

THE "CALL IN" PERIOD FOR THIS SET OF MINUTES ENDS AT 12 NOON ON THURSDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2023. MINUTES NOD. 63 (4) (7) AND (10); AND 64 (2) ARE NOT SUBJECT TO "CALL-IN".

CABINET

MEETING HELD AT THE BIRKDALE ROOM, TOWN HALL, SOUTHPORT ON THURSDAY 7TH SEPTEMBER, 2023

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

56. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Veidman.

57. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

58. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Decision Made:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

59. DAY OPPORTUNITIES UPDATE

The Cabinet considered the report of the Assistant Director – Integrated Life Course Commissioning providing an update regarding progress on the plans to re-commission day opportunities in Sefton and seeking approval to extend current contracts whilst the procurement concluded.

Decisions Made:

That

- (1) the extension of interim contracts with existing day service providers by a further 12 months to complete the procurement exercise be approved; and
- (2) the update within the report, regarding the commissioning approach and success of the consultation and engagement undertaken and ongoing support of the user reference group as part of a coproduced approach, be noted.

Reasons for the Decision(s):

The range of commissioning activity to support the longer-term vision and strategy had required a much broader market focus due to the impacts of the current cost of living crisis and increased pressure on fee levels and sustainability of provision, including building-based offers of support, had resulted in a longer timeframe being required to help commissioners to better understand the breadth of issues and impacts.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

The option to progress the tender as described in the previous Cabinet Member – Adult Social Care report was considered and rejected based upon the need to further understand of the wider market and impacts on fee levels due to the cost-of-living crisis, which was also impacting staffing levels.

60. PHASE 1 BUSINESS PLAN FOR SANDWAY HOMES LTD

Further to Minute No. 93 of 1 December 2022, the Cabinet considered the report of the Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing) updating on the progress and delivery of new homes as part of the Phase 1 Business Plan for Sandway Homes Limited and following on from the Business Plan approved by the Cabinet in December 2022. The report provided an update on delivery of construction activity and forecast financial performance, comparing this to the previously agreed Business Plan. The report outlined variations to the current Business Plan and provided details of the current progress in respect of Phase 2 Business Planning.

Decisions Made:

That

- (1) the variations to the Phase 1 Business Plan as provided by the Company to the Council as of December 2022, be noted and the revised Business Plan detail, as set out in the report, be approved;
- (2) the range of external economic factors and risks that have the potential to impact the delivery and financial performance of the Phase 1 business plan be noted and acceptance and understanding of these and the material impact that they may have, be confirmed;
- (3) the changes to the loan agreement between the Council and the company, as set out in para 5.11 of the report, be approved;
- (4) the current position in relation to the Phase 2 Business Plan and the intention for a comprehensive update to be provided in November 2023, be noted; and
- (5) any further material variations to the revised position be reported to the Cabinet, as shareholder, at the earliest opportunity.

Reasons for the Decision(s):

Since 2016 the Council had been considering its role in the provision of housing throughout the Borough to complement an active third and private sector market.

There was significant demand for housing sites and housing development within Sefton, with over 11,000 housing units being required, over the Local Plan period, in order to meet with the local housing demand. There was a national shortfall of circa 1m homes (of which 400,000 fall into affordable homes) whilst across the Liverpool City Region a total of circa 50,000 housing units would be required in the medium term. Sandway Homes Limited sought to increase housing completions and the availability of choice for residents and those wishing to live in Sefton.

This would be achieved by working with the Council and stakeholders including Homes England and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority to leverage in brownfield enabling funds to assist the local authority in proactively re-developing sites included in its brownfield disposal register.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

There were no alternative options to be considered.

61. SOCIOECONOMIC DUTY

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director – Place recommending the adoption of the Socioeconomic Duty in Sefton, for incorporation within the Council’s Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and action plan, and the Council’s Equality Impact Assessment processes. The report set out the background to the matter; details of the Socioeconomic Duty and what adopting the duty would mean in practice; together with next steps.

Decisions Made:

That

- (1) the continued challenges faced by many Sefton residents during the difficult economic period and the ongoing cost of living crisis be noted, and support for the most vulnerable residents and communities be continued;
- (2) the Socioeconomic Duty be adopted, for incorporation into the Council’s ongoing work and processes relating to Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion;
- (3) socioeconomic disadvantage be taken into account in terms of the Council’s public sector equality duty; and

- (4) the Council will continue to work with partner agencies and other local authorities across the Liverpool City Region on the development and implementation of action plans associated with the Socioeconomic Duty.

Reasons for the Decision(s):

Adoption of the duty by local authorities could deliver a number of benefits, including:

- Improving outcomes for local people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.
- Supporting cross organisational and cross departmental working.
- Raising awareness of socio-economic inequalities within organisations and among partners.
- Ensuring widespread organisational commitment to, and consideration of, socio-economic inequalities.

It was proposed that the Socioeconomic Duty already aligned closely with the vision, values and core purpose of the Council, but adoption would support sustained focused on continuity and consistency in application of the emerging action plan.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Not adopting the Duty would leave the Authority out of step with Liverpool City Region partners and might lead to missed opportunity in terms of tackling inequality.

62. BUSINESS CONTINUITY POLICY

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services indicating that in the event of a major incident such as a fire resulting in the loss of access to a building, loss of ICT or pandemic flu, it was good practice for organisations to have in place plans to ensure that services could continue to be provided. In the case of local authorities, the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 placed an additional statutory requirement for Local Authorities to put in place a Business Continuity Management Programme.

The Council had existing business continuity arrangements to ensure the continued delivery of its priority activities to protect its vulnerable residents in the event of an emergency.

The revised policy Business Continuity Policy, attached to the report, set out the Council's continued approach to implement an effective business continuity framework across all service areas which would ensure the timely recovery of priority services in the event of an incident.

