

CABINET EXECUTIVE

Minutes of a meeting held via Zoom

MONDAY, 26 FEBRUARY 2024

Present:

Councillor Terry Richardson (- Leader of the Council) (Leader)
Councillor Maggie Wright (- Finance, People & Performance Portfolio Holder) (Deputy Leader)

Cllr. Nigel Grundy	- Neighbourhood Services & Assets Portfolio Holder
Cllr. Les Phillimore	- Housing, Community & Environmental Services Portfolio Holder
Cllr. Ben Taylor	- Planning Delivery and Enforcement & Corporate Transformation Portfolio Holder

Also in attendance as Observers:

Cllr. Nick Brown (Scrutiny Commissioner)

Officers present:-

Julia Smith	- Chief Executive
Sarah Pennelli	- Executive Director - S.151 Officer
Louisa Horton	- Executive Director - Communities and Monitoring Officer
Nick Brown	- Finance Group Manager
Katie Hollis	- Accountancy Services Manager
Katie Brooman	- Elections and Governance Manager
Nicole Cramp	- Democratic & Scrutiny Services Officer
Isaac Thomas	- Democracy Support Officer

1. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS

No disclosures were received.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2024, as circulated, were approved and signed as a correct record.

3. PUBLIC SPEAKING PROTOCOL

No requests were received.

**4. SCRUTINY COMMISSION RESPONSE TO THE ADMINISTRATIONS
2024/25 DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS**

Considered – Report of the Senior Democratic Services & Scrutiny Officer, presented by Cllr. Nick Brown – Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission.

Cllr. Nick Brown thanked Cabinet Executive Members for attending the budget sessions and for responding to all the questions put to them.

Cllr. Maggie Wright thanked all Members who attended the scrutiny budget sessions and commended Officers who prepared the reports for the meetings.

Cllr. Les Phillimore queried the wording of Recommendation 10 which refers to housing support for ‘vulnerable residents’ and proposed that the wording could be made broader as the Housing Team is working to provide accommodation for a wider range of residents. Cllr. Nick Brown agreed with this proposed amendment.

Other options considered:

No other options were considered. Budget scrutiny is a constitutional requirement.

DECISION

That Cabinet Executive considers the comments and recommendations of Scrutiny Commission in respect of the draft 2024/25 budget proposals before making final recommendations to Council.

Reason:

Scrutiny Commission has a mandate to examine the Administration’s draft budget proposals and submit comments to Cabinet Executive which it is then obliged to consider before making its own final recommendations to Council on Budget proposals. All non-executive members may be involved in this process.

5. QUARTER 3 BUDGET REVIEW 2023/24

Considered – Report of the Accountancy Services Manager.

Other options considered:

None.

DECISIONS

1. That the financial performance against the budget for the quarter ending 31st December 2023 be accepted.
2. That the forecast contribution of £318,257 to General Fund balances be accepted.
3. That the irrecoverable debts set out in paragraph 4.5 are authorised to be written off.

Reasons:

1. It is good practice that Members have oversight of the Council's financial performance at regular points during the financial year.
2. To recognise movements in the call on reserves and balances to date, along with potential variances in establishment costs and key income streams that may arise between now and the end of the financial year.

6. QUARTER 3 CAPITAL PROGRAMME REVIEW 2023/24

Considered – Report of the Accountancy Services Manager.

Other options considered:

None.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL

1. That the report be accepted.
2. That the latest Capital Programme for 2023/24, totalling £11,760,992, be accepted.

Reasons:

1. To ensure that the Council has adequate resources in place to meet its capital expenditure commitments.
2. To reflect additions or other changes to the Capital Programme that have occurred in the 3rd quarter of the year.

7. 5 YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 TO 2028/29

Cllr. Ben Taylor left the room during consideration of this item and did not return.

Considered – Report of the Finance Group Manager.

Other options considered:

None. It is important to produce a 5-year Capital Programme as a minimum requirement of the Capital Strategy, and that the programme aligns with the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL

1. That the 5 Year Capital Programme for 2024/25 to 2028/29 be approved.
2. That the application of capital resources of £3,826,900 for 2024/25, including a borrowing requirement of £1,665,938, be approved.
3. That the Capital Strategy 2024/25 to 2028/29 be approved.

