

EXECUTIVE

15 FEBRUARY 2023

PRESENT

Leader of the Council (Councillor Tom Ross), in the Chair.

Councillor C. Hynes	Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Children's Services
Councillor S. Adshead	Executive Member for Environmental Services / Labour Group Secretary
Councillor K.G. Carter	Executive Member for Adult Social Care
Councillor J. Harding	Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Strategic Partnerships
Councillor E. Patel	Executive Member for Economy and Regeneration
Councillor J. Slater	Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing and Equalities
Councillor A.J. Williams	Executive Member for Climate Change and Transport Strategy
Councillor J.A. Wright	Executive Member for Housing and Neighbourhoods

Also present: Councillors Acton, Blackburn, Chalkin, Jerrome, Morgan, Newgrosh, and Whetton.

Officers In attendance

Sara Todd	Chief Executive
Graeme Bentley	Director of Finance and Systems
Dominique Sykes	Director of Legal and Governance
Dave Muggerridge	Head of Financial Management
Alexander Murray	Governance Officer

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors New and Wright.

71. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

72. LAND SALES PROGRAMME

The Executive Member for Economy and Regeneration introduced the report that was part of the annual Finance work. The report contained the strategic Land review programme, and the Committee were reminded that there was a related report within Part II of the meeting which contained additional details. The report listed disposal notifications some of which would be known to the Committee as they had been on the list in previous years.

Following the introduction Councillor Whetton asked about the Jubilee Centre as the local community association had raised concerns about the lack of consultation regarding the possibility of building a replacement community centre. The Executive Member for Economy and Regeneration thanked Councillor Whetton for his question and agreed to discuss the topic with him after the meeting.

Councillor Blackburn asked whether a time frame for consultation could be given for one of the items in Table 2 of the report. In response to Councillor Blackburn the Executive Member for Economy and Regeneration said she would provide the details after the meeting.

Councillor Jerrome welcomed the progress on the Stokoe site and asked if a timeline for planning proposal could be shared. The Executive Member for Economy and regeneration agreed to share the information after the meeting. Following the questions, the Executive Member for Economy and Regeneration moved the recommendations of the report, which were seconded by the Leader, and approved.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the outcome of the 2022/23 Land Sales Programme Disposals be noted.
- 2) That the Disposal Programme for 2023/24 as set out in the report be approved and the sites that have been earmarked for disposal / development be noted.
- 3) That authority be delegated to the Corporate Director of Place to:
 - a) negotiate and accept bids in consultation with the Director of Finance and Systems and Corporate Director for Governance and Community Strategy for all sites listed on the Land Review Programme.
 - b) engage external resources where this will assist in implementing the programme, including a professional team where reasonably required to support a development project.
 - c) Commission, submit and/or authorise as appropriate:
 - i) any applications for planning permission on any properties included in the programme where this will assist in marketing and/or add value, or in any case where the Council is proposing to redevelop the site whether directly or in partnership with another party.
 - ii) any surveys/investigations where such surveys will reduce the risks associated with redevelopment, add value to the

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- capital receipt /revenue return and/or assist with the preparation, submission and resolution of any planning permission application, or any other usual pre-development survey or investigation.
- iii) any feasibility study or design for the site and or premises in association with either obtaining a planning consent or as part of options appraisal
- iv) any demolitions or physical alterations that will either reduce the risks associated with holding the premises or accelerate the sale/redevelopment and/or add value to the capital receipt/revenue return.
- d) offset eligible disposal costs against capital receipts in accordance with capital regulations.
- e) advertise the intention to dispose of a site in the event that it comprises open space as defined by the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, in Page 2 of 10 accordance with the relevant statutory procedure, and if any objections are received, to refer to the relevant portfolio holder for consideration in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment and Regulatory Services.
- f) acquire adjacent land or property where the acquisition will either add value to the overall development or de-risk the disposal/development of the Council asset.
- g) in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration and the Director of Finance and Systems, to add or substitute sites into the programme during the year including sites with a value of over £499,999.
- h) Transfer sites from Category 1 to Category 2, and vice versa.
- i) commission security services.
- j) authorise alternative methods of disposal where appropriate.
- k) authorise community engagement and consultations where the Corporate Director deems it necessary or advantageous.
- l) In relation to any site currently in development or any site which commences development during this programme, agree any licence or approve the grant of any easement or lease or any other disposal, including where that disposal taken in isolation would constitute a disposal at undervalue, which is designed or intended to implement or facilitate the development.
- m) In relation to the Brown Street and former Sale Magistrates sites, authorise a marketing, pricing and disposal strategy and authorise the sale of plots, either individually or in blocks, including where the anticipated or actual capital receipt exceeds £499,999.
- 4) That the Director of Legal and Governance in consultation with the Corporate Director of Place and, where appropriate, the Director for Finance and Systems, be authorised to finalise and enter into all legal agreements required to implement the above decisions.

