

Minutes of a meeting of the **CABINET** held in the Function Room, South Holland Centre, Market Place, Spalding, PE11 1SS, on Tuesday, 7 September 2021 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

G A Porter (Leader)

P E Coupland (Deputy
Leader)

C N Worth (Deputy
Leader)

A Casson

R Gambba-Jones

R Grocock

C J Lawton

E J Sneath

G J Taylor

Executive Support Members: A C Beal and N H Pepper.

The Joint Chief Executive, the Assistant Director Governance (Monitoring Officer), the Assistant Director Communities and Operations, the Assistant Director Strategic Growth, the Assistant Director Property and Delivery, the Assistant Director Finance, the Head of Environmental and Operational Services, the Head of Finance, the Interim Strategic Finance Manager, the Revenues and Benefits Operations Manager, the Recovery and Support Team Leader and the Democratic Services Team Leader.

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors J R Astill, B Alcock, A R Woolf and T A Carter, together with the Executive Director (Strategy and Resources) (S151).

In Attendance: Councillor A M Newton (Independent Group Leader),

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 April 2021 were signed by the Leader as a correct record.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were none.

3. QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE PUBLIC UNDER THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION (STANDING ORDERS).

There were none.

4. TO CONSIDER ANY MATTERS WHICH HAVE BEEN SUBJECT TO CALL-IN.

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There were none.

5. TO CONSIDER MATTERS ARISING FROM THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANELS

There were none.

6. 2020/2021 FINANCIAL OUTTURN

Consideration was given to the report of the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Strategy & Partnerships and the Executive Director (Strategy & Resources) (S151) which provided information on the outturn financial position of the Council as at 31 March 2021.

Members questioned what the additional £66,000 in relation to the Finance Team had been used for. The Assistant Director – Finance confirmed that this money had been an additional resource in order to administer the COVID Business Grant Scheme.

DECISION:

- 1) That the report and **Appendix A** be noted.
- 2) That the contributions to and use of reserves be agreed in line with para 5.5.1 to 5.5.3 and **Appendix A, Tables 3 and 4** of the report.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

- 3) The General Fund Underspend be transferred to the Council Tax Reserve
- 4) That the General Fund Capital Programme and HRA Capital Programme be approved as set out in **Section 4 of Appendix A**.

(Other options considered:

- *To do nothing.*

Reasons for decision:

- *To provide members with information on the Council's overall financial performance in 2020/21.)*

7. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2022/23 - CONSULTATION

Consideration was given to the report of the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Strategies, Partnerships and the Assistant Director Finance which considered options for the local Council Tax

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Support scheme for 2022/23.

DECISION:

That consultation be undertaken on the continuation of the current Council Tax Support scheme, including uprating in line with DWP's annual update of allowances and premiums for housing benefit in 2022/23.

(Other options considered:

- *Do nothing – retain the current scheme without uprating.*

Reasons for decision:

- *The recommendation would continue to align the CTS scheme and uprating for working age customers with DWP provisions for Housing Benefit and the CTS scheme for pensioners. This has been consistent each year since the introduction of the local Council Tax Support schemes.)*

8. DEBT WRITE OFF

Consideration was given to the report of the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Strategies, Partnerships and Executive Director (Strategy and Resources) (S151) which sought approval for the write-off of uncollectable debt, and gave an update on the impact of Covid and the Debt Respite Scheme ("Breathing Space").

Members agreed that only the principles of the report would be discussed and there was therefore no need for the meeting to go into private session.

Of the total debt proposed to be written off (£17,792,.77), £16,625.60 related either to insolvency or the debtor being deceased with insufficient funds in the estate.

DECISION:

- 1) That updates on the Covid impact and Breathing Space be noted; and
- 2) That the amounts identified in the report, as detailed below, be approved for write-off:

Council Tax	£5,499.94
Business Rates	£3,322.30
Housing Benefit Overpayments	£8,970.53
Total.....	£17,792.77

(Other options considered:

- *Do nothing*

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Reasons for decision:

- *All recovery methods have been considered and where appropriate pursued, before making the decision to write off.*
- *Officer time can be maximised on the greatest returns, at the same time as ensuring robust procedures for debt management are in place across all revenue streams.)*

9. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE LEADER DECIDES ARE URGENT.

The Leader announced that Councillor Drury had resigned from the Cabinet as of 1 September 2021. He would be pursuing a full time career with the fire service which would not allow him the time required to undertake his duties as a Portfolio Holder. Councillor Astill would be appointed to the Cabinet from 16 September 2021 and his portfolio responsibilities would be confirmed in due course.

10. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

DECISION:

Under section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public were excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 4 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

11. WASTE COLLECTION STAFFING AND CRITICAL HGV DRIVER SHORTAGE

Consideration was given to the report of the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and the Executive Director (Strategy and Resources) (S151) which provided an update on the current staffing situation for waste collections, including the HGV driver shortage, and sought approval to implement new working arrangements to support ongoing service delivery.

Consideration was given to proposed improvements to terms and conditions, and changes to working arrangements, training and associated matters.

DECISION:

That the recommendations, as detailed in the report be agreed and recommended to Council for adoption.

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(The meeting ended at 10.45 am)

(End of minutes)

Any RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL detailed above will be submitted for consideration to the meeting of the full Council on **22 September 2021**.