

Time began: 4.00pm
Time ended: 5.12pm

COUNCIL CABINET

13 January 2021

Present Councillor M Holmes (Chair)
 Councillors Barker, Roulstone, Smale, Webb and Wood

In attendance Councillors AW Graves, Repton, Shanker and Skelton
 Paul Simpson – Chief Executive
 Rachel North – Strategic Director Communities and Place
 Andy Smith – Strategic Director of People
 Simon Riley – Strategic Director of Corporate Resources
 Emily Feenan – Director of Legal, Procurement and
 Democratic Services
 Ian Fullagar – Head of Strategic Housing
 Bernard Fenton – Head of Customer Service
 Connie Spencer – Youth Mayor
 Priya Gill – Deputy Youth Mayor
 Kara Macfadyen – Senior Communications Officer

This record of decisions was published on 15 January 2021. The key decisions set out in this record will come into force and may be implemented on the expiry of five clear days unless a key decision is called in.

97/20 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Poulter and Williams.

98/20 Late Items

There were no late items.

99/20 Receipt of Petitions

There were no petitions

100/20 Identification of Urgent Items to which Call In will not apply

The following item needed to be implemented immediately and therefore been exempted from call-in on the grounds of urgency.

Item 9 - Council Tax Base 2021/22 (Minute no 104/20)

The Chair of the Executive Scrutiny Board had agreed the matter could be treated as an urgent item and therefore not subject to call-in.

101/20 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Matters Referred

102/20 Recommendations from the Executive Scrutiny Board

The Council Cabinet considered a report on Recommendations from the Executive Scrutiny Board. The Executive Scrutiny Board met and discussed items contained within the Council Cabinet Agenda. The report enabled the views and recommendations resulting from these discussions to be formally shared with Council Cabinet. These were submitted to Council Cabinet as Appendix 1, prior to commencement of the meeting.

Decision

To receive the report and consider the recommendations alongside the relevant report.

Key Decision

103/20 Ravensdale Infant and Nursery School – New School Project

The Council Cabinet considered a report which sought approval to place orders, and award contracts, for further design work needed to advance proposals and secure planning permission for a new Ravensdale Infant School building, following the recent major fire.

Approval was being sought for two elements of the proposed recovery plans currently being developed, as follows:

- Complete the next phase of the design works for a capital scheme for a permanent new replacement school building - estimated cost of £601,194;
- Placing orders and payments to secure key components of the new building, including steel work for the modular units – estimated cost of £442,519.

It was necessary to seek approval for the works, to ensure the new build could be completed as soon as was reasonably practical.

It was proposed that each element would be funded from the insurance settlement, currently undergoing review with the insurance loss adjuster. The loss adjuster had confirmed agreement to the proposals, subject to final actual costs being provided by the Council.

The Executive Scrutiny Board welcomed the inclusion of sprinklers in the new school and recommended to Council Cabinet that the new school should be designed to be carbon zero in operation from the start, or at least that the design allows for the buildings to be made carbon zero in an efficient manner in the near future.

Options Considered

The Council has no other option but to seek to replace Ravensdale Infant school at the earliest opportunity.

Decision

1. To approve, subject to recommendation 2.5, the addition of £601,194 to the Schools Capital Programme for the new school design work for Ravensdale Infant School, to be funded from the anticipated insurance settlement.
2. To approve, subject to recommendation 2.5 and paragraph 4.11, the placing of orders for steel works in advance at Ravensdale Infant school, to secure scheme delivery, at an estimated cost of £442,519 to be paid from the anticipated insurance settlement.
3. To approve, subject to recommendation 2.5, scheme commencement for the above works without the need for Gateway approval, and to add the profiled spend to the 2020/21-2022/23 capital programme.
4. To approve the transfer to reserves of the insurance monies and use of insurance reserve as appropriate to fund the expenditure outlined.
5. To note that the above costs were anticipated costs, and the Council was working closely with its insurer to seek a full insurance settlement for each element. If costs vary from currently anticipated figures, any necessary approvals would be made in line with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules and scheme of delegation, if necessary. Final costs would be reported to Council Cabinet once confirmed.
6. To note the recommendation from Executive Scrutiny Board.

