

## Cabinet

A meeting of Cabinet was held on Thursday, 18th February, 2021.

**Present:** Cllr Robert Cook (Chair), Cllr Jim Beall, , Cllr Nigel Cooke, Cllr Lisa Evans , Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy, Cllr Steve Nelson, Cllr Michael Smith

**Officers:** Julie Danks, Margaret Waggott, Peter Bell, John Devine (MD), Beccy Brown, Jonathan Nertney (HR&L), Garry Cummings, Angela Miles, Tony Montague, Julie Murphy, Richard Pratt, Iain Robinson, Lisa Tague,(F,D&BS), Martin Gray (CHS), Reuben Kench (CL&E), Jamie McCann (CS), Ann Workman (AH).

**Also in attendance:** Cllrs Clark, Dixon, Faulks, Gamble, Hall, Patterson, Riordan, Stephenson, Strike and Mrs Walmsley.

**Apologies:** N/A

### **CAB 58/20**      **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Nigel Cooke declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of the item Reshaping our Town Centres as a result of being a Board member of Tees Music Alliance.

Councillors Nigel Cooke and Sylvia Walmsley each declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of the item entitled Medium Term Financial Plan and Strategy as a result of each being a member of the Thornaby Town Deal Board.

### **CAB 59/20**      **Reshaping our Town Centres**

Cabinet noted that the Council had an ambitious programme to invest across all of its town centres and the impact of the pandemic had only continued to accelerate the challenges town centres faced across the country. For many years, the Council had recognised the importance of a diverse and vibrant town centre offer and Cabinet were provided with an update on planned investment opportunities across all six of the Borough's town centres. This followed on from Cabinet's October meeting where it approved the development of masterplans for each town centre.

The pace of development across each of the town centres had varied due to their complexity and ownership structures. The Council had previously allocated £3M within the Medium Term Financial Plan to support investment in town centres and the report set out a programme of interventions across Ingleby Barwick, Norton and Yarm from within that funding.

Cabinet gave approval to explore opportunities for investment in Billingham Town Centre that included looking at ownership structures and joint ventures with the current owner, St Modwen. Cabinet noted an update on the findings of the business case development and a recommendation for the next steps to see development opportunities in Billingham become one step closer to a reality.

Thornaby is part of the Government's Town Deal Programme and an update was provided on Thornaby's Town Investment Plan and the opportunity for the Council to support further investment in Thornaby directly.

In conclusion, Cabinet noted the Government's offer from the Future High Streets Fund and the challenges that presented in terms of the original request of Government and how these challenges could be met, along with an update on the redevelopment proposals for the Castlegate site.

RESOLVED that:-

1. Subject to approval of the Medium Term Financial Plan, Cabinet approve the principle of acquisition of Billingham Town Centre as the most effective means of ensuring meaningful redevelopment of the centre and note that a decision on the sum for the final acquisition and any associated works will be brought back to Cabinet at a future meeting once full due diligence on financial, legal and condition elements amongst others have been concluded.
2. Cabinet approve the final masterplans for Ingleby Barwick, Norton and Yarm as described in paragraphs 16-25 and 42-48 of the report and the allocation of previously approved funding of £3M from the 2020/21 Medium Term Financial Plan for the delivery of this programme with approval of the final scheme detail, cost and subsequent financial allocations to individual schemes and interventions delegated to the Director of Town Centres Investment in consultation with Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Housing
3. Cabinet note the in principle offer of £16,543,812, as opposed to original request of £24million, from the Government's Future High Streets Fund to support delivery of the redevelopment of the Castlegate Centre site and note the implications on the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan that will be considered by Council on 24 February 2021.
4. Cabinet note the implications of receipt of £16.5m funding on the development and delivery of the masterplan for the Castlegate shopping centre site as set out in paragraphs 30-31 of the report and subject to approval of the Medium Term Financial Plan, approve £5million to address the shortfall in Government funding.
5. Cabinet agree that the acquisition of the remaining interests in the Castlegate Centre will facilitate the carrying out of the development, redevelopment or improvement on or in relation to the land and that the development, redevelopment or improvement is likely to contribute to the achievement of the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the area.
6. Cabinet approve the use of the Council's Compulsory Purchase powers under section 226(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by section 99 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) to acquire all necessary interests in the Castlegate Shopping Centre and the adjacent area required for the implementation of the redevelopment of the Castlegate Centre site.
7. Cabinet approve the use of all actions necessary in accordance with the serving of Requisitions for Information, the making of the CPO, the representation of the Council in relation to any Inquiry, the confirmation of the CPO, the actions necessary following the confirmation of the CPO either by the

authority or the Secretary of State, and consequent orders or actions including the service of Notices to Treat or the making of a General Vesting Declaration, and all other notices, orders or actions required to give effect to the authorisation to acquire the land compulsorily.