73. EXECUTIVE'S FINAL REVENUE BUDGET PROPOSALS 2023/24 AND MTFS 2025/26 - 2026/27

The Leader introduced the report and reminded those in attendance that it was for approval of the Executives recommendations to Council and there would be opportunity for detailed discussion during the following budget Council meeting.

The Executive Member for Economy and Regeneration welcomed the budget proposals and spoke of her experience in taking part in the budget process and thanked Officers for their work and support in preparing the budget.

The Leader then moved the recommendations, and they were approved.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That it be recommend to Council that it:-
 - a) Approves the 2023/24 net Revenue Budget of £209.38m.
 - b) Approves the 2024/25 to 2025/26 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) including the income and savings proposals.
 - c) Notes the continued arrangements in relation to an enhanced Finance and Change Programme and the role of the Finance and Change Board who will continue to work with the Executive on the development of sustainable budget plans to support the Council in meeting the financial challenges from 2024/25 onwards
 - d) Approves the calculation of the Council Tax Requirement as summarised in Section 8.1 and set out in the Formal Council Tax Resolution in Annex J (any update for changes in Mayoral Police and Crime Commissioner or Mayoral General (incl. Fire Services) Precepts, if any, will be tabled at the Council Meeting);
 - e) Approves the proposal to increase Council Tax by 4.99% in 2023/24:
 - a. 2.99% general increase in the 'relevant basic amount' in 2023/24, and
 - b. 2.0% for the 'Adult Social Care' precept in 2023/24.
 - f) Notes the assumptions in the MTFS to increase Council Tax by
 - a. An increase in the 'relevant basic amount' of 2.99% in 2024/25 and 1.99% 2025/26, and
 - b. for the 'Adult Social Care' precept in 2% in 2024/25 and 1% in 2025/26.
 - g) Approves the planned application of earmarked reserves as detailed in Section 6.

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- h) Approves the Fees and Charges for 2023/24 and those relating to Registration of Births, Death & Marriages and Allotments also shown for 2024/25, as set out in the Fees & Charges booklet.
- i) Delegates authority jointly to each Corporate Director in consultation with the Council's Director of Finance and Systems to amend fees and charges which are within their respective delegated powers during 2023/24 in the event of any change in VAT rate, as appropriate.
- j) Delegates authority jointly to each Corporate Director in consultation with the Council's Director of Finance and Systems to amend fees and charges during 2023/24 which are within their respective delegated powers where the economics of the charge levels have changed (e.g. costs have risen unexpectedly), or for commercial reasons.
- k) Approves the virement of £100k from the Neighbourhood Grants budget for a period of two financial years to allow financial support towards the continuation of the Community Hubs.
- l) Approves the proposal to maintain the minimum level of General Reserve for 2023/24 at £9.5m (Section 6.8).
- m) Approves the Capital Strategy, Prudential and Local Indicators and overall level of the Capital Programme and Asset Investment Fund of £388.42m (as detailed in the Capital Strategy, Capital Programme & Prudential Indicators 2023/26) of which £200.58m relates to 2023/24; including the proposal in relation to £7.95m of new prudential borrowing related to the Leisure Strategy of £3.5m and £4.45m to support Local Authority Housing Fund.
- n) Approves the Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24 to 2025/26, including the Debt Strategy (Section 4), the updated policy on Minimum Revenue Provision (Section 5) the Treasury Investment Strategy (Section 6) and the Prudential Indicators, including the Authorised Limit (as required by Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2003, Operational Boundary, Minimum Revenue Provision and investment criteria as set out in Appendix 2 of the report.
- o) Approves the flexible use of capital receipts of up to £1.70m over the two years 2023 to 2025 to support the cost of the Modernisation Team in developing the Council's Finance and Change Programme.

