

CABINET MEETING

Meeting: 19 September 2023

At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Councillor Mark Hunter (Leader of the Council) (Chair) in the chair; Councillor Mark Roberts (Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Environment) (Vice-Chair); Councillors Grace Baynham (Cabinet Member for Parks, Highways & Transport Services), Keith Holloway (Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Social Care), Jilly Julian (Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources), Colin MacAlister (Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration & Housing), Wendy Meikle (Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education) and Frankie Singleton (Cabinet Member for Communities, Culture & Sport).

1. MINUTES

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 27 June 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors and officers were invited to declare any interests they had in any of the items on the agenda for the meeting.

No declarations of interest were made.

3. URGENT DECISIONS

No urgent decisions were reported.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Members of the public were invited to submit questions to the Cabinet on any matters within its powers and duties, subject to the exclusions set out in the Code of Practice.

No public questions were submitted.

5. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST TEST

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Mark Hunter) invited the Cabinet to consider whether to exclude the public and press from the meeting during consideration of agenda item 18 – ‘Hazel Grove Ambulance Station’ as it contained information that was ‘not for publication’ within its appendices.

RESOLVED – That in order to prevent the disclosure of information which was not for publication relating to the financial or business affairs of the any particular person (including the authority), the disclosure of which would not be in the public interest, would not be fair and would be in breach of Data Protection principles, the public be excluded

from the meeting in the eventuality it was necessary to discuss the information contained within the 'not for publication' appendix to agenda item 18 'Hazel Grove Ambulance Station' (see Minute 6 below).

Item including information 'Not for Publication'

6. HAZEL GROVE AMBULANCE STATION (ER&H5)

The Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration & Housing (Councillor Colin MacAlister) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on the delivery of a new ambulance station on the site of Hazel Grove Park and Ride which will replace the existing Ambulance Service (NWAS) facility at Travis Brow.

(NOTE: An appendix to the report contained information 'not for publication' which had been circulated to the Cabinet only).

RESOLVED – That, subject to appropriate planning consent being secured:-

(1) Approval be given to the use of the Mayoral Development Corporation Investment Facility to fund the development costs for the replacement ambulance station at Hazel Grove as set out in Appendix 2.

(2) Authority be delegated to the Director Development and Regeneration and Deputy Chief Executive to enter into the legal documentation with North West Ambulance Service to facilitate a 'land swap' following completion of the new ambulance station.

(3) Authority be delegated to the Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic Governance to do all things necessary or incidental to the implementation of the above resolutions.

Performance and Budget

7. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN (MTFP) (LDR104/ F&R19)

(i) Part A: Medium Term Financial Plan Update

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Jilly Julian) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) inviting the Cabinet to consider the outcomes of the review of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2023/24 to 2025/26 including the underpinning MTFP forecasts and assumptions and given the changes in the unprecedented adverse national economic conditions in terms of increasing inflationary costs, increasing interest rates and increasing demand for services, to ensure they continue to be based on the latest available information.

RESOLVED – That in relation to the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Update, the Cabinet has:-

(1) Noted the outcomes of the MTFP Update including the continuing financial scarring impacts of the pandemic, the increased inflationary pressures including pay award, increased demand in Children's services and the highlighted changes to the MTFP forecasts and assumptions approved in February.

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(2) Approved the forecast and assumption adjustments as a result of the MTFP Update outlined in the report.

(3) Noted that the Council's savings requirement has slightly decreased to £10.861m in 2024/25 rising to £44.059m in 2027/28 as a result of the adjustment highlighted and subject to further review and updates during the financial year.

(4) Noted that due to the significant uncertainty, volatility, and risk of the financial landscape the assessment of the MTFP forecasts and assumptions will continue to be iterative with further updates to the MTFP reported to Cabinet as part of the 2024/25 budget setting process; and

(5) Approved the recommended use of one-off resources identified during the financial year to support the Council's 2024/25 Budget and MTFP.

(i) Part B: Cabinet Response: Responding to Our Medium Term Financial Plan

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Mark Hutner) and the Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Jilly Julian) submitted a joint report (copies of which had been circulated) outlining the Cabinet's proposed response to addressing the uncertainty, volatility and risk outlined within the review of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) with a focus on delivering impactful and outcomes-focused transformational change for communities and businesses across Stockport.

The report further provided an overview of the approach the Cabinet will be taking to respond to the financial impact identified in the Part A report which would involve careful consideration of a series of budget options and some difficult decisions to ensure that the Council continued to have a balanced budget.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- The Council had a reputation for sound financial management.
- However, it was noted that the financial challenges that the council currently faced had never been as pronounced as they were at the moment.
- It was stated that all investments made by the council were prudent and all borrowing was affordable and sustainable.
- The Council remained financially resilient and robust and focused on meeting the current challenges as well as delivering its ambitions for borough at large.
- It was stated that the difficulties in providing a balanced budget were not underestimated, but that the Cabinet would not shy away from making difficult decisions to achieve this outcome.

