

CABINET, Monday, 14th February, 2022

PRESENT: Councillor T Swift MBE (Chair)

Councillors: Scullion, Courtney, Dacre, Fenton-Glynn, Lynn and Patient

90 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Wilkinson and it was noted that Councillor Courtney was acting as Interim Cabinet Member with responsibility for Children and Young People's Services in his absence.

(The meeting closed at 18:55).

91 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17TH JANUARY 2022 TO BE AGREED AS A CORRECT RECORD AND SIGNED BY THE CHAIR.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 17th January 2022, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

92 QUESTION TIME

There were no questions asked by members of the public or Councillors.

93 CALDERDALE CARES PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Councillor Fenton-Glynn, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Adult Services and Wellbeing presented a written report of the Director, Adult Services and Wellbeing to share the Calderdale Cares Partnership Agreement (the Agreement), which sets out the ways in which health and care partners in Calderdale were committing to work together for the benefit of Calderdale's population. Signatory partners, including the Council, were being asked to approve the Agreement and to recommend that the Agreement was finalised and shared with the Health and Wellbeing Board for ratification. The Agreement, though not binding, sets out how the Council was agreeing to continue working with other health and care organisations in Calderdale for the benefit of Calderdale's population. Though not binding, approval of the Agreement signified partners' commitment to continue working in collaboration with the other partners.

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

The Leader noted that there could be some changes once the final guidance on the Health Care Bill was published. It was also advised that consideration would also be given to how the West Yorkshire and Harrogate Health Partnership was developing considering there was representation from the Clinical Commissioning Group on the Health and Wellbeing Board.

RESOLVED that:

(a) the contents of the Calderdale Cares Partnership Agreement be approved; and

(b) the Calderdale Cares Partnership Agreement be finalised and shared with the Health and Wellbeing Board for ratification.

94 'PROBLEM DEBT' - A REVIEW BY THE STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY BOARD

The Leader, Councillor T Swift MBE invited Councillor Ashley Evans to present a written report of the Strategy and Performance Scrutiny Board which outlined the findings and recommendations of the detailed review on “problem debt” which had been undertaken by the Strategy and Performance Scrutiny Board. Under Rule 15 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules at Part 4 of the Constitution, Cabinet was required to consider reports from Scrutiny Boards. At Full Council on 21st July 2021, there was a motion and two amendments submitted, from which the following decision was made:

‘The motion by cross party agreement was withdrawn to facilitate a review on Pay Day Loans by Members of the Strategy and Performance Scrutiny Board and a report of their findings and recommendations to be submitted a future meeting of Cabinet for consideration’.

It was recommended by the Strategy and Performance Scrutiny Board that this review be taken forward, with the wider remit of ‘problem debt’ to ensure the work encompassed all key issues and that recommendations would be made based on these findings. A review group was established including five members of the Strategy and Performance Board, and one co-opted Member, who submitted the original motion. The report set out 8 recommendations for consideration.

Councillor Evans thanked all of the Members of the Review Group for their contribution to the report and explained to Members the findings of the review which were detailed within the report. Councillor Evans advised that the Review Group were surprised to find that Council Tax arrears was a major contributor to problem debt.

Councillor Evans commended the recommendations to Cabinet and asked that an update be provided to the Strategy and Performance Scrutiny Board in the summer of how the recommendations had been implemented.

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

During discussions Members expressed their appreciation to Members of the Strategy and Performance Scrutiny Board and everyone involved in the review and urged residents to contact the Council if they were struggling to pay their Council Tax. Members advised that early intervention was important, as was partnership working to help those most vulnerable within the community.

Councillor Lynn, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Public Services and Communities advised that some of the recommendations were already being put into practice and explained that two members of staff had been reassigned to work solely

with residents in relation to Council Tax arrears and were there to provide support, advice and guidance to them.

