

Decisions taken by the Cabinet on Monday, 8 February 2021



Notice dated: 9 February 2021

Issued to all councillors and senior officers.

Please refer to the relevant cabinet agenda and reports when reading this notice. The minutes of the meeting of the cabinet will be published in due course. To view the cabinet reports please [click here](#).

These decisions will come into force on the expiry of three working days after the publication of this decision notice unless implemented sooner for reasons of urgency.

DECISIONS:

Item No	Matter	Decision	Reason(s) for Decision
4	Corporate plan draft annual update and draft budget consultation responses 2021/22	<p>1. That Cabinet recommends to Full Council, to note and approve the draft annual update to the corporate plan 2020-24, subject to the proviso that any significant amendment made to the council's draft budget be reflected in the update.</p> <p>2. That delegated authority be given to the Managing Director, after consultation with the Leader of the Council to make further revisions as is considered necessary, to reflect decisions made on the council's budget.</p> <p>3. That all those who submitted views as part of the consultation process be thanked for their</p>	The council needs to approve the annual update to the corporate plan as its statement of strategic direction for the period 2020 - 2024, mindful of the views received as part of the public consultation.

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		contributions.	
5	Revenue Budget 2020/21 Revised and 2021/22, plus Capital programme 2021/22 - 2023/24	<p>Cabinet recommends that full Council:-</p> <p>(i) Approve the revised revenue budget for 2020/21 (Appendix A).</p> <p>(ii) Approve the draft 2021/22 revenue budget (Appendix A)</p> <p>(iii) Approve a 1.99% increase in the Borough Council's part of the Council Tax.</p> <p>(iv) Agree that car parking charges remain frozen for 2021/22</p> <p>(v) Agree that the absolute minimum level of reserves that shall be retained be £6m (plus General Fund Balance).</p> <p>(vi) Approve the Capital Programme 2020/21 (revised) to 2023/24 (Appendix P).</p> <p>(vii) Approve the proposed expenditure from the Renewal and Repairs Reserve, and Information Technology Reserve (Appendices J and I respectively) and those items from other reserves shown in Appendix H that can proceed without further reference to Cabinet or Council.</p>	<p>1. The Council must by law set a balanced budget. It will have used the remainder of its Transition Reserve along with some of the General Reserve to fund 2020/21 expenditure.</p> <p>2. A major overhaul of the funding mechanism for local authorities has again been postponed and when combined with a one year Spending Review, continues to provide considerable uncertainty on funding for 2022/23 and beyond.</p> <p>3. Despite identifying Priority Income and Expenditure Review (PIER) savings of £484,000 these are insufficient to balance the budget in 2021/22 without the use of General and other Reserves. Further significant savings need to be found during 2021/22 in order to reduce the call on the General Reserves, achieve a balanced budget, and ensure that reserve levels can be maintained at above the minimum recommended level.</p> <p>4. The Council needs to be in a position to match its available resources to its</p>

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		<p>(viii) Approve that the use of the monies in the budget and Reserves for "Invest to Save" schemes be determined by the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Leader of the Council.</p> <p>(ix) Agree that the Council does not seek to undertake any capital project/scheme purely for yield that would prevent the Council from borrowing either commercially or from the PWLB.</p> <p>(x) Approve the revised Land and Property Disposal Programme (Appendix L) and agree that disposals can be brought forward if market conditions make it sensible to do so.</p> <p>(xi) Agree that where a Capital scheme involves a net increase in overall revenue costs to the Council, or where any guarantee is to be provided which does, or could, incur costs for the Council, such decisions continue to be made by full Council.</p> <p>(xii) Agree that, no Council properties or land be disposed of, either by sale or long leasehold, at less than market value without further express approval by Full Council.</p> <p>(xiii) Agree that schemes marked with an asterisk in the Capital Programme can proceed without further</p>	<p>priorities across the medium term and to maintain sufficient reserves and capacity to deal with potentially large and unexpected events in addition to fluctuations in income and expenditure levels – as highlighted by the Covi9-19 crisis. In the light of increased in-year spend on temporary accommodation this requires a much greater degree of service cuts elsewhere and spend within housing areas must remain under regular review.</p> <p>5. The Council remains exposed to a much greater degree of volatility in terms of its income from Non Domestic Rates and expenditure in terms of Council Tax Support claims – the cost falling directly on the Council and the preceptors. The potential downside risks of Brexit and the increased reliance on income streams provide greater volatility to the Council's funding. On top of this is the impact of covid-19 and an economic downturn.</p> <p>6. The government have provided additional funding for 2020/21 which has significantly helped the financial position and there are some additional measures that will assist with the 2021/22 position;</p>
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		<p>reference to Cabinet or Council.</p> <p>(xiv) Agree that work on Priority Income and Efficiency Reviews (PIER) through the Strategic Oversight and Planning Board should continue, and where possible identify a sustainable budget for a period in excess of one year. A mid-year review, for members and officers, to be undertaken in the light of the continuing severe financial pressures.</p> <p>(xv) Approve the detailed recommendations in Appendix M, which relate to the setting of Council Tax in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Act 1992 (Appendix M – to be provided/updated for full Council).</p> <p>(xvi) Approve that the budget be amended as necessary to reflect the final grant figures including Disabled Facility Grants - once received.</p> <p>(xvii) Full Council adopt the existing Council Tax Support scheme subject to amendments to allowances in line with national changes. Determination of the allowances to be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer in line with prior year practice.</p>	<p>These are detailed later in the report.</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>Treasury Management, Annual</p>	<p>Cabinet recommend to Budget Council that:</p>	<p>1. The Council seeks to minimise the costs of borrowing and maximise</p>

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	<p>Investment Strategy and Capital Strategy 2021/22</p>	<p>1. The Council approve the Treasury Management Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy, Annual Investment Strategy, and the Capital Strategy.</p> <p>2. The strategies listed are updated as necessary during 2021/22 in the light changing and emerging risks and the Council’s evolving future expenditure plans.</p> <p>3. The Financial Rules and the Financial Operating Procedures of the Council are reviewed and revised as necessary to meet the requirements of the Code of Practice.</p>	<p>investment income whilst ensuring the security of its investments. The Council continues to make substantial investments in commercial property, housing and energy generation initiatives, and this will continue to involve the Council in taking on additional borrowing.</p> <p>2. The sums involved are significant and the assumptions made play an important part in determining the annual budget. The CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice (2017 Edition), adopted by the Council last year, was released to take account of the more commercialised approach being adopted by councils and the enhanced levels of transparency required. The Code represents best practice and helps ensure compliance with statutory requirements.</p> <p>3. The Council has the ability to diversify its investments and must consider carefully the level of risk against reward against a background of historically very low interest rates. Investments can help to close the gap in the budget in the years ahead and thus help to preserve services, assist in the regeneration of the town,</p>
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			provide additional housing and enhance the long term sustainability of the town. However, over reliance on such income streams would involve taking unnecessary risks with the future of the Council and its ability to deliver statutory services.
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