RESOLVED – That in relation to the Cabinet response to the Medium Term Financial Plan, the Cabinet has:-

(1) Noted the approach and endorsed the next steps, including agreeing to share with scrutiny, for comment, the proposals which support a resilient and sustainable MTFP; and

(2) Supported the ongoing development of our MTFP response and transformation programme.

8. 2023/24 QUARTER 1+ BUDGET MONITORING UPDATE (NON-KEY)

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Jilly Julian) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on the revenue budget forecast outturn for the period to the end of July 2023 (Quarter 1+) which included an update on the Dedicated Schools Grant, Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and updates to the Capital Programme.

RESOLVED – (1) That approval be given to the virements to the Revenue Budget.

(2) That the Cash Limit and Non-Cash Limit forecast outturn positions for 2023/24 as at Quarter 1+ be noted.

(3) That the update on Reserves be noted.

(4) That the DSG and HRA forecast outturn positions for 2023/24 as at Quarter 1+ be noted.

(5) That the forecast position for the 2023/24 Capital Programme be noted.

(6) That the changes to the Capital Programme and re-phasing of schemes during Quarter 1+ be noted.

(7) That the 2023/24 Capital Programme Prudential Indicators be noted.

(8) That approval be given to the debt write off as detailed in appendix 2.

9. 2023-24 RESERVES POLICY (NON-KEY)

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Jilly Julian) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on the Council's Reserves Policy following the reporting of the Council's 2022/23 outturn position.

RESOLVED - (1) That the annual review of Council's 2023/24 Reserves Policy including the level and rationale for the reserves held be noted.

(2) That approval be given to the adjustments and reclassification of earmarked reserves held in line with the recommended amounts.

(3) That approval be given to the proposed 2023/24 Reserves Policy.

10. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23 (F&R20)

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Jilly Julian) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) detailing the Annual Report on the functioning of the Council's Treasury Management functions for 2022/23.

RESOLVED – That the Council Meeting be recommended to:-

- (1) Approve the actual 2022/23 prudential and treasury indicators in this report.
- (2) Note the Annual Treasury Management Report for 2022/23.

11. TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW Q1 (NON-KEY)

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Jilly Julian) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on the operation and effectiveness of the Council's Treasury Management function for quarter one of 2023/24.

RESOLVED – That the report and the treasury activity be noted.

Key Decisions

12. SCHOOLS STRATEGY (CF&E2)

The Cabinet Member for Children, Families & education (Councillor Wendy Meikle) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) detailing a proposed Schools Strategy that provided an opportunity to define, refine and reorganise thinking and approach to ensure that Stockport had a school system which was fit for purpose, sustainable, able to respond to the needs of children in our borough and met the requirements of the current national policy agenda.

RESOLVED - (1) That the Schools Strategy outlined in Appendix One of this report be agreed, noting the 6 priorities identified in it.

(2) That the success measures identified in the Strategy be agreed and that an annual update be provided on its delivery.

General Items

13. INTERCHANGE PARK UPDATE (NON-KEY)

The Cabinet Member for Parks, Highways & Transport Services (Councillor Grace Baynham) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on the design, construction and plans to animate the new Interchange Park on top of the Stockport Interchange development.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- The Council had worked with Transport for Greater Manchester and Greater Manchester Police at all stages to ensure that the park would be secure by design.
- The park would be well-lit and well-used such that people would feel safe and comfortable using the park without the need for significant physical security interventions, although it was noted that security measures had been designed into the park.
- The success of Stockport in delivering a new town centre park was highlighted.
- It was noted and welcomed that the play equipment had been designed to be inclusive.

- The environmental credentials of the park and interchange development were highlighted including the measures to hold back water during periods of heavy rainfall rather than discharging it straight into the river.

RESOLVED - (1) That the report and progress in the park be note..

(2) That the proposed for the use of existing funding to maintain and develop the space be supported.

14. STOCKPORT COUNCIL MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT 2022/23: REVIEW AND REFRESH (NON-KEY)

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Jilly Julian) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) outlining the latest review of Stockport Council's Modern Slavery Statement (2022/23) and presenting the refreshed iteration of the Statement (2023/24) for Cabinet's comment and approval.

RESOLVED – That the Stockport Council Modern Slavery Statement 2023/24 be approved and adopted.

15. ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT 2022/23 (NON-KEY)

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Jilly Julian) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an overview of complaints handled by the council and giving examples of lessons learnt from complaints during 2022-23.

RESOLVED - That the information contained in the Annual Complaints Report, including the positive progress being taken to improve complaints handling across the council, be noted.

16. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES (NON-KEY)

RESOLVED – That approval be given to the appointment of councillors to the following outside bodies:-

Outside Body

Nomination

Planning & Housing Commission

Substitute:
Cllr Mark Roberts

PATROL (Parking and Traffic Regulations
Outside London) Adjudication Joint Committee

Cllr Grace Baynham

17. GMCA DECISIONS

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Mark Hunter) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out decisions taken by the GMCA at its meetings on 30 June and 28 July 2023.

RESOLVED – That the decisions be noted.

18. TO CONSIDER RECOMMENDATIONS OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

There were no recommendations to consider.

The meeting closed at 6.49 pm