

## **BUDGET EXECUTIVE – VIRTUAL MEETING**

**17 FEBRUARY 2021**

### **EXECUTIVE MEMBERS PARTICIPATING**

Leader of the Council (Councillor A. Western)(in the Chair),  
Executive Member for Children’s Services (Councillor C. Hynes),  
Executive Member for Adult Social Care (Councillor J. Harding),  
Executive Member for Communities and Partnerships (Councillor G. Whitham),  
Executive Member for Covid-19 Recovery and Reform (Councillor M. Freeman),  
Executive Member for Culture and Leisure (Councillor E. Patel),  
Executive Member for Environmental and Regulatory Services (Councillor S. Adshead),  
Executive Member for Finance and Governance (Councillor T. Ross),  
Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Equalities (Councillor J. Slater),  
Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration (Councillor J. Wright).

Also virtually participating: Councillors Acton, Akinola, Barclay, Blackburn, Boyes, Brotherton, Carter, Coggins, Evans, Holden, Jerrome, Lamb, Lloyd, Mitchell, Myers, K. Procter, S. Procter, Rigby, Thomas (part only), Thompson, D. Western (part only) and Young.

#### Officers virtually in attendance:

Chief Executive (Ms. S. Todd),  
Corporate Director, Place (Mr. R. Roe),  
Corporate Director, Finance and Systems (Ms. N. Bishop),  
Corporate Director, Governance and Community Strategy (Ms. J. Le Fevre),  
Corporate Director, People (Ms. S. Saleh),  
Corporate Director, Children’s Services (Ms. J. McGregor),  
Director of Finance (Mr. G. Bentley),  
Governance Officer (Mr. J.M.J. Maloney).

### **25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations were made by Executive Members.

### **26. EXECUTIVE’S BUDGET PROPOSALS 2021/22 AND RELATED ISSUES**

The Executive considered a range of reports, as set out in the following Minutes, relating to the Council’s proposed budget for 2021/22 and related issues.

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## 27. EXECUTIVE'S REVENUE BUDGET PROPOSALS 2021/22 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS) 2022/23 - 2023/24

The Executive Member for Finance and Governance and the Director of Finance and Systems submitted a report which sets out the Executive's updated 3 year budget strategy proposals and detailed revenue budget proposals for 2021/22 and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the period 2022/23 - 2023/24. In connection with those proposals, the report noted the factors which had been taken into account in developing them, and set out recommendations to Council accordingly.

### RESOLVED - That it be recommended to Council that it:-

- a) Approves the 2021/22 net Revenue Budget of £179.30m.
- b) Approves the 2022/23 to 2023/24 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) including the income and savings proposals.
- c) 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 to the report (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);
- d) Approves the proposal to increase Council Tax by 4.99% in 2021/22:
  - o 1.99% general increase in the 'relevant basic amount' in 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24, and
  - o 3% for the 'Adult Social Care' precept in 2021/22.
- e) Approves the continuation of the Council Tax Hardship scheme and awards all existing working age Council Tax Support (CTS) recipients registered as at 31st March 2021 – a discretionary Hardship award equivalent to the value of their 21/22 liability;
- f) Approves the treatment of all new, post 31st March 2021, claims for CTS in accordance with the existing CTS scheme, as the vast majority of recipients will receive 100% support, and ensures direct information and advice for further discretionary support is detailed in notification letters;
- g) Approves the planned application of earmarked reserves as detailed in Section 6 of the report.
- h) Approves the Fees and Charges for 2021/22 and those relating to Registration of Births, Death & Marriages and Allotments also shown for 2022/23, 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 2021/22 in the event of any change in VAT rate, as appropriate.

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- 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 2021/22 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 proposal to increase the minimum level of General Reserve for 2021/22 at £8.0m, an increase of £1m from 2020/21 (Section 6.6 of the report).
- l) Approves the Capital Strategy, Prudential and Local Indicators and overall level of the Capital Programme and Asset Investment Fund of £415.40m (as detailed in the Capital Strategy, Capital Programme & Prudential Indicators 2021/24) of which £184.37m relates to 2021/22; including the proposal in relation to £10.0m of new prudential borrowing.
- m) Approves the Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22 to 2023/24, including the debt strategy (Section 3 of the report), the Treasury Investment Strategy (Section 5 of the report) 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 3 of the report.
- n) Approves the proposed distribution of Dedicated Schools Grant as recommended by the School Funding Forum and Executive as summarised in Section 7 of the report and detailed in Annex I.
- o) Due to the late publication of the Final Local Government Finance Settlement, Council delegates authority to the Council's designated S151 officer to vary the level of Budget Support Reserve needed to balance the 2021/22 revenue budget in the event of any change at final settlement.

**and confirmed that in recommending approval of the above, the Executive has taken into consideration :**

- p) The objective assessment by the Director of Finance and Systems of the robustness of budget estimates and adequacy of the financial reserves (Section 6 of the report and Annex H).
- q) The Executive's response to the Scrutiny Committee's recommendations to the budget proposals as included in a separate report on the agenda.
- r) The Council's Public Sector Equality duty.
- s) The results of the consultation on the budget proposals where required.

