



CORPORATE SELECT COMMITTEE

Meeting: Monday, 7 February 2022 at 6.30 pm in Virtual

Present: Councillor T Ashton (Chair)

Councillors J Collins, O Cross, L Grooby, D Lomax, R McKeown, G Oakley, E Siddall, M Stone and E Thrane

Councillors Barrow and A McKeown were also in attendance.

22/24 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENT

(Agenda Item)

The Chair confirmed that the meeting was being broadcast live to the internet via the Council's website and was capable of repeated viewing. The images and sound recording may be used for training purposes within the Council. All were asked to keep to the speaking guidelines which were outlined. Any views expressed by any speaker in the meeting are the speaker's own and do not necessarily reflect the views of High Peak Borough Council.

22/25 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

(Agenda Item 4)

The Leader provided an update around Derbyshire Vision, advising that following the recently released levelling up paper, Derbyshire and Derby City had been awarded a county deal based on the Vision Derbyshire model, and further details would be reported in due course.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2022 and the Joint Meeting with Economy & Growth Select Committee on 6 December 2022 be approved as a correct record.

22/26 THIRD QUARTER FINANCIAL, PROCUREMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW 2021/2022

(Agenda Item 5)

The Committee considered the Council's overall performance and financial position for the period ended 31 December ("Third Quarter 2021/22"). Specific reference was made to the summary of the position as set out in paragraph 3.3 of the report.

RESOLVED:

That the Third Quarter 2021/22 financial, procurement and performance position as detailed in Appendices A, B and C and summarised at paragraph 3.3 of the report be noted.

22/27 BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2022/2023
(Agenda Item 6)

The Committee considered the proposed budget for 2022/23. Updated Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 – 2025/26, Capital Strategy 2022/23, proposed Fees and Charges for 2022/23 and Procurement Forward Plan 2022/23.

It was noted that as set out in paragraph 3.9 of the report, there is a balanced budget for 2022/23 but there is greater uncertainty and risk in the MTFP for future years, particular around the Government's business rates review, fair funding review and new homes bonus review, the outcomes of which are unknown. Additional pressures had been identified around the pay award, higher than anticipated inflation, and the impact of the recovery from Covid-19..

A Council Tax increase of £5 on a Band D equivalent property was proposed, which equates to a 2.50% increase, although it was noted that for those residents in Band A, B or C dwellings the average increase will be less than £5.

A Council Dwelling Rent of 1.6% was proposed and the Executive Councillor advised that the HRA Working Group would be re-convened to undertake a review of the HRA business plan which would inform the MTFP going forward.

In response to a query around the government payments to assist residents with energy bills, members were advised that this was not a council tax rebate, and that anyone in a Band A, B, C, or D dwelling would receive a £150 payment in April as a separate payment once greater clarity had been received from central government. It was clarified that this payment could not be used by the council to clear any council tax arrears. Regarding the council's own buildings, conditions surveys were ongoing with a view to making them more energy efficient as part of the future Asset Management Plan.

It was suggested that the council car parks in Hope Valley be exempt from the parking fee increase, in view of the extent that they are used by non-residents.

In response to a query regarding the earmarked reserves for climate change, members were advised that the reserves are listed in the outturn report but would be circulated to members on request. Further clarity and explanation was requested around the tables on page 25 and 35 of the report around the energy efficient elements within the Capital Strategy.

RESOLVED:

That Corporate Select Committee supports the following **recommendations** to Council:

- Approves the General Fund Budget for 2022/23 as detailed in Appendix A (section 9)
- Approves the revised Medium-Term Financial Plan (2022/23 to 2025/26) as detailed in Appendix A, including the revised Capital Programme (attached at Annex A)
- Approves the Capital Strategy 2022/23 as set out in Appendix B
- Approves the updated Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan Forecast as detailed in Appendix A (Annex E) and commissions a fundamental review of the HRA Business Plan during 2022/23
- Approves the proposed Fees and Charges for 2022/23 as detailed in Appendix C
- Approves the proposed Procurement Forward Plan for 2022/23, providing the Authority to procure based on procurement activity detailed in Appendix D
- Approves a Band D Council Tax of £205.40 for 2022/23 (an increase of £5.00 or 2.50% from 2021/22)
- HRA charges as follows:
 - All dwellings rents to increase by 1.6% increasing the average rent from £72.64 to £73.96 per week (average rent takes into account new tenancies let over the previous year where the higher formula rent was charged. This gives an arithmetical increase of 1.81%)
 - Garage rents to be increased by 5% from £7.49 to £7.86 average per week
 - Other Charges including service charges to increase by a maximum of 5%
 - Fuel charges at individual blocks have been reviewed and the 2022/23 charge is based on the 2021/22 estimated costs and 2020/21 actual fuel usage/prices, charged on an individual scheme basis.
- Notes the Chief Finance Officer's view that the level of reserves are adequate for the Council, based on this budget and the circumstances in place at the time of preparing it (Appendix A Annex C)

The Committee considered the new Access to Services, Digital and Organisational Development Strategies which aim to respond to the ways in which our residents live, work and access the council's services, as well as to the more flexible ways in which people are working.

During the ensuing debate, the view was expressed that it would be useful for members to discuss the position of the council following the Covid 19 pandemic. It was also commented that the documents were unnecessarily lengthy and the use of jargon should be kept to a minimum.

It was suggested that the website should be reviewed to make it more user friendly, and it was noted that face to face service is available at locations across the borough as well as via telephone.

RESOLVED:

That the Access to Services, Digital and Organisational Development Strategies be noted.

22/29 COUNCIL TAX - LONG TERM EMPTY PROPERTY PREMIUM LEVY POLICY
(Agenda Item 8)

The Committee considered an update to the Council Tax levies Policy to include a new charge on properties empty for at least ten years and to clarify circumstances where the empty property premium may be waived.

RESOLVED:

That the Executive be recommend to approve amendments to the current Council Tax Reductions and Levies Policy to include:

- A levy of 300% of Council Tax for properties empty for at least ten years, from 1 April 2022
- Clarification on circumstances where the levy may be waived (as outlined in paragraphs 3.5 and 3.6 of the report)

22/30 HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21
(Agenda Item 9)

The Committee considered the annual health and safety report as required by the Council's assurance framework. The Corporate Health and Safety Advisor introduced the report which provided an overview of the Council's health and safety arrangements and progress made and identified key areas of focus to ensure the Council maintains its health and safety performance.

The Corporate Health and Safety Advisor was thanked for his work and for an excellent report.

RESOLVED:

That the 2020/21 Annual Health and Safety Report be noted.

22/31 SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME
(Agenda Item 10)

Training around the 5 year housing land supply was to be held on 24 February.

With reference to minute 22/11, a report on recovery processes would be added to the work programme.

Further to minute 22/12, an information digest providing an Asset Management update would be circulated and it was noted that discussions around likely timescales for the convening of the Asset Management Working Group were on-going.

It was suggested that a Scrutiny Chair's meeting be arranged.

RESOVLED:

That, subject to the above, the Select Committees Work Programmes be noted,

22/32 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC
(Agenda Item 12)

RESOVLED:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business as they contain exempt information as set out in Part I of Paragraph 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

22/33 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING
(Agenda Item 13)

RESOLVED:

That the exempt minutes of the meeting on 27 September and of the Joint Meeting with Economy & Growth Select Committee held on 6 December 2022 be approved as a correct record.

22/34 DELIVERY OF FACILITIES MANAGEMENT AND HOUSING REPAIRS SERVICES
(Agenda Item 14)

The Committee considered arrangements for the Joint Venture for the Provision of Facilities Management and Housing Repairs and made recommendations to the Executive.

22/35 UPDATE ON FUTURE HIGH STREET FUND (VERBAL UPDATE)
(Agenda Item 15)

The Committee considered an update on the Future High Street Fund which was noted.

The meeting concluded at 8.04 pm

CHAIR