

Council

A meeting of Council was held on Wednesday, 26th February, 2020.

Present: The Worshipful the Mayor (Cllr Lynn Hall); Cllr Helen Atkinson, Cllr Louise Baldock, Cllr Chris Barlow, Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr Pauline Beall, Cllr Jacky Bright, Cllr Julia Cherrett, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Robert Cook, Cllr Nigel Cooke, Cllr Evaline Cunningham, Cllr Ken Dixon, Cllr Lisa Evans, Cllr Kevin Faulks, Cllr Luke Frost, Cllr Clare Gamble, Cllr John Gardner, Cllr Ray Godwin, Cllr Tony Hampton, Cllr Stefan Houghton, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Mohammed Javed, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Paul Kirton, Cllr Tina Large, Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy, Cllr David Minchella, Cllr Mick Moore, Cllr Steve Nelson, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Ross Patterson, Cllr Maurice Perry, Cllr Lauriane Povey, Cllr Stephen Richardson, Cllr Tony Riordan, Cllr Andrew Sherris, Cllr Michael Smith, Cllr Andrew Stephenson, Cllr Norma Stephenson O.B.E, Cllr Mick Stoker, Cllr Ted Strike, Cllr Marilyn Surtees, Cllr Laura Tunney, Cllr Hilary Vickers, Cllr Steve Walmsley, Cllr Alan Watson, Cllr Sally Ann Watson, Cllr Paul Weston, Cllr Julia Whitehill, Cllr Bill Woodhead MBE and Cllr Barry Woodhouse.

Officers: Julie Danks (MD), Garry Cummings, Tony Montague (F&BS), Beccy Brown, Julie Butcher (HR,L&C), Martin Gray (CS), Jamie McCann (CS), Ann Workman (AH); Reuben Kench (CL&E), Peter Bell (DS).

Also in attendance: Members of the public.

Apologies: Cllr Chris Clough, Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Cllr Matthew Vickers and Cllr Sylvia Walmsley.

C Welcome and Evacuation Procedure

81/19

The Worshipful the Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and the evacuation procedure was noted.

C Declarations of Interest

82/19

Each of the Members present had a non-prejudicial interest in relation to setting the Council Tax and Members Allowances and a dispensation regarding any disclosable pecuniary interests in respect of agenda item 4 - Medium Term Financial Plan Update and Strategy due to having beneficial interests in properties in the borough / being Council Tax Payers.

Councillor Nigel Cooke declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 4 - Medium Term Financial Plan Update and Strategy as he had a relative who was an employee of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council and he was a non-remunerated board member of Tees Valley Music Alliance.

C Medium Term Financial Plan Update and Strategy

83/19

Consideration was given to the final report in setting the Council's 2020/21 Budget and Council Tax and outlining the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) position to 2024. The report also included an update on the financial performance for 2019/20.

The 2019/20 financial position showed an overall improvement from the previous reported position but still showed a projected overspend. The main pressure being in Children in our Care which was a national position and there was significant work ongoing in this area.

The report outlined proposals for setting the 2020/21 budget and the projected MTFP. There remained significant uncertainty around Government funding for 2021 onwards and assumptions and estimates had therefore had to be made.

The Provisional and Final Financial Settlements had provided funding allocations for 2020/21 only. This meant that the position for 2021/22 onwards, outlined in the report, needed to be treated with some caution.

Future Government funding was likely to be affected by:

- Government Spending Review
- Fair Funding Review
- Review of Business Rates Retention

Based on the assumptions in the report and subject to decisions on Council Tax levels, it was expected that the Council would have a balanced Budget for 2020/21 and a sustainable Medium Term Financial Plan. Members noted that the Council had a strong track record of prudent financial management and delivering savings early. This had enabled the use of reserves to support a planned and managed approach to addressing the financial challenges and this would continue.

Cabinet had considered this matter at its meeting held on 20 February 2020 and a copy of the relevant minute extract had been circulated to Members.

Moved by Councillor Bob Cook, seconded by Councillor Jim Beall:-

1. That 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. A 2020/21 Council Tax requirement for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council of £94,210,546 be approved.

3. A 2020/21 Council Tax requirement for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council inclusive of Parish Precepts (£905,908) of £95,116,454 be approved.

4. The 2020/21 budget and indicative 2020/24 MTFP as outlined in paragraphs 36-37 and the level of General Fund Balances set out in paragraphs 18-19 be approved.

Business Rate Relief System

5. The changes introduced in recent Government budgets and the Ministerial Statement of 27 January 2020 be noted.

Taxation

SBC

6. 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 £1,650.61 at Band D (£1,100.41 at Band A) be approved.