**In addition, that it be recommended that Council note the following :**

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- t) The approval on 6 January 2021 under delegated powers by the Corporate Director of Finance and Systems of the Council Tax Base for 2021/22 at 75,816 Band D equivalents.
- u) The estimated Council Tax deficit for 2020/21 has been calculated at £4.06m and will be collected over the three years 2021/2022 to 2023/24 in line with the updated legislation to assist in the management of COVID-19 related pressures. Contributions towards the deficit will be made by the Mayoral Police and Crime Commissioner Precept and Mayoral General Precept (including Fire Services) in proportion to their 2021/22 precepts.
- v) The base budget assumptions as set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as detailed in Annex A to the report.
- w) The budget gap for the two years 2022/23, £11.12m and 2023/24, £10.30m.
- x) The recurrent budget gap caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to continue into 2022/23 and is estimated that £7.1m will be met from reserves.
- y) That the Capital Programme for 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24 is to be set at an indicative £184.37m, £144.13m and £86.90m respectively (indicative at this stage as a number of capital grants are not yet known).
- z) 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.

## **28. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2021/22 - 2023/24**

The Executive Member for Finance and Governance and the Corporate Director of Finance and Systems submitted a report which outlined the key aspects of the proposed Treasury Management Strategy for 2021/22 – 2023/4, including with respect to the investments and borrowing strategy, outlook for interest rates, management of associated risks, policy to be adopted on Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) and Prudential Indicators.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted and that it be recommended that Council approve:

- the Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22 – 2023/24 including the:
- policy on debt strategy as set out in section 3 of the report;
- investment strategy as set out in section 5 of the report;
- 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 to the report.

*Executive (17.2.21)***29. CAPITAL STRATEGY, ASSET INVESTMENT STRATEGY, CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND PRUDENTIAL & LOCAL INDICATORS 2021/24**

The Executive Member for Finance and Governance and the Director of Finance and Systems submitted a report which highlighted the Council's investment plans for the next three years taking into account the estimated resources to be made available from Government as well as the Council's own resources, and which consisted of the Capital Strategy, General Capital Programme, Asset Investment Strategy, Prudential and Local Indicators and Details of Block Budget Allocations.

RESOLVED -

(1) That the following be approved:

- Capital Programme as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report;
- Schemes to be undertaken from the "block" budget allocations reported in paragraph 21 and detailed Appendix 4 to the report. In respect of the Highway Structural Maintenance Programme, that the Executive delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Place in consultation with the Executive Member for Environmental and Regulatory Services to amend the Programme in the event of any changes in overall levels of funding.

(2) 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 £415.40m for the period 2021/24, comprising £170.84m in respect of the General Capital Programme and £244.56m for the Investment Fund
- additional prudential borrowing of £10.00m to support the general capital programme, as detailed in Paragraph 11 of the report; and
- the prudential and local indicators set out at Appendix 3 to the report.

**30. STRATEGIC LAND REVIEW PROGRAMME 2021-2024 - PART I**

The Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration and the Corporate Director for Place submitted a report which advised Members of the outcome of the 2020/21 Land Sales Programme, proposed a Strategic Land Review Programme for the disposal of land and buildings during the financial year 2021/22, and sought the necessary delegations. It also advised as to proposals for 2022/23 and 2023/24. It was noted that a related report was to be considered in Part II of the agenda.

RESOLVED -

(1) That the outcome of the 2020/21 Land Sales Programmes be noted.

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- (2) That the Strategic Land Review Programme for 2021/22 (and further) as set out in the report be approved.
- (3) That authority be delegated to the Corporate Director 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, including any bid which would result in a capital receipt of £500,000 or more.
  - 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 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 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, Air Quality and Climate Change.
  - 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. add to or substitute sites into the programme during the year, including any site where the anticipated capital receipt would be £500,000 or more.
  - 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

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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 £499,000.

- (4) That the Corporate Director of Governance and Community Strategy in consultation with the Corporate Director 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.

### **31. FEES, CHARGES & ALLOWANCES 2021/22**

The Executive Member for Finance and Governance and the Director of Finance and Systems submitted a report which summarised the salient features of the annual review and pricing of the Council's main fees and charges, which were now recommended to Council, along with appropriate delegation arrangements covering potential in-year amendments, where appropriate.

RESOLVED - That Council be recommended to approve the following:

- The Fees and Charges for 2021/22 and those relating to Registration of Births, Death & Marriages and Allotments also shown for 2022/23, as set out in the booklet available on the Council's web site;
- That approval be delegated jointly to each Corporate Director with the Director of Finance and Systems to amend fees and charges which are within their respective delegated powers during 2021/22 in the event of any change in the rate of VAT, as appropriate;
- That approval be delegated jointly to each Corporate Director with the Director of Finance and Systems to amend fees and charges during 2021/22 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.

### **32. EXECUTIVE'S RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2021/22**

The Executive Member for Finance and Governance and the Corporate Director of Finance and Systems submitted a report which contained a detailed response to each of the points raised by the Scrutiny Committee in its report presented to the Executive at its meeting on the 25 January 2021.

RESOLVED - That the Executive's response to the Scrutiny Committee, as set out in the report, be approved.

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### **33. BUDGET 2021/22 - CONSULTATION PROCESS AND FEEDBACK**

The Executive Member for Finance and Governance submitted a report which set out the approach taken to the budget consultation for 2021/22 and provided a summary of the feedback received through the various consultation methods employed. It was noted that the outcomes had been drawn upon in developing the current budget proposals.

RESOLVED – That the content of the report be noted.

### **34. 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.

### **35. STRATEGIC LAND REVIEW PROGRAMME 2021-2024 - PART II**

The Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration and the Corporate Director for Place submitted a report which set out confidential aspects of the Council’s proposed Strategic Land Review Programme. A related report had been considered in Part I of the agenda. (All relevant resolutions relating to this matter are set out in the relevant Minute above.)

The meeting commenced at 6.00 p.m. and finished at 6.15 p.m.