8. Cabinet note the potential impact of Castlegate Centre demolition on key stakeholders within the town centre such as transport providers and Market Traders and that an active engagement plan commence from March 2021.

9. Cabinet note the progress made on the Thornaby Town Investment Plan and subject to approval of the Medium Term Financial Plan, approve £5million to support interventions in accordance with the detail provided in paragraph 40 of the report.

10. Cabinet approve the recommendations set out in the exempt Appendix E to this report in respect of Thornaby Town Centre.

11. Cabinet note the intention to publish a 'Prospectus' for each of the Borough's town centres and delegates final amendments and future updates to the Director of Town Centres Investment in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Housing.

## **CAB Medium Term Financial Plan and Strategy**

**60/20**

Cabinet's views were sought on the final report in setting the Council's 2021/22 Budget and Council Tax, along with an outline of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) position to 2025.

The report also included an update on the financial performance for 2020/21.

The 2020/21 financial position had been significantly affected by the Covid Pandemic and the report highlighted significant financial pressures which had been funded by Government.

It was noted that there were a range of pressures on the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2021 onwards which were not necessarily related to the pandemic and these had been reflected in the Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan. The financial position over the medium term was extremely uncertain, and as previously outlined to Members, would be affected by a further Government Spending Review, a potential Fair Funding Review and future proposals around Business Rates Retention.

The proposals in the report presented before Cabinet would mean that the Council would have a balanced budget in 2021/22 and place the Council in a good financial position heading into a period of financial uncertainty.

### **RECOMMENDED to Council that:-**

**1. In accordance with the Local Government Act 2003, Members note that the Section 151 Officer confirms that the following recommendations:**

- a) represent a robust budget which has been prepared in line with best practice;
- b) provide adequate working balances;
- c) that the controlled reserves and provisions are adequate for their purpose.

#### **General Fund Budget**

2. Approve a 2021/22 Council Tax requirement for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council of £98,166,656.
3. Approve a 2021/22 Council Tax requirement for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council inclusive of Parish Precepts (£872,636) of £99,039,292.
4. Approve the 2021/22 budget and indicative 2021/25 MTFP as outlined in paragraphs 51 – 52, the level of General Fund Balances set out in paragraphs 31 – 32 and the one-off pressures set out in paragraphs 54 – 58 of the report.
5. Approve prudential borrowing of £10m to fund the additional town centres investments in Stockton and Thornaby (£5m in each) as set out in the Report to Cabinet on 18 February 2021.
6. Approve prudential borrowing of up to £10m allow the Council to negotiate the acquisition of Billingham Town Centre and undertake any immediate repairs and remediation work as set out in the Report to Cabinet on 18 February 2021

#### **Business Rate Relief System**

7. Note that the Chancellor is expected to make announcements regarding business rates and reliefs in his March Budget.

#### **Taxation**

##### **SBC**

8. Approve the Council Tax for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council prior to Parish, Fire and Police Precepts be increased by 3.9%, which includes the Government Levy of 2% in respect of Social Care i.e. to £1,714.98 at Band D (£1,143.32 at Band A).

##### **Fire, Police & Parish**

9. The Council note the Police precept of £15,210,571 which equates to a Council Tax of £265.73 at Band D (£177.15 at Band A).
10. The Council note the proposed Fire precept of £4,598,145 which equates to a Council Tax of £80.33 at Band D (£53.55 at Band A).
11. The Council note the Parish precepts as set out in paragraph 78 of the budget report.

## **Capital**

**12. Approve the Capital Programme attached at Appendix A & B of the report.**

## **Organisational and HR**

**13. Council approve the Pay Policy Statement including the new pay and grading structure at Appendix C and C(1) of the report.**

## **Members Allowances**

**14. Approve that Members allowances are frozen for 2021/22. This will mean that these allowances have been frozen since 2013/14.**

## **Council Tax - Statutory Requirements**

**15. Members approve the statutory requirements for Council Tax as shown in Appendix D of the report.**

**16. Cabinet recommend to Council that the current Local Council Tax Support Scheme is retained for the financial year 2021/22 (see paragraphs 81 - 83) and that the Director of Finance, Development and Business Services be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Leader, to make further adjustments should the Government issue revised publications with regards to these matters after 24 February to ensure that the intended alignment is maintained.**

## **Capital Strategy**

**17. Approve the Capital Strategy as set out at Appendix E to the report, including the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Policy and the MRP Strategy.**

## **Treasury Management/Prudential Code**

**18. Approve the Treasury Management Strategy as set out in Appendix F to the report.**

## **Investment Strategy**

**19. Approve the Investment Strategy as set out at Appendix G to the report.**

## **RESOLVED that:-**

**20. Cabinet approve and note the Officer Appointments to outside bodies and governing bodies at Appendix C(1).**

**61/20**

This was the confidential information considered as part of agenda item Investing in Reshaping Our Town Centres. Please refer to the detail above for the decision