Councillor Leigh MBE attended the meeting and addressed Cabinet and advised that he had been a founding member of the Review Group and commended the report to Cabinet. He echoed Councillor Evans' comments of the surprise that Council Tax debt was a contributor to problem debt.

RESOLVED that:

(a) Cabinet receive the report and would respond in detail in relation to the 8 recommendations set out in Section 3 of the report; and

(b) an update would be provided to a meeting of the Strategy and Performance Scrutiny Board later in the the year.

95 'A' BOARDS POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Councillor Scullion, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Regeneration and Strategy presented a written report of the Directors, Public Services and Regeneration and Strategy which provided the outcome of a "call in" by the Adults, Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board relating to Cabinet's earlier approval of a Borough wide A Boards policy. The report focused on A Boards because they were not "fixed" in the same way that other types of street furniture may be which may present a greater danger/obstacle to people of all abilities. In October 2021, Cabinet approved a trial A Board policy which provided for a minimum 1.8m free passage adjacent to all A Boards. In the event, that decision was "called in" by the Adults, Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board who subsequently agreed the following:

- (a) members of the public and Officers be thanked for attending and contributing to the discussion;
- (b) the willingness of Cabinet Members to review the policy on 'A' Boards is welcomed; and
- (c) in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 21(f) of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules the decision taken at Cabinet on 4th October 2021 in relation to Minute Number 41 be referred back to Cabinet to review the draft 'A' Board Policy, and that consideration be given to the views expressed by members of the public and the Adults, Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board within the meeting.

The report described the need for a suitable A Board policy in order to ensure that the Council meets its statutory duties.

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

During discussions Members commended the report and agreed it was the right approach to take time and look at the detail within the Policy for a number of reasons

which included other policies that were being adopted by the Council including the Green and Health Streets Policy, and to consult with the public, businesses and The Accessible Calderdale Disability Access Forum.

Members noted that due to pandemic many businesses had utilised outside spaces to allow for social distances and confirmed that it was important a balance was found to support residents and businesses within Calderdale.

RESOLVED that:

(a) following the call in by the Adults, Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board and in light of elements “b” and “c” above, Officers be requested to consult more widely with all interested parties and reformulate proposals for an A Board policy which was, in the original paper due to be, in the first instance, piloted in Hebden Bridge;

(b) the reformulated proposals after consultation with the groups described be delegated to the Directors, Public Services and Regeneration and Strategy in consultation with the Cabinet Members with responsibility for Public Services and Communities and Regeneration and Strategy, in order to reduce further delay for the initial pilot testing of this policy be approved; and

(c) the Directors, Public Services and Regeneration and Strategy be requested to report back to Cabinet on the measures adopted.

96 WORKPLACE, OFFICE ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY

Councillor Scullion, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Regeneration and Strategy presented a written report of the Director, Regeneration and Strategy which provided a brief update on the progress to date with the Workplace Office Accommodation Strategy (WOAS) and identified required changes to the current agreed position in response to ongoing business continuity and forward business planning activity. The position agreed at the August 2020 Cabinet meeting required adjustment in response to the changes proposed to support the ongoing and forward resilience of critical council services, and therefore required a Cabinet decision.

The Workplace Office Accommodation Strategy, now in year 2 of the planned 7-year programme of work, was progressing well and within the approved financial envelope. It was an organisation-wide change programme delivered through three key enablers, People, Assets and Systems. The strategy was designed to be flexible and responsive to changing needs, to complement identified service requirements and forward resilience as part of the Council’s Covid-19 recovery plan.

Councillor Scullion explained that the key part of the report was about the retention of the premises of Horton Street to accommodate the needs of social care work staff for them to provide a resilient service to the community and to support each other in their work practices.

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

Councillor Lynn, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Public Services and Communities supported the recommendation and drew Member's attention to paragraph 9.5 of the report which provided information on the Horton Street premises providing a fit for purpose single front door service to enable customer contact. Councillor Lynn advised that the use of the Council's online reporting service had increased throughout the pandemic and understood that there would always be a need for face-to-face communication.

