

## **BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET**

### **CABINET**

These minutes are draft until confirmed as a correct record at the next meeting.

Thursday, 11th February, 2021

#### **Present:**

Councillor Dine Romero	Council Leader and Liberal Democrat Group Leader
Councillor Rob Appleyard	Cabinet Member for Adult Services
Councillor Tim Ball	Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning, and Economic Development
Councillor Neil Butters	Cabinet Member for Transport Services
Councillor Paul Crossley	Cabinet Member for Community Services
Councillor Kevin Guy	Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Councillor Richard Samuel	Deputy Council Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources
Councillor Sarah Warren	Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency and Neighbourhood Services
Councillor David Wood	Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency and Neighbourhood Services
Councillor Joanna Wright	Cabinet Member for Transport Services

#### **82 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting by explaining that this meeting is being held under The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020. The Council has agreed a protocol to cover virtual meetings and this meeting will operate in line with that protocol. The meeting has the same status and validity as a meeting held in the Guildhall..

#### **83 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

#### **84 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chair invited Michael Hewitt (Interim Monitoring Officer) to address the meeting at this point.

Michael Hewitt informed the meeting that he would issue a general dispensation on agenda item 14 (Budget & Council Tax 2021/22 and Financial Outlook) to all Councillors with regard to payment of Council Tax. Michael Hewitt has also issued an additional dispensation to all Councillors who were in receipt of Council services and invited Councillors to make any declaration of interest.

Councillor Tim Ball declared an other interest in item 14 as his grandson is in receipt of care package.

Councillor Sarah Warren declared an other interest in item 14 as a family member was undertaking an educational health care needs assessment.

Councillor Kevin Guy declared an other interest in item 14 as his family business was in a receipt of a government COVID business grant.

Councillor Joanna Wright declared an other interest in item 14 as a family member was in receipt of social care services.

## **85 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR**

There was none.

## **86 QUESTIONS FROM PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS**

There were 13 questions from Councillors and no questions from members of the public.

*[Copies of the questions and responses, including supplementary questions and responses if any, have been placed on the Minute book as Appendix 1 and are available on the Council's website.]*

## **87 STATEMENTS, DEPUTATIONS OR PETITIONS FROM PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS**

David Redgewell in a statement *[a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 2 and on the Council's website]* addressed transport issues in the West of England area.

Kari Erickson in a statement *[a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 3 and on the Council's website]* addressed the Cabinet about Bath City Centre High Street Renewal.

Councillor Paul Myers, in his capacity as the Chair of the Corporate PDS Panel, in a statement *[a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 4 and on the Council's website]* presented the summary of findings from the three PDS Panels of the Council in terms of the Budget 21/22.

The Chair and Councillor Richard Samuel thanked Councillor Myers for the statement. Councillor Samuel invited Councillor Myers to discuss develop on improvements in the scrutiny process of the next budget planning.

Theresa Franklin in a statement *[a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 5 and on the Council's website]* expressed her concerns related to

proposals to Approach Golf Course and asked the Cabinet to keep the Approach Golf Course open.

Martin Grixoni addressed the Cabinet by expressing his concerns related to the proposed Budget, in particular on some of the recent Cabinet and Single Member Decisions where he felt that may have negative impact on the city of Bath and the Council.

## **88 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **89 CONSIDERATION OF SINGLE MEMBER ITEMS REQUISITIONED TO CABINET**

There were none.

## **90 MATTERS REFERRED BY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY BODIES**

Councillor Paul Myers (Chair of the Corporate Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel) addressed the Cabinet under agenda item 6 – Statements, Deputations or Petitions from Public and Councillors with summary of the PDS Panels comments on the proposed Budget 21/22.

## **91 SINGLE MEMBER CABINET DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING**

The Cabinet agreed to note the report.

## **92 DECISION ON AWARD OF A CONTRACT TO A NEW OPERATOR FOR THE APPROACH GOLF COURSE SITE FOLLOWING A PROCUREMENT PROCESS**

Councillor Lucy Hodge addressed the Cabinet by saying that the Cabinet would be making a significant decision on Approach Golf Course. Councillor Hodge said that the Cabinet made a decision in July 2020 on Approach Golf Course indicating that the site would continue to operate as 18-hole golf course. However, the residents were very concerned that the decision on the new operator of the site was not consulted with the residents, and the residents had little warning on what was happening. Councillor Hodge invited the Cabinet not to ignore the petition of 4,000 signatures, asked the Cabinet to listen what the residents have to say at this meeting and put a pause on the decision for the time being. Councillor Hodge urged the Cabinet not to take the decision today.

