

PRESENT: Councillor Scullion (Chair)

Councillors: T Swift MBE, Courtney, Dacre, Fenton-Glynn, Lynn, Patient and Wilkinson

88 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

(The meeting closed at 16:16).

89 ADMISSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the stated paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, namely:-

Housing Accelerator Fund: Acceptance of Funding from West Yorkshire Combined Authority – Paragraph 3 – Financial or Business Affairs

Housing Energy Retrofit Demonstrator Project – Paragraph 3 – Financial or Business Affairs

90 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11TH DECEMBER 2023

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 11th December 2023, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

91 QUESTION TIME

The Leader, Councillor Scullion, invited members of the public and Councillors to ask questions of the Leader and of the other Cabinet Members. An oral response would, if possible, be provided at the meeting, but if this was not possible a written response would be provided to the questioner within 7 working days. The full details of questions asked, and answers provided would also be published on the Council's website.

- (a) A question was asked by Mr Ed Greenwood regarding out-of-date Councillor information on the Council's website.

The Leader, Councillor Scullion responded and advised that the anomalies were the result of a transition between software applications. The Leader thanked Mr Greenwood for his question and asked that in future to contact Democratic Services if there were any issues.

- (b) A question was asked by Councillor Prashad in relation to the work being carried out at Northbridge Leisure Centre.

The Leader, Councillor Scullion responded and advised that a written response would be provided to the question.

- (c) A question was asked by Councillor Leigh MBE regarding a recent request to Central Government for additional funding.

The Leader, Councillor Scullion responded and advised that a written response would be provided to the question.

- (d) A question was asked by Councillor Dickenson in relation to an allegation of antisemitism with the Labour Party in Calderdale.

The Leader, Councillor Scullion responded and advised that a written response would be provided to the question.

92 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM SCRUTINY BOARDS

No reports were received from Scrutiny Boards.

93 LEEDS CITY REGION BUSINESS RATES POOL 2024/25

Councillor Dacre, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources presented a written report of the Director, Resources and Transformation which advised that since the introduction of the Business Rates Retention system in 2013/14, Calderdale had been a member of the Region's Business Rates Pool and sought consideration of the proposals for 2024/25 along with the associated governance arrangements. Cabinet's approval was required to ratify the decision to enter the Regional Pool.

Although much reduced due to the Government's recent policy change on pilots, and more recently the impact of the pandemic and economic conditions on business rates more generally, pooling was still expected to result in increased funding for the region. Risks around safety nets were highlighted within the report, but it was felt that the reward expected from the Pool outweighed the risks to the Council. It was therefore recommended that Members ratify Calderdale's inclusion in the Leeds City Region Business Rates Pool in 2024/25.

The report outlined background information, options considered, financial, legal, human resources and organisational development, environmental, health and economic implications.

RESOLVED that Calderdale Council's participation in the Leeds City Region Business Rates Pool in 2024/25 be confirmed.

94 CALCULATION OF THE COUNCIL TAX BASE 2024/25

Councillor Dacre, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources presented a written report of the Director, Resources and Transformation which sought consideration and approval of the calculation of the Council's Tax Base for the tax year 2024/2025. In order to determine the amount of Council Tax to levy for 2024/2025 financial year, it was necessary for each Local Authority to calculate its Tax Base (number of Band D equivalent properties in its area) so that when the Council's Budget was fixed at Budget Council (for Calderdale this was 26th February

2024) the amount to levy on each property band in each area was readily known. Members were also being asked to consider whether the Council should reduce the threshold at which empty homes premium was levied from 2 years to 1 year and increase the amount levied on properties empty for more than 10 years from 200% to 300% from 2024/25 onwards.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as amended, Members are asked to approve the various Tax Bases which will apply to the Calderdale MBC area for 2024/25 in connection with Council Tax.

The report outlined background information, options considered, financial, legal, human resources and organisational development, environmental, health and economic implications.

During discussions Members welcomed the report and highlighted the importance of the reduction of the Empty Homes Premium from 2 to 1 years, and the introduction of a 100% premium for second homes from 2025/26. Members hoped that these introductions would encourage people to use the houses in their ownership and reduce the number of empty homes within Calderdale. It was noted that the number of empty homes had reduced in recent years in Calderdale and it was hoped the introduction of the premium for second homes would continue the trend and make more houses become available in the local housing market.