RESOLVED that:

(a) in response to the service-specific issues set out in the Director, Regeneration and Strategy's written report, particularly focusing on: services to vulnerable children, young people and their families; and vulnerable residents requiring direct access to council services, Horton Street be retained and reconfigured within the existing scope and approved financial envelope of the programme, and that forward lease arrangements be reviewed and negotiated at the appropriate time;

(b) the Director, Regeneration and Strategy, Head of Finance and Head of Legal and Democratic Services be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Regeneration and Strategy for the detailed arrangements for the design and delivery of the works required and transition arrangements; and

(c) the former Council Office space at Threeways be taken forward in the context of a whole-site solution as part of a wider strategic plan for North Halifax, as agreed by Cabinet in January.

97 CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING - 2021/22 TO 2023/24

Councillor Dacre, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources presented a written report of the Head of Finance that provided details of the forecast Capital Programme for the period 2021/22 to 2023/24 and an update on the delivery of schemes in the Capital Programme. Cabinet approval was required to increase the overall Capital Programme to £172.117 million as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report, to allow for the latest forecast expenditure in relation to Highways, West Yorkshire Plus Transport Fund (WY+TF), Schools, Future High Street and Brighthouse Investment Plan during the next 3 years. It was currently forecast that there would be a surplus in funding of £2.203m for the period.

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

RESOLVED that the:

(a) Capital Programme of £172.117 million detailed in Appendix 1 and 2 of the Head of Finance's written report be approved; and

(b) report be referred to the Strategy and Performance Scrutiny Board for consideration.

98 REVENUE MONITORING 2021/22 OVERALL POSITION

Councillor Dacre, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources presented a written report of the Head of Finance advising of the final overall revenue monitoring position for 2021/22, the forecast service and centrally controlled variances of the various Directorates and the estimated impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. After using reserves and any proposed management action, Directorates were reporting the following forecast positions on their service-controlled budgets: -

- Adults and Wellbeing Services – £196k service underspend. This was an improvement of £795k from the second monitor.
- Chief Executive's Office – £208k service underspend, an improvement of £172k from the second monitor.
- Children and Young People's Services - £1,998k service overspend. This projected overspend had increased by £1m since the second monitor.
- Public Services – £4.893m overspend with £4.648m of this being due to Covid-19. A forecast service overspend of £245k. This is an improvement of £355k from the second monitor.
- Regeneration and Strategy – £783k overspend with £377k due to Covid-19. A forecast service overspend of £406K representing an improvement of £94k from the second monitor.

The table in the report showed net service controlled overspends of £8.689m. Of this, £5.025m was estimated to be the effect of Covid-19, leaving a net service pressure of £3.664m. Directors were pursuing additional measures they could take to reduce this figure to £2.245m by the year end. However, two Directorates (Adults and Wellbeing, and Chief Executive's) were projecting in year underspends of £404k and would be allowed to carry forward their underspends to help address budget pressures next year. This means that the service overspend to be addressed in year rises to £2.649m. This was the total projected overspending by Children and Young People's Services, Public Services and Regeneration and Strategy. Underspensing on centrally controlled budgets and extra central grant funding were forecast to reduce this by £1.5m to £1.137m. This was the level of overspending which, if it cannot be contained in the remainder of the current year, would be met from the £1.1m contingency budget for social care in line with the financial strategy approved by Cabinet in November.

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

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the current budget position and proposed funding approach be noted;
- (b) Directorates continue taking action to manage budgets in year; and

(c) the Strategy and Performance Scrutiny Board be requested to consider what additional information they might require to allow them to scrutinise any areas in more detail.

99A GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET MTFS FORECAST - UPDATE

Councillor Dacre, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources presented a written report of the Head of Finance that provided an updated position following the publication of the consultation budget to determine whether Cabinet wished to amend its budget recommendations.