Reasons

In accordance with Financial Procedure Rules, additions to the Council's capital programme not provided for in the approved budget are required to be reported to Cabinet for approval.

104/20 Council Tax Base for 2021/22

The Council Cabinet considered a report which stated that The Council has a legal requirement to calculate a Council Tax base for each financial year and to notify its Council Tax base to both The Police and Crime Commissioner for Derbyshire and Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Authority. The Council Tax base must be calculated

between 1 December and 31 January in the preceding financial year and notified to The Police and Crime Commissioner for Derbyshire and Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Authority by 31 January of the preceding financial year.

The Council Tax base was an estimated figure of the number of domestic properties expressed in terms of 'band D' equivalents in the Council's area during the financial year concerned. It was used to determine a headline charge for band D properties in the city. Charges for other bands were calculated as defined fractions of the headline charge.

The proposed Council Tax base for 2021/22 was 69,545.77 band D equivalent properties compared with the 2020/21 Council Tax base of 69,592.06.

The Executive Scrutiny Board noted the report.

Options Considered

1. The Council has a statutory duty to set a Council Tax base.
2. The Council could opt not to levy the additional empty property premium. However, this option had not been proposed, for the reasons set out in section 4.6 of the report.

Decision

1. To approve the Council Tax base for the year 2021/22 as 69,545.77 band D equivalent properties, in accordance with The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012/2914).
2. That in accordance with the methodology and estimates shown at Appendix 1 of the report, to recommend Council to approve this calculation, at the Council meeting on 20 January 2021.
3. To approve the following empty property premium charges and total Council Tax charges from 1 April 2021
 - For properties that have been empty and unoccupied for two years or more, but less than five years an empty property premium of 100%, giving a total Council Tax charge of 200%.
 - For properties that have been empty and unoccupied for five years or more, but less than 10 years, an empty property premium of 200%, giving a total Council Tax charge of 300%.
 - For properties that have been empty and unoccupied for ten years or more, an empty property premium of 300%, giving a total Council Tax charge of 400%.

Reasons

1. Agreeing the Council Tax base was the first step in the process of setting the Council Tax to be collected in 2021/22 and was an essential part of establishing the 2021/22 budget.
2. Increasing the amount of Council Tax payable on certain long term empty properties would act as a strong incentive for owners to bring such properties back into use, which in turn would minimise the incidence of anti-social behaviour associated with them and help address the housing shortage within the City.

105/20 Financial Support for Families During School Holidays

The Council Cabinet considered a report which set out details of the programmes of support currently in place to help support children and families in poverty across Derby, utilising the community assets that had been put in place in the last nine months.

The report proposed a short and medium term approach that detailed a co-ordinated short and medium response to children at risk of food poverty in the city which would be taken forward by the newly established Poverty Commission.

In doing so, outlined options for financial support to families during school holidays in direct response to the Free School Meals motion passed at the Council meeting on 25 November 2020. The approach outlined in the paper responds to the Council's motion but was designed around wider desired outcomes for disadvantaged children in receipt of free school meals and developing family resilience.

The Executive Scrutiny Board recommended to Council Cabinet

1. that it implements in full the motion agreed at full council to provide children and families with support, via vouchers, for all school holidays in 2021 and beyond.
2. that the poverty commission consider the outputs of the work of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Review Board 2018/19 topic review on child poverty in the city as part of its deliberations.
3. that these items on additional financial support for families during the School holidays to be included in the Medium Term Financial Plan presented to Council in February.

Options Considered

1. To provide assistance only through the existing Council's Single Discretionary Award Framework and through the Holiday Activity and Food

Programme. This option though affordable would not be expected to meet the needs.