Reasons:

1. To obtain approval for the proposed level of capital expenditure in 2024/25 and the suggested method of financing that expenditure.
2. To provide a longer-term forecast of capital expenditure and financing requirements for the period 2024/25 to 2028/29.
3. To ensure compliance with the Prudential Code.

8. **PRUDENTIAL INDICATOR & TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2024/25**

Considered – Report of the Finance Group Manager.

Other options considered:

None. The approval of the Treasury Management Strategy and prudential indicators is a statutory requirement.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL

1. That the capital prudential indicators and limits for 2024/25 to 2028/29 are approved.
2. That the Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25 and the treasury prudential indicators are approved.
3. That the Investment Strategy for 2024/25 be approved.
4. That the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement for 2024/25 be approved.
5. That delegated authority be granted to the Executive Director (Section 151), in consultation with the portfolio holder for Finance, Performance, and People, to decide whether to redeem its holding in the Lothbury Property Trust, or to transfer its investment to the proposed merger outlined at paragraph 4.3 of the report.

Reasons:

1. The Local Government Act 2003 and supporting regulations requires the Council to “have regard to” the CIPFA Prudential Code and the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice to set Prudential and Treasury Indicators for the next three years to ensure that the Council’s capital investment plans are affordable, prudent, and sustainable.
2. The Act requires the Council to set out its treasury strategy for borrowing and to prepare an Annual Investment Strategy. This covers the Council’s criteria for choosing investment counterparties and limiting exposure to the risk of loss.
3. The Act also requires the Council to undertake an annual review of its policy for calculating the minimum revenue provision (MRP) for repayment of external debt.
4. The timing of the proposed merger of the Lothbury Property Trust with an alternative property fund is such that the Council will only have a short window of opportunity to make its decision regarding the future of its property fund investment.

9. SCHEDULE OF CHARGES 2024/25

Considered – Report of the Accountancy Services Manager.

Other options considered:

Not to review the fees and charges. However, it is considered appropriate that, where possible, charges should be set at a level necessary to achieve full cost recovery.

DECISION

That the Schedule of Charges for 2024/25 be approved.

Reason:

To ensure that the fees and charges for 2024/25 are formally set and approved.

10. GENERAL FUND BUDGET PROPOSALS 2024/25

Considered – Report of the Executive Director (Section 151 Officer).

Other options considered:

None – The Council is required to set its budgetary requirement and for the Council to consider the opinion of the Executive Director (S151 Officer) as to the robustness of the proposed budget and the levels of reserves and balances being adequate.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL

1. To have regard to the comments of the Executive Director (Section 151 Officer) in paragraph 4.7 in respect of the requirements of the Local Government Finance Act 2003.
2. That the 2024/25 General Fund Revenue Account net expenditure budget of £15.394m be approved.
3. That delegated authority be given to the S151 Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to make amendments to the Budget should it be necessary.

Reasons:

1. It is a requirement for the Cabinet Executive and Council to take into account the requirements of the Local Government Finance Act 2003 in relation to the robustness of the budget and the adequacy of reserves.
2. Cabinet and Council are required to consider and approve the General Fund Revenue Account budget proposals in order to set the budget and Council Tax for the forthcoming financial year.
3. Delegated authority is sought in order to make any amendments to the Budget should any new information become available following approval by full Council.

11. COUNCIL TAX 2024/25

Considered – Report of the Finance Group Manager.

Other options considered:

None – the setting of the Council Tax Requirement is a statutory requirement, and changes to Council Tax Support and discretionary liability must be approved by Full Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL

1. That the Council Tax Requirement for 2024/25 be set at £6,526,402.
2. The District Council Band D Council Tax be set at £189.14, reflecting an increase of 2.99% (£5.49), all other bands being determined in accordance with the relevant Sections of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended.
3. The precepts and Band D Council Tax for Leicestershire County Council*, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), the Combined Fire Authority, and the various Parish Councils within the District, be determined as set out in the following report, with all other bands being determined in accordance with the relevant Sections of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended.

Reason:

The Council is statutorily required to determine its own Council Tax Requirement and to determine the Council Tax for the 2024/25 financial year, after considering precepts set by the other preceptors.

THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 6.18 P.M.