

Minutes of a meeting of the **CABINET** held in line with The Local Authorities & Police & Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority & Police & Crime Panel Meetings) (England & Wales) Regulations 2020, on Tuesday, 12 January 2021 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

G A Porter (Leader)

P E Coupland (Deputy
Leader)
C N Worth (Deputy
Leader)
A Casson

H Drury
R Gambba-Jones
R Grocock

C J Lawton
E J Sneath
G J Taylor

Cabinet Support
Members:

J R Astill and A C Beal

The Executive Director Commercialisation (S151), the Executive Manager – Growth, the Place Manager, the Executive Manager – Delivery, the Strategic Finance and Compliance Manager, the Communications Manager, the Strategic Finance Manager, the Democratic Services Manager and the Democratic Services Team Leader.

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors N H Pepper, together with Lincolnshire Community & Voluntary Service and Lincolnshire Police.

In Attendance: Councillor A M Newton (Independent Group Leader), Councillor B Alcock (Chairman, Performance Monitoring Panel) and Councillor A R Woolf (Chairman, Policy Development Panel).

54. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

There were none.

55. **2021/22 DRAFT BUDGET, MEDIUM TERM PLAN AND CAPITAL STRATEGY (FOR CONSULTATION)**

Consideration was given to the report of the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Strategy & Partnerships and the Executive Director Commercialisation (S151) which considered the Draft General Fund and Housing Revenue Account 2021/22 revenue and capital estimates and the Draft Financial Medium Term Strategy (for Consultation).

The following issues were addressed:

- It was clarified that, with regard to the MTFs 2021/22 to 2024/25 draft estimates, showing the savings target requirement for 2021/22, the table on page 7 of the report pack was the correct version. The table on page 14 was not.

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- The report before members, and the ensuing discussion was the situation at the present time – the ongoing Covid situation was frequently changing, and could continue to affect the budget.
- Reduced Planning Fee income – although some large applications had come forward this year, they would contribute to this and not next year's figures. A number of factors could affect the overall amount of planning fee income, and the Authority was currently being cautious in its forecasts.
- It was clarified that the Lower Tier Grant Fund was a one-off, un-ring-fenced grant that could be used to cover the costs of waste management, leisure and homelessness.
- Meetings had been undertaken with the various Drainage Boards in the area with regard to rises in the amount of their precept. The Covid situation had been stressed, and it was anticipated that they would consider their costs and keep them as low as possible to keep any rises to a minimum. Clearly however, essential maintenance still had to continue to ensure the risk of flooding was kept to a minimum.
- Concern was raised with regard to continued vacancies within the Planning Department, specifically regarding Planning Policy. It was anticipated that, should the situation improve after April, that this would be a main area of focus.
- With regard to how the business rate deficit, laid out at section 4.2.4 of the report, had occurred, officers explained that the mechanism for setting the Business Rates income level was set in January considering information available at that time. However, situations changed and there were various factors that could contribute towards the business rates deficit position.
- Businesses were looking more closely at their business rate situation, and work undertaken with businesses applying for the various grants that had become available during the Covid period had identified some changes.
- Officers were working with the Finance and Economic Development Teams with regard to any shared intelligence around new businesses coming forward in the next financial year. It was reported that the Power Station extension in Spalding had been added to the valuation list, backdated to June 2019, and this would assist in reducing the business rates deficit.
- The first round of departmental Star Chamber reviews had been completed, with further reviews to take place. Departmental staffing or funding would not be reduced to such an extent that they were not able to provide the level of service required from them.

Members were reminded that the document would be going out to consultation, and that the final budget report for agreement would be different due to the rapidly changing situation as a result of the Covid pandemic.

The Leader used the opportunity to urge everybody within their communities to follow current Government guidance to stay at home wherever possible to relieve the pressure on the NHS.

DECISION:

That the following documents be issued for consultation in preparation for the budget setting in February 2021:

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- Revenue Estimates for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account 2021/22, as set out in Appendices A, B and C;
- Reserves position 2021/22 to 2024/25 as set out in Appendix D;
- Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2024/25 as set out in Appendix E;
- Capital Strategy as set out in Appendix F.

(Other options considered:

- *There were no alternative options presented, however amendments may be made by Cabinet before release to Council.*

Reasons for decision:

- *To comply with the budgetary and policy framework)*

(The meeting ended at 10.34 am)

(End of minutes)

Any RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL detailed above will be submitted for consideration to the meeting of the full Council on 20 January 2021.