The Policy had been revised to clarify and strengthen the responsibilities for all staff members and management.

Decision Made:

That the revised Business Continuity Policy be approved.

Reasons for the Decision:

Approving a revised Business Continuity Policy provided leadership, clear direction and priority for the Council.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

63. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT 2023/24 TO 2026/27 - REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET UPDATE 2023/24 – SEPTEMBER UPDATE

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services advising of:

- 1) The current position relating to the 2023/24 revenue budget.
- 2) The current forecast on Council Tax and Business Rates collection for 2023/24.
- 3) The monitoring position of the Council's capital programme to the end of July 2023:
 - The forecast expenditure to year end.
 - Variations against the approved budgets and an explanation of those variations for consideration by Members.
 - Updates to spending profiles and proposed amendments to capital budgets necessary to ensure the efficient delivery of capital projects are also presented for approval.
- 4) The latest performance management information for 2023/24.

The following Appendices were attached to the report:

- Appendix A – Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2025/26
- Appendix B – Performance Information 2023/24 – Quarter 1

Decisions Made:

That

Revenue Budget

- (1) the current position relating to the 2023/24 revenue budget be noted;

- (2) the actions being taken to refine forecasts and identify mitigating efficiencies to ensure each service achieves a balanced position, be noted;
- (3) the financial risks associated with the delivery of the 2023/24 revenue budget be noted and the fact that the forecast outturn position will continue to be reviewed, and remedial actions put in place, to ensure a balanced forecast outturn position and financial sustainability can be achieved, be acknowledged;
- (4) **the Council** be recommended to approve a supplementary revenue estimate for £2.319m for Adult Social Care funded from the Market Sustainability Improvement Fund (MSIF): Workforce Fund;
- (5) decisions on the use of the Market Sustainability Improvement Fund (MSIF): Workforce Fund be delegated to the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member - Adult Social Care;
- (6) a supplementary revenue estimate of £782,414 (2023/24 £360,745 and 2024/25 £421,669) for Place Based Business Support, to be fully funded by the grant allocation from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority funded from the UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF), be approved;
- (7) **the Council** be recommended to approve a supplementary revenue estimate for £1.000m for Education Excellence funded from the Delivering Better Value in SEND Programme grant.

Capital Programme

- (8) the spending profiles across financial years for the approved capital programme, as set out in paragraph 8.1 of the report, be noted;
- (9) the latest capital expenditure position as at 31 July 2023 of £7.195m, as set out in paragraph 8.16 of the report; and the latest full year forecast of £63.999m, as set out in paragraph 8.17 of the report, be noted;
- (10) **the Council** be recommended to approve a supplementary capital estimate for £1.300m for the Local Authority Housing Fund, funded by grant from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC);
- (11) a supplementary capital estimate for £0.628m for the Local Transport Capital Block Funding – Pothole Fund funded by grant from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, be approved;
- (12) a supplementary capital estimate for £0.242m for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) funded by grant from DLUHC, be approved;

- (13) a virement of £0.375m from the previously approved revenue budget for the UKSPF to the capital programme, be approved;
- (14) the fact that the Council will procure an updated Stock Condition Survey for Crosby Library, be noted;
- (15) the fact that capital resources will be managed by the Executive Director - Corporate Resources and Customer Services to ensure the capital programme remains fully funded and that capital funding arrangements secure the maximum financial benefit to the Council, as set out in paragraphs 8.21-8.23 of the report, be noted;

Performance

- (16) the latest position relating to key performance measures be noted;

the Council is recommended to:

Revenue Budget

- (17) approve a supplementary revenue estimate for £2.319m for Adult Social Care funded from the Market Sustainability Improvement Fund (MSIF): Workforce Fund;
- (18) approve a supplementary revenue estimate for £1.000m for Education Excellence funded from the Delivering Better Value in SEND Programme grant, subject to final approval from the Department for Education; and

Capital Programme

- (19) approve a supplementary capital estimate for £1.300m for the Local Authority Housing Fund funded by grant from DLUHC.

Reasons for the Decision:

To ensure the Cabinet is informed of the current position in relation to the 2023/24 revenue budget.

To provide an updated forecast of the outturn position with regard to the collection of Council Tax and Business Rates.

To keep Members informed of the progress of the Capital Programme against the profiled budget for 2023/24 and agreed allocations for future years.

To progress any changes that are required in order to maintain a relevant and accurate budget profile necessary for effective monitoring of the Capital Programme.

To approve any updates to funding resources so that they can be applied to capital schemes in the delivery of the Council's overall capital strategy.

To ensure the Cabinet is informed of key performance information.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

64. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT 2023/24 TO 2026/27 — MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2024/25 TO 2026/27

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services advising of:

1. the update to the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2024/25 to 2026/27 taking account of all currently available information.
2. an update on other areas that informed financial decision making including the Council's reserves position, its growth programme, its position on its wholly owned council companies and the High Needs budget as these were all interlinked with the MTFP.

Decisions Made:

That

- (1) the updated Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2024/25 to 2026/27 and any assumptions made, be noted;

the Council is recommended to: -

- (2) approve the updated Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2024/25 to 2026/27 and any assumptions made.

Reasons for the Decision:

In March 2023 the Council approved a one-year budget plan for 2023/24. As part of this report, an indicative budget gap of £18.5m for 2024/25 to 2025/26 was reported, before any decisions on the level of Council Tax. The MTFP for this period has subsequently been updated to reflect the latest information available and to reflect the ongoing service pressures the Council is facing. The MTFP period has also been extended by a further year to 2026/27. In approving the recommendation laid out in this report, the Council will continue to ensure resources are well managed and reflect the key priorities of the residents of Sefton.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Not Applicable.