RESOLVED that:

(a) a reduction in the threshold at which empty homes premium was levied from 2 years to 1 year and increase the amount levied on properties empty for more than 10 years from 200% to 300% from 2024/25 onwards be approved;

(b) the introduction of a 100% premium for Second Homes from financial year 2025/26 be approved; and

(c) the calculation of the Council's Tax Base for the year 2024/25 and in accordance with the Local Authorities (calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as amended, the amount calculated by Calderdale MBC as its Council Tax Base for the year 2024/25 be:-

That part of Calderdale for which there is no Parish Council	49,689.78
Blackshaw Parish Council	372.24
Erringden Parish Council	66.35
Hebden Royd Town Council	3,304.83
Heptonstall Parish Council	557.65
Ripponden Parish Council	2,951.82
Stainland & District Town Council	1,557.32
Todmorden Town Council	4,946.88
Wadsworth Parish Council	570.84
The whole of Calderdale	64,017.71

95 REVENUE BUDGET FORECAST (REVISED MTFP POSITION)/CABINET BUDGET PROPOSALS 2024/25 TO 2026/27 FOR CONSULTATION

The Leader, Councillor Scullion, presented the draft Cabinet Budget Proposals for Consultation 2024/25 to 2026/27. The report provided an update on the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2024-2027 which confirmed the latest spending power for 2024/25 following publication of the draft Local Government Finance Settlement on 18 December 2023. Based upon the spending power, the report sets out the proposed budget for 2024/25 and provisional budgets for 2025/26 and 2026/27 for consultation.

The Leader advised that the Council was legally required to set a balanced budget before the start of each new financial year and the report set out Cabinet's draft budget proposals for 2024/25, and provisional budgets for 2025/26 and 2026/27 to consult with key stakeholders in advance of submitting a final revenue budget to Council on 26 February 2024.

The Leader advised that Cabinet was presenting their budget proposals in a tough climate for Local Government. The expectation on Local Authorities to maintain a wide range of important services and functions for local residents and communities, at the same time as demand for specialist and crisis interventions for the most vulnerable continued to increase makes the allocation of limited funds ever more challenging. The Council was currently spending 70% of the Council's budget on adults and children's social care.

Costs were spiralling for Councils and over the last thirteen years central government funding for basic services had failed to meet the cost of inflation, rising wages and energy bills. Cabinet had tried to do 'more with less' over that time but this was unsustainable. Inevitably the Council would have to look at reducing services or cutting services that were not legally required to provide. Like all Councils Calderdale must by law provide certain services such as social care and refuse collection, many other services were important, but optional. Cabinet had no choice but to make some tough decisions.

The Leader explained that Cabinet was determined to set a legal budget and to make the books balance. Councils were required to produce a balanced budget and if they did not the power to make local decisions could be taken away by the Government and Cabinet want the decisions on how money was spent in Calderdale to be made in Calderdale.

The Leader advised that Cabinet aimed to:

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- Make the budget balance and keep decision-making local
- Meet our legal, statutory obligations
- Mitigate inequality as much as possible
- Be ambitious for Calderdale
- Enhance quality of life
- Keep our residents safe
- Protect services where possible
- Keep our focus on tackling climate change

- Bring investment into the borough
- Be honest about what we can and cannot do

The report outlined background information on a robust and balanced budget, supporting social care, targeted help for those who need it, ambitious for the future, climate change, Council Tax increases and the social care levy and the importance to seek the public's view.

Four weeks of consultation on the proposals would begin following the Cabinet meeting.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the revised position presented in the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2024-27 at Annex A of the report, be noted;
- (b) the budget proposals be approved for consultation; and
- (c) Cabinet considered feedback from the consultation when determining the revenue budget for 2024/25 and provisional budgets for 2025/26 and 2026/27 it be recommended to Budget Council on 26 February 2024, at its meeting on 12 February 2024.

96 GARDEN COMMUNITIES MASTERPLAN SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS AND DESIGN CODE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS

The Leader, Councillor Scullion presented a written report of the Director, Regeneration and Strategy seeking consideration of the Garden Communities Masterplan Supplementary Planning Documents and Design Code Supplementary Planning Documents. The report provided the outcomes of the consultation and requested Cabinet to recommend to Council that the Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) be adopted. The Local Plan was adopted on 22nd March 2023 by Council and a suite of SPDs were in preparation and would be brought to Cabinet in due course. The two Garden Communities sites were a key element of the Local Plan's housing delivery.

