

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the CIVIC SUITE, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN on Thursday, 10 February 2022

PRESENT: Councillor R Fuller – Chairman.

Councillors S Bywater, J A Gray, D N Keane, J Neish and K I Prentice.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs M L Beuttell, S J Criswell and J M Palmer (Cabinet Assistant).

52 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20th January 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

53 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

54 FINAL 2022/23 REVENUE BUDGET AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (2023/24 TO 2026/27); INCLUDING THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME

By means of a report by the Chief Finance Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were provided with details of the Final Budget 2022/23 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 to 2026/27 which included the Capital Programme.

In conjunction with the Chief Finance Officer and the Executive Councillor for Strategic Finance, a presentation was delivered by the Managing Director summarising the budget proposals for 2022/23 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy. In doing so, it was reported that the budget setting process began facing a significant deficit of £3.9m but that owing to a number of factors such as the recasting of income figures and the more favourable December settlement together with the identification of further efficiencies and routine underspends, a balanced budget was now being presented for consideration. The Managing Director then went on to explain how the budget had evolved between July 2021 to February 2022 and outlined the assumptions which had been made in relation to Council Tax, capital receipts, the general reserve, annual pay increases and inflation, the New Homes Bonus and the national living wage.

The Chief Finance Officer then went on to explain the challenges which lied ahead with regards to the Medium Term Financial Strategy up to 2026/27. The Cabinet noted that the proposed budget comprised three elements, namely the cost of services, funding from grants and tax and income from traded services. Having been acquainted with the options being explored to deliver a balanced

budget, the Executive Councillor for Strategic Finance concluded the presentation by informing the Cabinet that a surplus budget had been achieved without introducing any service cuts based on realistic and tested forecasts.

Having expressed their appreciation to the Chief Finance Officer, Service Managers and staff for their efforts on producing a comprehensive budget and in noting the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth), it was

RESOLVED

that Council be recommended to approve:

- a) the overall Final Budget 2022/23 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 to 2026/27 (as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report now submitted, which includes the Revenue Budget at Section 2 and the Capital Programme at Section 3); and
- b) the “Plan on a Page” (as outlined in Appendix 2 of the report now submitted).

55 2022/23 TREASURY MANAGEMENT, CAPITAL AND INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

Consideration was given to a report by the Chief Finance Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) seeking approval of the Treasury Management Strategy, Capital Strategy, Investment Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Statement and Flexible Use of Capital Receipts. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Council be recommended to approve:

- a) the Treasury Management Strategy (as attached as Appendix 1 of the report now submitted);
- b) the Capital Strategy (as attached as Appendix 2 of the report now submitted);
- c) the Investment Strategy (as attached as Appendix 3 of the report now submitted);
- d) the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement (as attached as Appendix 4 of the report now submitted); and
- e) the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy (as attached as Appendix 5 of the report now submitted).

56 A428 BLACK CAT TO CAXTON GIBBET IMPROVEMENTS SCHEME DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER POSITION REVIEW

With the aid of a report by the Strategic Growth Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet received an update on the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet Improvements Scheme Development Consent Order.

By way of background, the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning advised that an update had previously been reported at the Cabinet's June 2021 meeting with the Council working in collaboration with Cambridgeshire County Council as the Local Highways Authority and South Cambridgeshire District Council. Attention was drawn to the key matters highlighted in paragraph 4.1 of the report which were currently under discussion. In doing so, the Executive Councillor for Community Resilience and Wellbeing made comment on the trees planted alongside the A14 which had now died which was acknowledged by the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning.

In noting the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth), specifically paragraph 5.5, the Chairman confirmed that traffic management studies were not taking place in St Neots. Having had their attention drawn to minor changes to the wording and structure of the recommendations proposed within the report, that Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) to consider the key issues outstanding following consultation with specialist officers and Cambridgeshire County Council Local Highways Authority and made comment as necessary;
- (b) to confirm the Council's continued support of the A428 proposed scheme from Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet; and
- (c) to delegate authority to the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning, in consultation with the Strategic Growth Manager, to
 - (i) confirm the Council's continued in principle support for the scheme on or before the final deadline, subject to satisfactory resolution of outstanding matters; and
 - (ii) finalise the preparation and submission of the documents required from the Council as part of the remaining deadlines within the Examination in Public.

57 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT, 2021/22 QUARTER 3

With the aid of a report prepared by the Business Intelligence & Performance Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered progress made against the Key Actions and Corporate Indicators listed in the Council's Corporate Plan 2018/22 for the period 1st October to 31st December 2021. The report also incorporated progress on the current projects being undertaken by the Council.

The Deputy Executive Leader and Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning summarised the progress made in delivering the key actions for 2021/22 over the reporting period and the Cabinet were advised that 68% of these were on track, with 28% being classified as being within the acceptable variance and 4% behind

schedule largely attributable to staffing resources. The Cabinet's attention was then drawn to those areas where positive progress had been achieved, as set out in section 3.4 of the report submitted.

In terms of performance against the Council's Corporate Indicators, the Cabinet were pleased to note that the majority of these were on track at the end of Quarter 3 with five being classified as "red" because performance was below acceptable variance.

Having been apprised with the status of corporate projects at the end of December 2021 and in noting the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth), the Cabinet

RESOLVED

to note the progress made against the Key Actions and Corporate Indicators in the Corporate Plan and current projects, as summarised in Appendix A and detailed in Appendices B and C of the report now submitted.

58 FINANCE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2021/22, QUARTER 3

A report by the Chief Finance Officer was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) presenting details of the Council's financial performance at the end of December 2021.

The Cabinet's attention was drawn to the highlights within the report, specifically the forecast revenue outturn underspend of £1.607m and capital outturn underspend of £13.694m. Reference was also made to the Commercial Investment Strategy and the benefits this was achieving for the Council.

Having welcomed the report and in noting the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth), it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet

- a) note the Council's financial performance to the end of December 2021 (as detailed in Appendix 1 and summarised in paragraph 3.2 of the report now submitted); and
- b) has considered and approved the proposed budget changes to the Capital Budget to accommodate reclassification of budget and in year activity not included within the Medium Term Financial Strategy (as outlined in paragraph 3.3 of the report now submitted).

Chairman