

Council

A meeting of Council was held on Wednesday, 23rd February, 2022.

Present: The Worshipful the Mayor (Cllr Kevin Faulks); Cllr Helen Atkinson, Cllr Louise Baldock, Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr Pauline Beall, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Robert Cook, Cllr Nigel Cooke, Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Cllr Ken Dixon, Cllr Lisa Evans, Cllr Dan Fagan, Cllr Clare Gamble, Cllr Ray Godwin, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Stefan Houghton, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Niall Innes, Cllr Mohammed Javed, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Paul Kirton, Cllr Steve Matthews, 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 Lee Spence, Cllr Norma Stephenson O.B.E, Cllr Mick Stoker, Cllr Hugo Stratton, Cllr Ted Strike, Cllr Marilyn Surtees, Cllr Laura Tunney, Cllr Hilary Vickers, Cllr Steve Walmsley, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr Alan Watson, Cllr Sally Ann Watson, Cllr Paul Weston, Cllr Julia Whitehill and Cllr Bill Woodhead MBE.

Officers: Julie Danks, Nigel Hart, Michael Henderson, John Devine, Peter Bell (MD), Beccy Brown, Julie Butcher (HR&L), Garry Cummings, Tony Montague, Clare Harper (F,D&BS), Martin Gray (CHS), Reuben Kench (CL&E), Jamie McCann (CS), Ann Workman (AH).

Also in attendance: Members of the Public.

Apologies: Cllr Chris Barlow, Cllr Jackie Bright, Cllr Evaline Cunningham, Cllr Luke Frost, Cllr John Gardner, Cllr Tina Large, Cllr Michael Smith, Cllr Barry Woodhouse.

C 61/21 **Declarations of Interest**

The Chief Solicitor advised members that ownership of a house or liability to pay council tax in the borough would not give rise to a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest. Members were also advised that all members would have a personal interest in the setting of members allowances but that this would not prevent them taking part in the debate or vote.

C 62/21 **Medium Term Financial Plan Update and Strategy**

Consideration was given to the final report in setting the Council's 2022/23 Budget and Council Tax and outlining the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) position to 2026. The report also included an update on the financial performance for 2021/22.

The financial position over the medium term continued to be extremely uncertain in the context of a one-year financial settlement for local government and would be affected by a potential Funding Review and future proposals around Business Rates Reset and Retention.

Given this position across the medium term and in-light of funding uncertainties, Members noted that preparations may be required to develop a savings programme for future years. The position would be reassessed once there was clarity of future funding for local government.

At its meeting on 17 February 2022 Cabinet resolved to recommend to Council an increase in council tax of 2.9% as opposed to 3.9%.

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

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 2022/23 Council Tax requirement for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council of £101,697,237.
3. Approve a 2022/23 Council Tax requirement for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council inclusive of Parish Precepts (£925,550) of £102,622,787.
4. Approve the 2022/23 budget and indicative 2022/26 MTFP as outlined in paragraphs 32 - 37, the level of General Fund Balances set out in paragraphs 14-17 of the updated draft council report.
5. Approve prudential borrowing of £6m to fund transformational schemes to meet the growing demands in Children's Social Care and Special Educational Needs

Taxation

SBC

6. Approve the Council Tax for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council prior to Parish, Fire and Police Precepts be increased by 2.9%, which includes the Government Levy of 2% in respect of Social Care i.e. to £1,764.71 at Band D (£1,176.47 at Band A).

Fire, Police & Parish

7. The Council note the Police precept of £15,889,851 which equates to a Council Tax of £275.73 at Band D (£183.82 at Band A).
8. The Council note the Fire precept of £4,717,453 which equates to a Council Tax of £81.86 at Band D (£54.57 at Band A).
9. The Council note the Parish precepts as set out in paragraph 62 of the budget report.

Capital

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

Organisational and HR

11. Council approve the Pay Policy Statement including the pay and grading structure at Appendix C and C(1).
12. In accordance with the Localism Act 2011 and in accordance with Secretary of State guidance regarding severance payments for senior local

government employees, Council approves the total cost of £333,000 in respect of redundancy costs and payment to the Teesside Pension Scheme in relation to the redundancy of the Director of Community Services and Transport as part of the senior management restructure.

Members Allowances

13. Approve that Members allowances are frozen for 2022/23. This will mean that these allowances have been frozen since 2013/14.