To ensure that both sites delivered high quality development, both were to be supported by a Masterplan SPD and associated Design Code SPD. Therefore, there were four SPDs in total. Delivery of the two Garden Communities would contribute to the achievement of the Council's Vision 2024 by delivering two distinctive Garden Communities. The Garden Communities Masterplan SPDs and Design Code SPDs set out a detailed Masterplan and design framework that was fundamental to all three of the Council's Corporate priorities to 'Tackle the Climate Emergency', 'Reduce Inequalities' and 'Create Strong, Thriving Towns'.

The concept of a 'Garden Community' had its roots in the 'Garden City Movement' of the early 1900s. Engrained in Britain's urban development history, Garden Cities represented principles of good physical planning, quality architecture, plentiful open space, and inclusive community involvement and self-management. The principle of allocating the two Garden Community sites was subject to an extensive consultation process through the preparation of the Local Plan and further scrutiny through the Local Plan Examination in Public. The report provided a summary of the consultation

on the draft SPDs and sought approval for the final versions of the SPDs to be submitted to Council with a recommendation for their adoption.

The report outlined background information, options considered, financial, legal, human resources and organisational development, environmental, health and economic implications.

During discussions Members welcomed the report and encouraged residents to review the design guides. Members commented on the detail within the report, the intent and ambition of the designs and how these communities would look in terms of integration of nature, how people moved around the communities, the focus on education provisions and the different types of housing needed to build sustainable communities for the residents of the Borough. Members commented that the Local Plan enabled the Council to produce these types of documents to enable the development of quality of housing for Calderdale.

***RESOLVED that it be recommended to Council that:**

(a) the comments received during the consultation alongside officer responses (as set out in the consultation statements, Appendices 5,6,7 and 8 of the Director, Regeneration and Strategy's written report) and revised Supplementary Planning Documents be noted; and

(b) the following Supplementary Planning Documents be adopted:

- **Thornhills Garden Community Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (Appendix 1 of the Director, Regeneration and Strategy's written report).**
- **Thornhills Garden Community Design Code Supplementary Planning Document (Appendix 2 of the Director, Regeneration and Strategy's written report).**
- **Woodhouse Garden Community Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (Appendix 3 of the Director, Regeneration and Strategy's written report).**
- **Woodhouse Garden Community Design Code Supplementary Planning Document (Appendix 4 of the Director, Regeneration and Strategy's written report).**

97 REVIEW OF DISCRETIONARY AND LOCALLY SET PLANNING RELATED FEES

The Leader, Councillor Scullion presented a written report of the Director, Regeneration and Strategy which set out an updated approach to fees that were set locally for discretionary planning related services that were provided to customers. The report covered:

- Increased fees for pre-application planning advice to developers and agents.

- Introduction of fees for pre-application planning advice on proposals affecting Listed Buildings.
- Introduction of fees for a proposed enhanced Listed Building Consent Service.
- Introduction of fees to recover our costs providing informal advice on the implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain.
- Increase fees for the Council's Postal Addressing Service.

Effective pre-application advice supported the Council's priorities to reduce inequality; deliver strong and thriving towns and places; and respond to the climate emergency, for example through the delivery of affordable and sustainable new homes. The quality of Calderdale's built heritage and natural environment made important contributions to its distinctiveness and quality as a place to live, work and visit. Improving our conservation of built heritage and implementing Biodiversity Net Gain were therefore important objectives. To secure the effective delivery of the Planning Service, it required to be on a sustainable financial footing. The proposals set out in this report should therefore be seen in the context of the wider programme of improvements to Planning related processes at Calderdale, following budget investment in 2022/23 and 2023/24. The new and revised fees set out in the report below were exclusive of VAT where it was applicable.

The report outlined background information, options considered, financial, legal, human resources and organisational development, environmental, health and economic implications.

***RESOLVED that it be recommended to Council that the:**

(a) fees set out in Appendix 1 of the Director, Regeneration and Strategy's written report be implemented from 1st March 2024; and

(b) Corporate Lead, Planning be given delegated authority to make any minor corrections to the text in Appendix 1 of the Director, Regeneration and Strategy's written report before it was published.

