropriate Section 256 and Section 75 Agreements under the NHS Act 2006 (as amended).**
- 20. To authorise the Associate Director: Policy & Governance to execute all necessary contract documentation including the affixing of the common seal of the council as appropriate to enable the council to enter into appropriate Section 256 and Section 75 Agreements under the NHS Act 2006.**
- 21. To approve this suite of MTFs reports as the Council's Efficiency Strategy for 2022/23, including the document at Appendix 16, to enable new capital receipts generated in the three year period starting 1 April 2022 to be used to fund the revenue costs of reform as assumed throughout these reports.**
- 22. To note the initial projections for the potential budget gap through to 2025/26 and to start work in order to identify options for how this could potentially be bridged.**
- 23. To approve that once all final outstanding grant allocations are received, authority to amend the use of balances in 2022/23 to accommodate any difference in funding between that currently assumed and the final grant allocations be delegated to the**

Director: Finance & H.R. after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance & Customer Services.

- 24. To approve the Pay Policy for 2022/23 included as Appendix 15**
- 25. To approve the proposals for a revised formulae for the distribution to member authorities of any accumulated surplus of the WME Joint Committee set out in Appendix 17.**
- 26. Delegation of authority to the Director: Finance & HR after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance & Customer Service, to make changes to the Service & Financial Planning Strategy with immediate effect to reflect all grants received from Government, including that in respect of the “£150 council tax energy rebate for properties in council tax bands A to D”, and any associated spend.**
- 27. To approve the additional recommendations contained in the other reports included in this suite of Medium Term Financial Strategy reports included on this agenda.**

CAB-136 Donnington & Muxton Neighbourhood Development Plan – Proceed to Making the NDP

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Enforcement and Transport presented the report of the Director: Housing, Employment & Infrastructure.

The Council was proactive in supporting Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP) and six had been adopted to date. Following the success of the local referendum on 27 January 2022, the Donnington & Muxton NDP would become the seventh to be adopted.

The Leader of the Conservative Group welcomed the progress towards adoption.

RESOLVED – that Cabinet

- (i) Agree to make the Donnington & Muxton Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan.**
- (ii) Authorise the Director: Housing, Employment & Infrastructure to exercise all of the Council’s relevant powers and duties and undertake all necessary procedural arrangements relating to the making of the Donnington & Muxton Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan.**

CAB-137 Council Plan 2022/23 to 2025/26

The Leader of the Council presented the report of the Chief Executive.

The report underpinned the work presented in the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 report and set out the Council's vision for the Borough.

The Council had the lowest tax in the Midlands; it had protected green spaces through the Green Guarantee scheme, and would protect more spaces with the creation of further local nature reserves. The Authority provided outstanding children's services and it would continue to work to ensure Council services were as good as they could be.

NuPlace properties were home to over 1,000 residents, making it the largest private sector landlord in Telford & Wrekin. NuPlace provided a home for life, ensured tenants could trust their landlord, and increased the standards of private rented accommodation across the Borough.

A number of other successful projects were noted such as regeneration projects on the Borough's high streets, the construction of factory units through the Property and Regeneration Fund, and highway maintenance.

Members stated their pride in the work of the Council, their ambition to deliver for residents, and their desire to make Telford and Wrekin a place to be proud of.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group welcomed the plan, stating particular support for the environmental aspects therein.

RESOLVED – that Cabinet approve the refreshed Council Plan 2022/23 to 2025/26.

The meeting ended at 10.27 am

Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices

Anthea Lowe
Associate Director: Policy & Governance
Date: **Wednesday, 23 FEBRUARY 2022**

Signed

Date: Thursday, 17 March 2022