

THE "CALL IN" PERIOD FOR THIS SET OF MINUTES ENDS AT 12 NOON ON WEDNESDAY 22 FEBRUARY 2023. MINUTE NOS 123 TO 128 ARE NOT SUBJECT TO CALL- IN.

CABINET

MEETING HELD AT THE BIRKDALE ROOM, TOWN HALL, SOUTHPORT ON THURSDAY 9TH FEBRUARY, 2023

PRESENT: Councillor Ian Maher (in the Chair)
Councillors Atkinson, Cummins, Doyle, Fairclough,
Hardy, Lappin, Moncur and Roscoe

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Sir Ron Watson

119. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Veidman.

120. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of any disclosable pecuniary interests or personal interests were received.

121. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Decision Made:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

122. COVID MEMORIAL

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director - People which provided details of the ongoing consideration by the UK Commission on Covid Commemoration on how the UK will commemorate the lives lost through the Covid pandemic both nationally and locally and set out a proposed process for consultation following the release of further guidance by government following the submission of recommendations from the UK Commission on Covid Commemoration.

Decision Made: That

- (1) the timeline for the expected receipt of national guidance on Covid commemoration be noted; and
- (2) the process for consultation and implementation outlined in paragraph 2 of the report be approved.

Reasons for the Decision:

To inform Cabinet of the expected guidance to be received from the government and to approve a process for consultation and implementation in due course.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

No alternatives have been considered.

123. ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND ASSET DISPOSAL POLICY 2023/24

Further to Minute No. 39 of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services held on 7 February 2023, the Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services advising that the Asset Management Strategy and Asset Disposal Policy set out the vision and aspirations for the effective management of the Council's corporate asset portfolio and the role it plays in supporting and shaping the Council's agenda for the 2030 vision. Aside from its staff the Council's next biggest resource is its land and property and consequently it is vital that this resource is managed and used effectively and efficiently to ensure that the Council derives maximum benefit from its assets in support of its strategic aims and priorities.

The Asset Management Strategy and Asset Disposal Policy were set out as appendices to the report and will provide a framework for the planning, prioritisation, management and funding of the Council's asset base.

Decision Made:

That the Council be recommended to approve:

- (1) the updated Asset Management Strategy; and
- (2) the updated Asset Disposal Policy.

Reasons for the Decision:

The Asset Management Strategy and Asset Disposal Policy are key documents for Sefton Council which sets out key parameters in respect of the delivery of an efficient and effective property portfolio.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

124. PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2023/24

Further to Minute No. 40 of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services held on 7 February 2023, the Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services which explained that the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities was introduced following the Local Government Act 2003; and detailed measures / limits / parameters (Prudential Indicators) that were required to be set each financial year; and that the approval of these limits would provide a benchmark to measure actual performance against, to help ensure that the Council complied with relevant legislation, was acting prudently and that its capital expenditure proposals were affordable.

Decision Made:

That Council be recommended to:

- (1) approve that the Prudential Indicators, as detailed in the report, are set as the basis for compliance with The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities;
- (2) note that the relevant Prudential Indicators will be revised as required and that any changes will be brought to Cabinet and then to Council for approval;
- (3) note that the estimates of capital expenditure may change as grant allocations are received; and
- (4) approve that authority is delegated to the Executive Director for Corporate Resources and Customer Services in conjunction with the Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services to manage the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary for external debt as detailed in Section 5 of the report.

Reasons for the Decisions:

To enable the Council to effectively manage its Capital Financing activities and comply with the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities. The prudential indicators for the forthcoming and following years must be set before the beginning of the forthcoming year.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

125. TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY AND STRATEGY 2023/24

Further to Minute No. 41 of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services held on 7

February 2023, the Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services that set out the following proposed policy and strategy documents:

- a) Treasury Management Policy (Annex A);
- b) Treasury Management Strategy (Annex B); and
- c) Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement (Annex C)

Decision Made:

That Council be recommended to approve the:

- (1) Treasury Management Policy Document for 2023/24;
- (2) Treasury Management Strategy Document for 2023/24; and
- (3) Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement 2023/24

Reasons for the Decisions:

The Council has adopted CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Services. The Code requires that the Council sets a policy and strategy for the effective operation of the Council's Treasury Management function during the financial year. This will ensure that cash flow is adequately planned, surplus monies are invested commensurate with the Council's risk appetite whilst providing adequate portfolio liquidity, and that the borrowing needs of the Council are properly managed to ensure that the Council can meet its capital spending obligations.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

126. CAPITAL STRATEGY 2023/24 TO 2027/28

Further to Minute No. 42 of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services held on 7 February 2023, the Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services that sets out the long-term context in which capital expenditure, borrowing and investment decisions are made and considers the impact of these decisions on the priorities within the Council's Core Purpose and the promises made in the 2030 Vision for Sefton.

At the heart of the Capital Strategy is the Council's core objective to continue deliver financial sustainability. As such a flexible capital investment programme is more important than ever as a method to stimulate and enable economic growth and strategic investment, ensuring best use of existing assets and of generating future income streams to pay for and deliver day to day services.

Decision Made:

That the Council be recommended to approve the Capital Strategy as set out in Appendix A of the report.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

The Capital Strategy is a key policy document for Sefton Council and follows guidance issued in the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (2021 Edition).

Local authorities are required by regulation to have regard to the Prudential Code when carrying out their duties in England and Wales under Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2003.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

127. ROBUSTNESS OF THE 2023/24 BUDGET ESTIMATES AND THE ADEQUACY OF RESERVES – LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2003 - SECTION 25

Further to Minute No. 43 of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services held on 7 February 2023, the Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services which advised that to comply with statute, the Chief Financial Officer was required to report to Council prior to the approval of the budget and the setting of the Council Tax, to give assurance that the budget was robust and that there were adequate reserves and balances.

Decision Made: That:

- (1) it be noted that the Local Government Act 2003, (Section 25 as amended) requires the Chief Financial Officer to report formally the issues of an opinion as to the robustness of the estimates made and the tax setting calculations; and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves; and
- (2) the Council be recommended to have regard to the matters raised in this report during the final stages of determining the budget for 2023/24.

Reasons for the Decisions:

The Local Government Act 2003, (Section 25 as amended) requires the Chief Financial Officer to report formally on the issues contained within this report.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

**128. REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET PLAN 2023/24 – 2025/26
AND COUNCIL TAX 2023/24**

Further to Minute No. 44 of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services held on 7 February 2023, the Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services that provided:

- An assessment of the Council's current financial position and approach to the 2023/24 Budget Plan and preparation for the additional two-year budget period 2024/25 to 2025/26;
- An update on the Government's announcement of resources that are available to the Council for 2023/24 and 2024/25;
- The Council's current financial position and the assumptions built into the Medium-Term Financial Plan;
- The proposed Budget for 2023/24; and,
- The proposed Capital Programme for 2023/24.

The report also sets out the financial strategy of the Council and the national and local financial context within which it is operating, and it indicated that the Council has a statutory requirement to remain financially sustainable and to balance its budget every year.

Members of the Cabinet expressed concern that neither the Autumn Statement or the Local Government Finance Settlement 2023/24 had mentioned the Public Health Grant and therefore no information was available on the national totals or individual allocations.

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services reported that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services had not made any proposed amendments to the proposals set out in the report.

Decision Made:

The Council be recommended to:

- (1) note the update of the Medium-Term Financial Plan for the period 2023/24 to 2025/26;
- (2) approve the Budget Plan for 2023/24, including the Revenue Budget, allocation of specific grants (Section 13), and Capital

Programme (Appendix D), and authorise officers to undertake the necessary actions to implement the recommendation; and

- (3) Note the Schools' Forum decisions on the Dedicated Schools Grant and Individual School Budgets (Section 12).

Reasons for the Decision:

The recommendations in the report provide the basis on which the Budget Plan will be balanced for the financial year 2023/24 and will ensure that the Council's statutory obligations are met. In addition, it begins the planning for the financial strategy for the following two years to give the Council sufficient time to identify specific proposals to deliver financial sustainability over that period.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

The Council is legally required to set a balanced budget each year and this report has taken due consideration of all financial issues in its development.

No additional options are available for inclusion.