Councillor Mark Elliott in a statement [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 6 and on the Council's website*] invited the Cabinet to listen to the residents and turn down the bid on the Approach Golf Course.

Lynne Fernquest in a statement [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 7 and on the Council's website*] said that Bath Rugby Foundation has been using this site for many years and their disabled students have received the greatest benefit from this affordable space, and it would be a huge blow to lose it.

Patricia Ludlam in a statement [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 8 and on the Council's website*] urged the Cabinet not to award the contract yet but engage with local residents who have so much interest and help to offer.

Ben Reed in a statement [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 9 and on the Council's website*] also urged the Cabinet to note the residents' concerns for the Approach Course that has been seen over recent weeks (with the petition of 4,000 plus signatures) and honour their commitment to retain golf on the site.

Peter Langley addressed the Cabinet by saying that his family has been in Bath for a long time, and that High Common has been one of the favourite sites for them. Peter Langley said that Council's planners and conservationists should be involved in the planning around this site, in particular on its use. Peter Langley also pointed out that the application has been made to Heritage England to have the High Commons listed. Peter Langley also urged the Cabinet not to make the decision today.

Sally Parkes in a statement [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 10 and on the Council's website*] urged the Cabinet to listen to our local Ward Councillors, to listen the Bath residents' wishes, and keep status quo of the Approach Golf Site.

Justin Draeger in a statement [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 11 and on the Council's website*] urged the Cabinet to reject the bid and pause its decision, consult with the residents and keep the status quo of the site until a proper public consultation is conducted.

Emilio Pimentel-Reid in a statement [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 12 and on the Council's website*] invited the Cabinet to reject the bid and engage with the residents before making its final decision.

Lyn Jacobs in a statement [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 13 and on the Council's website*] asked the Cabinet to reject the bid, consult and listen to local people, conduct research on the future of golf post pandemic, and keep low level maintenance until an equitable solution is reached.

Robert Sumner in a statement [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 14 and on the Council's website*] urged the Cabinet to reject the only bid which has been made for the Approach Golf Course and to pause the whole process of finding a solution / operator for the Course, at least until the pandemic has come to an end.

Rachael Hushon in a statement [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 15 and on the Council's website*] as a Chair of Lansdown Crescent Association asked the Cabinet to listen to Ward Councillors, pause and maintain the High Common in the current state by way of low level maintenance until Covid restrictions are lifted, and economic conditions become clearer, and do not rush the decision.

The Chair thanked all speakers who addressed the Cabinet on this matter. The Chair informed the meeting that the Cabinet has agreed to hold the debate in open/public session for this item. If any of the Cabinet Members were minded to refer to any information from exempt documents, then the Cabinet would move into exempt session.

Councillor Paul Crossley introduced the report by reading out the following statement:

'I want to start by thanking all the speakers and those who have written to me with their views on the future of the Approach golf course. Your passion and respect for the value of this area is evident.

Whilst the decision on the future of the High Common is delegated to the Cabinet Member, I have always made clear that this matter must be considered in an Open Cabinet meeting to enable public participation in the process.

This evening's Cabinet meeting is about whether or not a 'preferred bidder' is appointed. If one is appointed, they will be required to engage meaningfully with the Community before any final decision is made. So, as you can see, there will be public engagement, whatever the Cabinet decides today.

For those who are not familiar with the process, I want to explain that, to ensure a fair and legal process, the Council is not able to comment during a live procurement – which is the current position. If we had been allowed to comment, we could have corrected the false myths and misunderstandings of our intentions.

I would like to highlight a few points in relation to these:

- There has never been any intention to prevent public access to the Approach
- There has never been any intention to limit any other recreational activities enjoyed by those using this space.
- There has never been any intention of selling the Approach
- The only intention was to enhance this important part of the green infrastructure for the city for all residents and visitors and for the environment

The Council has run a robust procurement process to find a golf or golf derived operator for the site. We have sought bids that, as a minimum, maintain community access to the site, but with a view to securing an operator who would enhance the facilities. We have proactively engaged with golf companies.

This is the second time a procurement process has taken place for a viable golf solution at the Approach. This was done in 2015 and again in 2020.

Despite these proactive actions, no viable golf bid has been received.

We will later debate the Council's challenging Medium-Term Financial position. Discretionary services, such as leisure, must aim to deliver financially sustainable solutions. Golf at the Approach has required significant subsidy from the Council for some time now. Any outcome from today must be affordable, meet the Council's desired outcomes, as well as the needs of the Community.