98 PROPOSED REVISION TO THE ADOPTED POLICIES MAP

The Leader, Councillor Scullion presented a written report of the Director, Regeneration and Strategy which outlined a proposed revision to the Adopted Policies Map and the legal and regulatory framework within which it was considered that a revision to the Policies Map could be prepared and lawfully and properly adopted by a Cabinet decision. The Local Plan was adopted on 22 March 2023, and was accompanied by the Policies Map which provided a geographical illustration of the policies in the Local Plan. The Policies Map was last updated in March 2023 following the Inspector's Report on the Examination of the Calderdale Local Plan on 26 January 2023. It showed the location of allocations and designations to provide clarity and efficiency in terms of which Local Plan policies applied in which location.

Between March 2022 and November 2023, there had been the designation of 18 Local Wildlife Sites by the West Yorkshire Local Sites Partnership. These were designations which were made outside of the Plan-making process. These

designations did not currently appear on the Policies Map and it therefore needed to be updated to incorporate them. The proposed changes to the Policies Map were necessary to the effectiveness of Policy GN3 of the Local Plan.

Since the adoption of the Local Plan, there had been the new conservation area designation of the West Vale Conservation Area approved by Cabinet on 7 August 2023. The Policies Map needed to be revised to show the boundary of the West Vale Conservation Area. It had also become apparent that there was an error with the category given to Shibden Park which was shown on the Policies Map as a 'locally important' historic park, rather than a 'nationally important' historic park. To comply with the relevant legislation and ensure that the relevant Local Plan policies were effective, it was considered that these changes to the Policies Map were necessary.

The report outlined background information, options considered, financial, legal, human resources and organisational development, environmental, health and economic implications.

RESOLVED that the:

(a) reasons which had prompted the need for a revision of the Policies Map, the legal and regulatory framework that enabled a revised Policies Map to be prepared be noted; and

(b) revised Policies Map as shown in the extract maps in Appendix 3 and 4 of the Director, Regeneration and Strategy's written report be adopted.

99 WAVE 5 SKILLS BOOTCAMP – 01/04/2024 TO 31/03/2025 - ACCEPTING A GRANT FROM THE WEST YORKSHIRE COMBINED AUTHORITIES

Councillor Dacre, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources presented a written report of the Director, Regeneration and Strategy which sought approval to accept funds from West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) Wave 5 Skills Bootcamp 2024/25 to directly deliver and commission a programme of activity. Cabinet approval was sought to formally accept £450,000 Skills Bootcamp resources which was being granted to support Calderdale's work to up-skill residents in skills and sectors that were in demand within the labour market. Cabinet were also asked to consider the focus of the funds, and delegate authority to the Director of Regeneration and Strategy for the finalisation of a programme of activity. The resources outlined in the report presented a significant opportunity to support the delivery of Vision 2024 and the delivery of the Council's three corporate priorities. They would impact across the borough and build capacity for developing further projects and programmes.

Councillor Dacre advised that the Skills Bootcamps programme would address specific local skills needs. Skills Bootcamps would secure benefits for residents aged 19 and over by giving them access to in-demand skills training and a guaranteed interview for a more sustainable, higher-skilled job and higher wages over time. The benefits for employers included helping them fill specific skills shortage vacancies, enabling them to become more productive more quickly. The programme would also offer innovative delivery methods, blending the acquisition of specialist skills with more holistic wrap-around support and Careers Information, Advice and Guidance which would meet the needs of individuals and businesses in Calderdale.

Councillor Dacre explained that from the potential sectors that were eligible for Bootcamp support, four had been identified to fit closely with opportunities in the Calderdale labour market:

- Construction
- Engineering and Manufacturing
- Creative and Design
- Early Years and Childcare

The report outlined background information, options considered, financial, legal, human resources and organisational development, environmental, health and economic implications.

During discussions Members shared their frustration around having yearly funding which the Council had to commission and obtain approval from Cabinet to receive, this was an inefficient way of running a training programme and that longer term funding was needed.

Members welcomed the report and funding to help upskill people within Calderdale. Members noted that it worked well with the Council's Inclusive Economy Strategy, and for towns to thrive they needed people with skills to help build them.