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- p) Approves the proposed distribution of Dedicated Schools Grant as recommended by the School Funding Forum and Executive as summarised in Section 7 and detailed in Annex I.
 - q) Due to the late publication of the Public Health Grant allocations, delegates authority to the Director of Finance and Systems to vary the net Revenue Budget for any changes in the assumed level of this grant.
 - r) Delegate authority to the Director of Finance and Systems in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and Governance to administer the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Fund (EBSSAF) scheme as announced in December 2022. Guidance is yet to be released, and costs will be fully funded by a section 31 grant.
 - s) Approves the declaration to be made of the Council's intention to charge up to 100% premium on second homes with effect from 1st April 2024 and to bring forward the time period under which a premium can be charged on empty properties from two years to one year. The declaration must be done 12 months prior to commencement as laid out in the draft Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill and is subject to its formal approval.
- 2) That it be confirmed that in recommending approval of the above, the Executive has taken into consideration:
- a) The objective assessment by the Director of Finance and Systems of the robustness of budget estimates and adequacy of the financial reserves (Section 1 and 6).
 - b) The Executive's response to the Scrutiny Committee's recommendations to the budget proposals as included in a separate report on the agenda.
 - c) The Council's Public Sector Equality duty.
 - d) The results of the consultation on the budget proposals where required.
 - e) The changes to the Council Tax Support Fund 2023/24 as detailed in a separate report to the Executive on 23 January 2023.
- 3) That, in addition, it be recommended that Council notes the following:

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- a) The approval on 17 January 2023 under delegated powers by the Director of Finance and Systems of the Council Tax Base for 2023/24 at 78,464 Band D equivalents.
- b) The estimated Council Tax surplus for 2022/23 has been calculated at £0.473m, sufficient to release £0.385m to support the Council's budget plans and a distribution of £0.061m and £0.027m representing the respective shares of the Mayoral Police and Crime Commissioner Precept and Mayoral General Precept (including Fire Services).
- c) The base budget assumptions as set out in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as detailed in Annex A.
- d) The budget gap for the two years 2024/25, £6.95m and 2025/26, £10.13m.
- e) That the Capital Programme for 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26 is to be set at an indicative £200.58m, £132.39m and £55.45m respectively (indicative at this stage as a number of capital grants are not yet known).
- f) That the Council Tax figures included in the report for the Mayoral Police and Crime Commissioner Precept and Mayoral General Precept (including Fire Services) are the recommended provisional amounts pending their formal approval.

74. CAPITAL STRATEGY, ASSET INVESTMENT STRATEGIC, CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND PRUDENTIAL AND LOCAL INDICATORS 2023 - 2026

The Leader introduced the report and reminded those in attendance that it was for approval of the Executives recommendations to Council and there would be opportunity for detailed discussion during the following budget Council meeting.

Councillor Chalkin thanked the Executive for finding money within the budget for surfacing Hale Road and repairs in Stamford Park.

The Leader then moved the recommendations, and they were approved.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Capital Programme as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report be approved.
- 2) That the schemes to be undertaken from the "block" budget allocations reported in paragraph 21 and detailed Appendix 4 of the report be approved.
- 3) That it be recommended that Council approve:
 - the Capital Strategy included in Appendix 1 to the report;
 - the overall Capital Programme in the sum of £417.38m for the period 2022/25, comprising £187.23m in respect of the General Capital Programme and £230.15m for the Investment Fund and

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- additional prudential borrowing of £50.52m as detailed in paragraph 12 of the report.
- the Prudential and Local Indicators as set out at Appendix 3 of the report.
- the Asset Investment Strategy included in Appendix 5 of the report.
- the flexible use of capital receipts of up to £0.27m to support the cost of the Modernisation Team in developing the Council's Finance and Change Programme.
- the flexible use of capital receipts strategy as detailed in paragraph 16 of the report.

75. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2023/24 - 2025/26

The Leader introduced the report and reminded those in attendance that it was for approval of the Executives recommendations to Council and there would be opportunity for detailed discussion during the following budget Council meeting.

Opportunity was provided for Executive Members and others in attendance to ask questions or make comment, but nothing was raised.

The Leader then moved the recommendations, and they were approved.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and it be recommended that Council approves;

The Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26 including the:

- policy on debt strategy as set out in section 4;
- the updated policy on Minimum Revenue Provision in section 5;
- Investment Strategy as set out in section 6;
- Prudential Indicators and limits including the Authorised Limit (as required by section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2003), Operational Boundary, Minimum Revenue Provision Statement and Investment criteria as detailed in Appendix 3.

76. FEES AND CHARGES 2023/24

The Leader introduced the report and reminded those in attendance that it was for approval of the Executives recommendations to Council and there would be opportunity for detailed discussion during the following budget Council meeting.

Opportunity was provided for Executive Members and others in attendance to ask questions or make comment, but nothing was raised.

The Leader then moved the recommendations, and they were approved.

RESOLVED: That it be recommended to Council that it approves the Following:

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- The Fees and Charges for 2023/24 and those relating to Registration of Births, Death & Marriages and Allotments also shown for 2024/25, as set out in the booklet available on the Council's website;
- The joint delegation of authority to each Corporate Director and the Director of Finance and Systems to amend fees and charges which are within their respective delegated powers during 2023/24 in the event of any change in the rate of VAT, as appropriate;
- The joint delegation of authority to each Corporate Director and the Director of Finance and Systems to amend fees and charges during 2023/24 which are within their respective delegated powers where the economics of the charge levels have changed (e.g. costs have risen unexpectedly), or for commercial reasons.