Council Tax - Statutory Requirements

14. Members approve the statutory requirements for Council Tax as shown in Appendix D.

15. The Council must set its Local Council Tax Reduction scheme annually by 11 March of the preceding financial year. The scheme was set at Council on Wednesday 24 November 2021; since that date the Department for Work and Pensions has confirmed the updated benefit figures effective from April 2022. Cabinet therefore recommends to Council that the scheme approved on 24 November 2021 is retained but with the income table at Schedule 1 within the policy document adjusted to reflect the updated figures.

16. 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 23rd February to ensure that the intended alignment is maintained.

Appointment of Auditors

17. The Council approves acceptance of the Public Sector Audit Appointments invitation to join the sector led option for the appointment of external auditors for five years from 1 April 2023.

Capital Strategy

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

Treasury Management/Prudential Code

19. Approve the Treasury Management Strategy as set out in Appendix G to the report.

Investment Strategy

20. Approve the Investment Strategy as set out at Appendix H to the report.

At this point Cllr Alan Watson and Cllr Sally Ann Watson withdrew from the meeting.

Following a debate and in accordance with The Local Authorities (Standing

Orders) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 and the Council Procedure Rules a recorded vote took place on the motion.

For the motion:-

Cllr Helen Atkinson, Cllr Louise Baldock, Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr Pauline Beall, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Robert Cook, Cllr Nigel Cooke, Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Cllr Ken Dixon, Cllr Lisa Evans, Cllr Kevin Faulks, Cllr Clare Gamble, Cllr Ray Godwin, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Mohammed Javed, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Paul Kirton, 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 Norma Stephenson O.B.E, Cllr Mick Stoker, Cllr Ted Strike, Cllr Marilyn Surtees, Cllr Steve Walmsley, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr Paul Weston and Cllr Bill Woodhead MBE.

Against the motion:-

Cllr Dan Fagan, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Stefan Houghton, Cllr Niall Innes, Cllr Steve Matthews, Cllr Stephen Richardson, Cllr Tony Riordan, Cllr Lee Spence, Cllr Hugo Stratton, Cllr Laura Tunney, Cllr Hilary Vickers and Cllr Julia Whitehill.

Abstention:-

Cllr Andrew Sherris.

The motion was carried.

RESOLVED 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;
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General Fund Budget

2. A 2022/23 Council Tax requirement for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council of £101,697,237 be approved.
3. A 2022/23 Council Tax requirement for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council inclusive of Parish Precepts (£925,550) of £102,622,787 be approved.
4. The 2022/23 budget and indicative 2022/26 MTFP as outlined in paragraphs 32 - 37, the level of General Fund Balances set out in paragraphs 14-17 of the updated draft council report be approved.
5. Prudential borrowing of £6m to fund transformational schemes to meet the growing demands in Children's Social Care and Special Educational Needs be approved.

Taxation

SBC

6. The Council Tax for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council prior to Parish, Fire and Police Precepts be increased by 2.9%, which includes the Government Levy of 2% in respect of Social Care i.e. to £1,764.71 at Band D (£1,176.47 at Band A) be approved.

Fire, Police & Parish

7. The Police precept of £15,889,851 which equates to a Council Tax of £275.73 at Band D (£183.82 at Band A) be noted.

8. The Fire precept of £4,717,453 which equates to a Council Tax of £81.86 at Band D (£54.57 at Band A) be noted.

9. The Parish precepts as set out in paragraph 62 of the budget report be noted.

Capital

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

Organisational and HR

11. The Pay Policy Statement including the pay and grading structure at Appendix C and C(1) be approved.

12. In accordance with the Localism Act 2011 and in accordance with Secretary of State guidance regarding severance payments for senior local government employees, Council approved the total cost of £333,000 in respect of redundancy costs and payment to the Teesside Pension Scheme in relation to the redundancy of the Director of Community Services and Transport as part of the senior management restructure.

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reflect the updated figures.

16. 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 23rd February to ensure that the intended alignment is maintained.

Appointment of Auditors

17. The acceptance of the Public Sector Audit Appointments invitation to join the sector led option for the appointment of external auditors for five years from 1 April 2023 be approved.

Capital Strategy

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

Treasury Management/Prudential Code

19. The Treasury Management Strategy as set out in Appendix G to the report be approved.

Investment Strategy

21. The Investment Strategy as set out at Appendix H to the report be approved.

At its meeting on 17 February 2022 Cabinet RESOLVED that:-

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