

Time Commenced – 4.30pm
Time Finished – 6.00pm

Executive Scrutiny Board

19 January 2021

Present: Councillor Repton (Chair)
Councillors Care, Evans, Hudson, Hussain, Pattison, P Pegg,
Testro, Willoughby

In attendance: Emily Feenan – Director of Legal, Procurement and
Democratic Services
Amanda Fletcher – Head of Finance for Communities and
Place
Heather Greenan – Director of Policy, Insight and
Communications
Janice Hadfield – Head of Finance for Corporate Services
Suanne Lim – Director for Early Help and Children's Social
Care
Steven Mason – Democratic Services Officer
Toni Nash – Head of Finance for Organisation and
Governance
Rachel North – Strategic Director for Communities and Place
Alison Parkin – Director of Financial Services
Simon Riley – Strategic Director for Corporate Resources and
S151 Officer
Paul Simpson – Chief Executive
Andy Smith – Strategic Director for People Services
Councillor Webb – Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and
Housing

55/20 Apologies for Absence

There were none.

56/20 Late Items

There were none.

57/20 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

58/20 Budget Proposals 2021/22

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director of Corporate
Resources on Budget Proposals 2021/22.

Members noted that Council Cabinet published budget proposals for 2021/22
on Wednesday 16 December 2020 as part of a report on the Medium Term

Financial Plan 2021/22-2023/24 Update. It was also noted that public consultation ran from 17 December 2020 to 17 January 2021.

It was reported that the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) assumed delivery of £9.609m of budget savings and additional income in 2021/22, and an increase in Council Tax of 4.49% (this included 2.5% specifically for social care).

It was noted that the MTFP incorporated £22.287m of pressures in 2021/22, to address demand and cost pressures and to invest in Council priorities.

The Strategic Director for Corporate Resources and S151 Officer introduced the item and outlined some of the new needs and opportunities facing the council, as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report.

Members noted the following key MTFP themes:

- a) Digital Council – Digital Customer and Intelligent Council
- b) Property Rationalisation
- c) Transforming Cities and Transport
- d) Demand Management/Commercialisation
- e) Community Working Model – Better Together
- f) Service Optimisation – Effective, Efficient and Economic Services

Members asked about the projected use of reserves in 2021/22 and future years and future Government funding. It was reported that the proposed budget for the 2021/22 municipal year made no recurrent use of reserves to achieve a balanced budget. It was also reported that the council would be lobbying the Government to ensure that it received sustainable funding going forward.

Members enquired about income pressures, as outlined in the report, in relation to parking and Leisure Services. Members noted the effects of the Covid pandemic and the receipt of Government subsidy.

Members also discussed a number of other matters, such as the replenishment of reserves, the possibility of free school meals provision being incorporated in the MTFP, property rationalisation and proposed job losses and Council Tax increases.

The Strategic Director for Communities and Place, the Strategic Director for People Services and the Strategic Director for Corporate Resources outlined the pressures and savings proposals within their respective service areas.

In relation to the Communities and Place service area, Members asked about recycling, including proposed savings in relation to recycling at Raynesway,

In relation to the People Services directorate, Members discussed the retention of foster carers, the support in place to enable people to become foster carers, proposed efficiencies in day care and provision for the high needs block.

Resolved:

- 1. to recommend to Council Cabinet that it fully implements the November 2020 Council motion regarding the failure to provide food vouchers throughout 2021 and beyond and the expansion of Free School Meals provision to every child whose family is in receipt of Universal Credit or equivalent, or with a low income and no recourse to public funds. Failure to do this fails many children and families in the City;**
- 2. to recommend to Council Cabinet that it considers the inclusion of measures to replenish reserves as part of the budget;**
- 3. to recommend to Council Cabinet to ensure that Free school meals provision as passed at Full Council and presented to Council Cabinet on 13 January 2021 is incorporated in the revised MTFP that they present to February's Full Council meeting; and**
- 4. to recommend to Council Cabinet that it applies the philosophy to invest now to save in future to the renewal of Ravensdale Infant School and ask officers to work up a design for a new school that will be zero carbon in operation.**

MINUTES END