

Cabinet

Monday, 6 December 2021

Decisions

Set out below is a summary of the decisions taken at the meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 6 December 2021. Decisions made by the Cabinet will be subject to call-in. Recommendations made to the Council are not subject to call-in. The wording used does not necessarily reflect the actual wording that will appear in the minutes.

If you have any queries about any matters referred to in this decision sheet please contact Jonathan Malton.

1. Quarter Two Performance Report

Cabinet:

Reviewed the KPI results and comments at Appendix A and progress against Business Plan actions at Appendix B.

Options Considered: Cabinet could have:

Recommended further actions to address any identified issues.

Reason for Decision: These recommendations are required to enable management and members to understand the organisation's performance. The information included within performance reports contributes to the evidence base for the ongoing review of priorities and enables, where appropriate, redirection of resources to reflect emerging priorities and address areas of concern.

2. Empty Homes Strategy

Cabinet:

- a) **Approved** the Draft Empty Homes Strategy 2021 -2025, as set out at Appendix A, to go out to wider public consultation
- b) **Delegated** authority to the Lead Member for Housing to approve the final Strategy subject to minor amendments, if any, arising from the consultation.

Options Considered: Cabinet could have:

Rejected the draft Empty Homes Strategy 2021-25, but without an up-to-date Empty Homes Strategy, the Council is unable to demonstrate how it is tackling empty homes in the District.

Reason for Decision: To ensure the Council have an up-to-date Strategy, setting out how the Council deals with empty homes in the District.

3. Investment Strategy

Cabinet:

Recommended to Full Council the updated Investment Strategy attached at Appendix A which includes a range of investment indicators to comply with the Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments and the governance arrangements that enable the Council to seek approval for priority investments in a timely manner in response to market conditions, subject to minor amendments by the Head of Finance, in consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member for Finance.

Options Considered: Cabinet could have:

Not reviewed the Investment Strategy, although this is not considered to be appropriate. Local authorities are required to have regard to guidance issued in relation to investments and are accountable to their communities for the performance of them. Local politicians and officers operate within local governance frameworks of checks and balances to ensure that decision-making is lawful, informed by objective advice, transparent and consultative. Good governance means that proper arrangements are in place to ensure that intended objectives are achieved, and the security, liquidity and yield of investments are paramount commitments.

The Council is required to obtain approval for the Investment Strategy each financial year and, where the Council proposed to make a material change to its Strategy during the year, a revised Strategy must be presented to Council for approval before the change is implemented. The impact of the new borrowing rules necessitates a full review of the Strategy, removing the emphasis towards investments for yield.

Reason for Decision: To establish and approve an updated Investment Strategy that complies with CIPFA's revised Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (2017 edition) and Prudential Code Guidance Notes for Practitioners (2018 edition), CIPFA's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes (2017 edition), revised Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments (3rd Edition) issued in February 2018 and new rules on borrowing from the Public Works Loans Board effective from 26 November 2020.

4. Capital Programme Update & New Bids

Cabinet:

- a) **Acknowledged** the performance achieved in relation to the Capital Programme schemes substantially completed in 2020/2021, summarised at Appendix A in the report.
- b) **Considered** the capital programme bids for new projects outline at Appendix B and to determine whether to approve the new capital schemes.
- c) **Recommended** to Full Council the revised capital programme for the period 2021/2022 to 2026/2027, at Appendix C for the General Fund and at Appendix D for the Housing Revenue Account, to reflect the new scheme bids, amendments to the programme and the reprofiling of

expenditure identified in the report.

Options Considered: Cabinet could have:

Not approved the new capital funding bids.

Reason for Decision: To enable the Cabinet to consider the outturn performance of the Council's Capital Programme in 2020/2021, new capital project bids for 2022/2023 and the updated capital programme incorporating new items and reprofiling of expenditure.

5. **Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring (Quarter 2)**

Cabinet:

- a) **Noted** the forecast 2021/22 revenue position against the approved revenue budget shown in Appendix B, the projected major variances with reasons for these variances at Appendices C1 and C2 and the action being taken to address the underlying issues.
- b) **Noted** the latest Capital Programme 2021/22 position [and variances, if any] as shown in Appendix D.

Options Considered: Cabinet could have:

Requested amendments to the monitoring information to ensure further awareness of budget trends and emerging budget issues.

Reason for Decision: To advise the Cabinet of the latest monitoring information in respect of the 2021/22 revenue and capital budgets and emerging budget issues, for the second quarter period to 30 September 2021.

6. **Bids and Savings**

Cabinet:

- a) **Noted** the growth bids put forward (both one off and ongoing) and detailed at Appendix A and B and consider whether those for 2022/2023 should be included in the Budget to be proposed in February 2022.
- b) **Noted** the proposed range of service efficiency savings/policy options detailed in Appendix C and that these will undergo further refinement and consultation with stakeholders prior to forming part of the Budget Setting Report in February 2022.

Options Considered: Cabinet could have:

Not approved the new revenue funding bids and savings.

Reason for Decision: To enable the Cabinet to consider the new revenue bids and savings for 2022/2023.

7. **Fees and Charges**

Cabinet:

- a) **Approved** the fees and charges as detailed in Appendix A of the report to take effect from 1 April 2022 (unless otherwise stated) or the earliest feasible date thereafter.
- b) **Noted** the proposed variations to fees and charges in comparison to the prevailing inflation rate detailed in the report.

Options Considered: Cabinet could have:

Not adopted the revised fees and charges from 1 April 2022, although this was not considered to be appropriate. The Council is required by law to set a balanced budget and the additional income from fees and charges contributes to this, albeit marginally. In determining the new fee scales, due regard has been given to the sensitivity of price increases on service demand.

Reason for Decision: To ensure that the Council receives income from fees and charges where allowable to contribute to the funding of services, to enable discretionary services to be provided and to assist the Council in preparing its Revenue Budget for 2022/2023.