77. EXECUTIVE'S RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2023/24

The Leader welcomed the Budget Scrutiny report and Scrutiny Members involvement in the budget process. The Leader noted that there were good recommendations submitted by Scrutiny and that the Executive's response addressed each one with the majority having been agreed and some having been completed.

Councillor Acton welcomed the response from the Executive and noted the amount of monitoring required by all three Scrutiny Committee's to ensure the budget was delivered as agreed.

RESOLVED: That the Executive's response to the Scrutiny Committee be approved.

78. EXCLUSION RESOLUTION

RESOLVED - That the public be excluded from this meeting during consideration of the remaining items on the agenda, because of the likelihood of disclosure of "exempt information" which falls within one or more descriptive category or categories of the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, as amended by The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 and specified on the agenda item or report relating to each such item respectively.

79. LAND SALES PROGRAMME

The Executive Member for Economy and Regeneration introduced the Part II report and explained why it was being considered in Part II.

Following the introduction Councillor Chalkin raised a question about two of the developments. The Executive Member for Economy and Regeneration and the Director of Finance and Systems gave a brief response to Councillor Chalkin. The Executive Member for Economy and Regeneration also stated that she would provide Councillor Chalkin with additional details after the meeting.

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Councillor Blackburn asked about one of the developments and received a response from the Executive Member for Economy and Regeneration about the plans for the site.

Councillor Whetton requested clarification of details covered within the Part II report. The Executive Member for Economy and regeneration offered to meet with Councillor Whetton to discuss the development.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the outcome of the 2022/23 Land Sales Programme Disposals be noted.
- 2) That the Disposal Programme for 2023/24 as set out in the report be approved and the sites that have been earmarked for disposal / development be noted.
- 3) That authority be delegated to the Corporate Director of Place to:
 - n) negotiate and accept bids in consultation with the Director of Finance and Systems and Corporate Director for Governance and Community Strategy for all sites listed on the Land Review Programme.
 - o) engage external resources where this will assist in implementing the programme, including a professional team where reasonably required to support a development project.
 - p) Commission, submit and/or authorise as appropriate:
 - i) any applications for planning permission on any properties included in the programme where this will assist in marketing and/or add value, or in any case where the Council is proposing to redevelop the site whether directly or in partnership with another party.
 - ii) any surveys/investigations where such surveys will reduce the risks associated with redevelopment, add value to the capital receipt/revenue return and/or assist with the preparation, submission and resolution of any planning permission application, or any other usual pre-development survey or investigation.
 - iii) any feasibility study or design for the site and or premises in association with either obtaining a planning consent or as part of options appraisal
 - iv) any demolitions or physical alterations that will either reduce the risks associated with holding the premises or accelerate the sale/redevelopment and/or add value to the capital receipt/revenue return.
 - q) offset eligible disposal costs against capital receipts in accordance with capital regulations.
 - r) advertise the intention to dispose of a site in the event that it comprises open space as defined by the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, in Page 2 of 10 accordance with the relevant statutory procedure, and if any objections are received, to refer to the relevant portfolio holder for consideration in

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- consultation with the Executive Member for Environment and Regulatory Services.
- s) acquire adjacent land or property where the acquisition will either add value to the overall development or de-risk the disposal/development of the Council asset.
 - t) in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration and the Director of Finance and Systems, to add or substitute sites into the programme during the year including sites with a value of over £499,999.
 - u) Transfer sites from Category 1 to Category 2, and vice versa.
 - v) commission security services.
 - w) authorise alternative methods of disposal where appropriate.
 - x) authorise community engagement and consultations where the Corporate Director deems it necessary or advantageous.
 - y) In relation to any site currently in development or any site which commences development during this programme, agree any licence or approve the grant of any easement or lease or any other disposal, including where that disposal taken in isolation would constitute a disposal at undervalue, which is designed or intended to implement or facilitate the development.
 - z) In relation to the Brown Street and former Sale Magistrates sites, authorise a marketing, pricing and disposal strategy and authorise the sale of plots, either individually or in blocks, including where the anticipated or actual capital receipt exceeds £499,999.
- 4) That the Director of Legal and Governance in consultation with the Corporate Director of Place and, where appropriate, the Director for Finance and Systems, be authorised to finalise and enter into all legal agreements required to implement the above decisions.

The meeting commenced at 6.00 p.m., and finished at 6.19 p.m.