RESOLVED that:

(a) the approach to the use of £450,000 Skills Bootcamp funding for Calderdale be endorsed;

(b) acceptance of the Skills Bootcamp grant funding be approved; and

(c) the Assistant Director, Economy, Housing, and Investment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Regeneration and Strategy (for Employment and Skills) be given delegated authority to approve the terms upon which the grant awards were accepted and develop and implement an approach to support delivery of activity, including via organisations embedded in local employment and skills networks.

100 HOUSING ACCELERATOR FUND: ACCEPTANCE OF FUNDING FROM WEST YORKSHIRE COMBINED AUTHORITY EXEMPT

Councillor Patient, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Climate Change, Active Travel and Housing presented a written report of the Director, Regeneration and Strategy which sought approval to accept £786,065 of grant funding from the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) through the Housing Accelerator Fund. Cabinet approval was required to accept £786,065 of grant funding available through the Housing Accelerator Fund, administered by WYCA, to support the delivery of a pipeline of housing projects. Cabinet approval was also required to agree the general principles of how this money might be spent, and to authorise the delegation of authority to the Director, Regeneration and Strategy for the confirmation of final detail and receipt of any further funds through the Housing Accelerator Fund. Housing Accelerator Funds would significantly improve the Council's ability to deliver housing

projects that were crucial to meeting housing needs set out in the Housing Strategy, Local Plan and Housing Delivery Plan.

The report outlined background information, options considered, financial, legal, human resources and organisational development, environmental, health and economic implications.

RESOLVED that the:

(a) acceptance of £786,065 from West Yorkshire Combined Authority through the Housing Accelerator Fund be approved; and

(b) Director, Regeneration and Strategy be given delegated authority to confirm the final detail of the projects to be funded and receipt of any further funds.

101 HOUSING ENERGY RETROFIT DEMONSTRATOR PROJECT EXEMPT

Councillor Patient, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Climate Change, Active Travel and Housing presented a written report of the Director, Regeneration and Strategy which sought funding for a Housing Energy Retrofit Demonstrator Project from the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) to offer a demonstrator project that would provide whole of house energy efficiency improvements to up to 30 pre-1919 solid wall stone homes, typical of the main housing type throughout Calderdale. The proposed scheme would test various principles of targeted energy efficiency retrofit works, which would be required to be delivered at scale and pace over the next fifteen years as part of the Council's work on the Climate Emergency and the Climate Action Plan. This plan aimed to improve a minimum of 69,000 homes to energy efficiency rating C by 2038, at a current average of 5,000 homes per year. The proposed project would make the recipients' homes warmer, healthier, and cheaper to heat, also contributing to the Council's key priorities of reducing inequalities and building strong and resilient towns and places.

The proposed funding received WYCA committee endorsement on 7 December 2023, with a Grant Funding Agreement needed by February 2024. The scheme would need to be completed by March 2025 to maximise potential additional match funding opportunities. The proposed scheme would bring £1.09m into the borough to carry on the Council's work to develop and bring forward energy efficiency retrofit schemes that would improve affordable warmth, reduce future energy costs, lower carbon emissions, and contribute towards the ambition to be Net Zero by 2038.

The report outlined background information, options considered, financial, legal, human resources and organisational development, environmental, health and economic implications.

During discussions Members welcomed and supported the report. Members noted that Calderdale was the first Local Authority in West Yorkshire to undertake such a project and that there had been a lot of interest from neighbouring authorities. Member commented that it was important to not only look at how energy was produced, but how it was used. It was hoped that the project would be a blue print that could be used in other areas of the Borough.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) Subject to approval of the grant by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and the completion of the Funding Agreement, receipt of the £1.09m grant from WYCA's Better Homes Hub programme to deliver the proposed energy efficiency retrofit street demonstrator and incorporate the scheme into the Council's overall Capital Programme be approved.
- (b) the proposed target street for the project be approved;
- (c) the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be given delegated authority for the signing of the Grant Funding Agreement in February;
- (d) the Director, Regeneration and Strategy in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Climate Action, Active Travel and Housing and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be given delegated authority for the decisions on any future changes to the proposed project and target street; and
- (e) low interest repayment loans or interest free equity loans may be granted in relation to the scheme and the Director, Regeneration and Strategy in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Climate Action, Active Travel and Housing and the Director, Resources and Transformation for future decisions on loan finance for owner occupiers and private landlords participating in the proposed scheme.