Fire, Police & Parish

7. The Police precept of £14,870,633 which equates to a Council Tax of £260.54 at Band D (£173.69 at Band A) be noted.

8. The Fire precept of £4,499,317 which equates to a Council Tax of £78.83 at Band D (£52.55 at Band A) be noted.

9. The Parish precepts as set out in paragraph 65 of the budget report be noted.

Capital

10. The Capital Programme attached at Appendix A & B be approved.

Organisational and HR

11. The Pay Policy Statement at Appendix C be approved.

Members Allowances

12. Members allowances be frozen for 2020/21. This will mean that these allowances have been frozen since 2013/14.

Council Tax - Statutory Requirements

13. The statutory requirements for Council Tax as shown in Appendix D be approved.

14. The current Local Council Tax Support Scheme be retained for the financial year 2020/21 (see paragraph 68 of the report).

Capital Strategy

15. The Capital Strategy as set out at Appendix E to the report, including the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Policy and the MRP Strategy be approved.

Treasury Management/Prudential Code

16. The Treasury Management Strategy as set out in Appendix F to the report be approved.

Investment Strategy

17. The Investment Strategy as set out at Appendix G to the report be approved.

Moved by Councillor Tony Riordan, seconded by Councillor Andrew Stephenson that the substantive motion be amended as follows:-

2. A 2020/21 Council Tax requirement for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council of

£92,396,665 be approved.

3. A 2020/21 Council Tax requirement for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council inclusive of Parish Precepts (£905,908) of £93,302,573 be approved.

4. The 2020/21 budget and indicative 2020/24 MTFP as outlined in the new paragraph 36 below and the level of General Fund Balances set out in paragraphs 18-19 and that the £3m allocation for town centres be funded from Indiginous Growth Fund be approved.

6. The Council Tax for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council prior to Parish, Fire and Police Precepts be increased by 1.9% i.e. to £1,618.83 at Band D (£1,079.22 at Band A) be approved.

All other recommendations remained the same as the substantive motion.

The changes to body of report and impact of the alternative recommendations was detailed within the amendment document.

A recorded vote then took place on the amendment to the substantive motion.

For the amendment:-

Councillors Jacqueline Bright, John Gardner, Lynn Hall, Tony Hampton, Stefan Houghton, Stephen Richardson, Tony Riordan, Andrew Stephenson, Laura Tunney, Hilary Vickers, Alan Watson, Sally Ann Watson and Julia Whitehill.

Against the amendment:-

Councillors Helen Atkinson, Louise Baldock, Chris Barlow, Jim Beall, Pauline Beall, Julia Cherrett, Carol Clark, Bob Cook, Nigel Cooke, Evaline Cunningham, Ken Dixon, Lisa Evans, Kevin Faulks, Luke Frost, Clare Gamble, Ray Godwin, Barbara Inman, Mohammed Javed, Eileen Johnson, Paul Kirton, Tina Large, Ann McCoy, David Minchella, Mick Moore, Steve Nelson, Jean O'Donnell, Ross Patterson, Maurice Perry, Lauriane Povey, Andrew Sherris, Mike Smith, Norma Stephenson OBE, Mick Stoker, Ted Strike, Marilyn Surtees, Steve Walmsley, Paul Weston, Bill Woodhead MBE and Barry Woodhouse.

The amendment was not carried.

A recorded vote then took place on the substantive motion.

For the substantive motion:-

Councillors Helen Atkinson, Louise Baldock, Chris Barlow, Jim Beall, Pauline Beall, Julia Cherrett, Carol Clark, Bob Cook, Nigel Cooke, Evaline Cunningham, Ken Dixon, Lisa Evans, Kevin Faulks, Luke Frost, Clare Gamble, Ray Godwin, Barbara Inman, Mohammed Javed, Eileen Johnson, Paul Kirton, Tina Large, Ann McCoy, David Minchella, Mick Moore, Steve Nelson, Jean O'Donnell, Ross Patterson, Lauriane Povey, Mike Smith, Norma Stephenson OBE, Mick Stoker, Marilyn Surtees, Steve Walmsley, Paul Weston and Barry Woodhouse.

Against the substantive motion:-

Councillors Jacqueline Bright, John Gardner, Lynn Hall, Tony Hampton, Stefan Houghton, Stephen Richardson, Tony Riordan, Andrew Stephenson, Ted Strike, Laura Tunney, Hilary Vickers, Alan Watson, Sally Ann Watson and Julia Whitehill.

Abstentions to the substantive motion:-

Councillors Maurice Perry, Andrew Sherris and Bill Woodhead MBE.

The substantive motion was carried.

RESOLVED that:-

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Treasury Management/Prudential Code

16. The Treasury Management Strategy as set out in Appendix F to the report be approved.

Investment Strategy

17. The Investment Strategy as set out at Appendix G to the report be approved.

At its meeting on 20 February 2020 Cabinet RESOLVED that:-

18. The Officer Appointments to outside bodies and governing bodies at Appendix C(1) be approved and noted.