Cabinet received a revenue budget report at its meeting on the 17th January which set out the expected financial position of the Council over the next 3 years. This standstill position was the starting point of the budget process. The report highlighted the key points of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2022/23, the estimated standstill budgets for 2022/23 to 2024/25 and the level of savings required in each of those years based on certain assumptions. The report also highlighted the level of General Fund Balances which would be available over that period to ensure that they remain above the minimum recommended level.

The standstill budget, however, only provided a snapshot of the Council's agreed expenditure budgets and expected funding levels at a point in time. It is therefore necessary to update this position to take account of further information that has become available in the meantime in order to inform Cabinet's final budget recommendations to Council.

The final Local Government Finance Settlement for 2022/23 announced on 7 February 2022 improved the overall position of Calderdale compared to the provisional announcement in December by £328k. The Head of Finance advised that this improvement was used to meet, in part, the additional cost pressures mentioned in the report.

The report also provided information about the council tax energy rebate which had been announced by Government.

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

RESOLVED that:

(a) the changes identified in the report were considered and noted in conjunction with their final recommendations on the level of revenue budget and Council Tax for 2022/23 to Budget Council; and

(b) delegated authority be given to the Head of Finance in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources to agree and implement a scheme which meets the requirements of the Government's Council Tax energy rebate and discretionary support measures as highlighted in the report.

99B CABINET BUDGET PROPOSALS

The Leader, Councillor T Swift MBE presented a written report of the Scrutiny Boards incorporating comments from Place, Adults Health and Social Care, Children and Young People's Scrutiny Boards and Strategy and Performance on the Budget proposals.

There were no formal recommendations made by the Scrutiny Boards in relation to the Cabinet Budget Proposals for 2022/23, however Members requested that the observations made by Scrutiny Boards were taken into account by Cabinet when they prepared a revised budget proposal to present to Council.

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

RESOLVED that the observations submitted by Scrutiny Boards in response to the budget proposals from Cabinet be noted for 2022/23 when Cabinet reviewed their budget proposals after the consultation period had ended.

99C CABINET BUDGET CONSULTATION 2022/23

The Leader, Councillor T Swift MBE presented a written report which summarised the feedback received from the budget consultation. Each year when Cabinet published its draft budget the Council opened a period of budget consultation. This year the draft budget was published on Monday 17th January 2022 and responses were considered at the meeting, with any further comments provided to Cabinet for full Council on Monday 28th February, where final decisions would be taken. Additional funding for Local Government had been announced by the Chancellor for 2022/23, though no guarantees about the government funding beyond that time.

RESOLVED that:

(a) the comments made by the public, during the budget consultation period be taken into account in the budget decision making process; and

(b) any comments received up until the Budget Council on 28th February 2022 would be passed on to Cabinet.

99D CABINET BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

The Leader, Councillor T Swift MBE, presented a written report on the Cabinet Budget Proposals outlining the planned budgeted expenditure for the Council. Cabinet were bringing forward these budget proposals in unprecedented times.

With no guarantees about government funding beyond April 2023, and continuing uncertainty, this meant that Cabinet had focussed on the steps needed to deliver a balanced and robust budget for 2022/23. This was an essential step in positioning the Council to give support to our communities as it moved to recover from the impact of the pandemic.

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The report provided background information on a robust and balanced budget, supporting social care, targeted help for those who need it, keeping Calderdale safe, ambitions for the future, Climate Change, Council Tax increases and responses received during the budget consultation.

***RESOLVED** that having considered the update on the revenue budget forecast and the responses to consultations on the proposals adopted by Cabinet on 17th January 2022 for consultation purposes, the Council on 28th February 2022 be recommended to approve a Total Net Revenue Budget Requirement of £177,733,516 (after the use of £88,500 of balances) for the financial year 2022/23 based on the budget proposals now submitted and set out within the report.

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