2. For the Council to fund the full costs of Free School Meals from 1 April for all holiday periods. This would be in addition to eligible children taking part in the Holiday Activity and Food Programme in 2021. The costs of this based on the current numbers of children receiving Free School Meals was approximately £2m and likely to increase throughout 2021.
3. There was currently no additional government funding identified to fund this and if agreed the cost would be a significant draw down on Council reserves. The Medium Term Financial Plan out for consultation assumed no recurrent use of reserves and any decision to utilise additional reserves would impact on future financial sustainability. This option would fail to provide a sustainable and resilient solution for families.

Decision

1. To note the successful implementation of the COVID Winter Grant Scheme implemented in Derby in December 2020 and the design principles underpinning the Derby scheme.
2. To implement a support package to the 31st December 2021 to ensure access to food support for children at risk of food poverty.
3. To provide a free school meal voucher scheme for the half term holidays in the spring and autumn 2021.
4. To commission a review through the newly established Poverty Commission to consider and recommend options for a sustainable model from the 31st December 2021 utilising the strengths of community assets within Derby alongside partnerships with schools, academies and community groups.
5. To identify an approach that balanced the desire to address child poverty in Derby with the legal obligation the Council must prepare a balanced budget.
6. To accept recommendation 2 from the Executive Scrutiny Board that the poverty commission consider the outputs of the work of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Review Board 2018/19 topic review on child poverty in the city as part of its deliberations.
7. To reject the recommendations 1 and 3 from Executive Scrutiny Board.

Reasons

1. The design of the COVID Winter Grant Scheme combined short term interventions, with a programme of longer-term support for the most vulnerable families and individuals in Derby, through a partnership of Derby organisations and Council services focused on developing household and

community resilience. It should be noted that funding for this programme ends on 31 March 2021.

2. The size of the funding required to meet the scope of the motion would be a significant draw on Council funding, in the event government funding was not provided or was insufficient. The impact of COVID on the economy of the city, may increase the cost to provide support as more families become eligible for financial assistance. Based on the current numbers of children and young people eligible in Derby for Free School Meals this would be in the region of £2.0m per year for which the Council receives no government funding since the costs of free school meals is a function administered by the Department for Work and Pensions.
3. The combination of short-term support such as food provision with a programme of personalised household support designed to maximise benefit take-up, develop practical skills such as preparing healthy meals on a budget, access to activity programmes and use of government grants, would help to create a more sustainable programme that builds resilience.
4. The targeted approach outlined and recommended in the report was also firmly in line with Derby's Recovery Plan as the city emerges from the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021. This was very much the ethos and approach of the city's community recovery work with the Council working alongside and with our NHS, cultural and voluntary and community sector partners in supporting and developing community and family assets and resilience.

Budget and Policy Framework

106/20 Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2021 to 2051

The Council Cabinet considered a report which sought approval for the updated Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan, its associated rent increases and capital programme. The HRA Business Plan sets out the 30 year investment strategy for the management and maintenance of the Council's housing stock together with investment proposals for additional homes.

Despite increasing pressures in recent years, the HRA remained in a relatively strong position. It could meet the immediate management and maintenance requirements of the Council's housing stock, together with the investment ambitions for additional homes, and the modelled business case requirements over the 30 years of the business plan.

The Executive Scrutiny Board noted the report.

Decision

1. To approve the 2021/22 update of the rolling 30 year HRA Business Plan, as set out in the report.

2. To approve funding for an expansion of the new homes programme as part of the Council's capital programme as set out in paragraph 4.7.4 and appendix 1 of the report.
3. To approve the 2021/22 management and maintenance fee paid to Derby Homes as set out in paragraphs 4.10.4 and 4.10.5 of the report.
4. To approve changes to rents and service charges as set out in paragraph 4.12.1 of the report.
5. To approve the continuation of the capital programme for the years 2021/22 to 2023/24 in appendix 1 of the report and to approve Derby Homes directly managing the schemes attributed to them in appendix 1 of the report.

MINUTES END