I know my Cabinet colleagues have considered the Tender report. I would like to thank again the Community and Cabinet for the comments and contributions to the discussion.'

Councillor Paul Crossley moved the following recommendations:

- 1) That whilst the bid in the report is proceedable, the Cabinet are not satisfied that there are sufficient benefits to commit to a long-term solution and will not be appointing Company A.
- 2) That the High Common is retained as public open space which should increase the range of informal uses on the site.

Councillor Richard Samuel seconded the motion by saying that the Council has followed a scrupulous public procurement process that is governed by current UK Law. It was not legally possible for the Council to issue a public document on a tender process during its course. Councillor Samuel said that he has worked alongside Councillor Crossley to ensure that a fair, legal, and transparent procurement process had taken place. This was an open tender process which means that, unlike restricted tenders where a particular outcome is sought, the Council was seeking market interest in the provision of services to the two former golf courses, one of which was at the High Common. Due to the pandemic, and due to declining interest in golf, the golf courses became loss making sites, and the purpose of the tender was to seek interest in alternatives. Nevertheless, the brilliant provision of golf services was not ruled out, and indeed efforts were made to encourage tenders to submit the relevant applications. The resident should be in no doubt that this space was not under threat from development, or restrictions; it would remain as public open space available to all to enjoy in perpetuity. Councillor Samuel concluded by welcoming residents' involvement in the process.

The rest of the Cabinet supported the motion from Councillor Crossley and welcomed the residents' engagement in the process. Members of the Cabinet also thanked and Ward Councillors for their statements. Members of the Cabinet highlighted the importance of the High Common area to the residents, in particular for their health and wellbeing.

Councillor Sarah Warren asked if Councillor Crossley had any information on the types of chemicals that were usually used to maintain golf greens.

Councillor Crossley responded with the list of chemicals used to maintain golf courses and added that these compounds were not banned, restricted or controlled.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously) that the Cabinet agreed with the following decision:

- 1) That whilst this bid in the report is proceedable, the Cabinet are not satisfied that there are sufficient benefits to commit to a long-term solution and will not be appointing Company A.
- 2) That the High Common is retained as public open space which should increase the range of informal uses on the site.

### 93 **DECISION ON AWARD OF A CONTRACT TO A NEW OPERATOR FOR THE ENTRY HILL GOLF COURSE SITE FOLLOWING AN OJEU PROCUREMENT PROCESS**

Elizabeth Hallam in a statement [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 16 and on the Council's website*] asked the Cabinet to retain Entry Hill as a golf course.

Katina Beckett (Chair of Entry Hill Community Association) in a statement [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 17 and on the Council's website*] asked the Cabinet to ensure a proper residents' engagement with the preferred bidder.

The Chair thanked all speakers who addressed the Cabinet on this matter. The Chair informed the meeting that the Cabinet has agreed to hold the debate in open/public session for this item. If any of the Cabinet Members were minded to refer to any information from exempt documents, then the Cabinet would move into exempt session.

Councillor Paul Crossley introduced the report and thanked the speakers for their statements. Councillor Crossley said that encouraging and enabling people to be active was one of the most effective and sustainable ways to improve lives and confront inequality. The Cabinet made the decision in July 2020 to run an open procurement exercise to seek a new operator for the Entry Hill golf course. The bids that the Council received were environmentally friendly, sustainable financial future and to promote improved experience for local people. A community consultation on the future of the site was undertaken between December 2019, and March 2020, and involved carrying out substantial stakeholder engagement to understand the views of residents, Golf Course users, and those who would like to use the site. The consultation has ignited considerable interest from the residents and organisations with a range of exciting proposals coming forward. Councillor Crossley thanked everyone who took part in the consultation by recognising the passion and commitment that people have for their own preferred choice of sport. Five bidders have submitted final tenders for Entry Hill, all of which addressed the recommendations of the consultation and priorities of Council, such as to contribute to climate and ecological emergency goals, getting more people more active and ensuring there is a leisure preserve provision for all members of the community in the future through removing the subsidy requirement to the Council. Due to commercial sensitivities and in line with the tender procedure, details of bidders and proposals were not made public until preferred bidders have been appointed. However, one bid has exceeded all others in responding to the requirements, and that was company E. Councillor Crossley concluded by saying that the bid would be public after standstill period of 10 days.

Councillor Paul Crossley moved the recommendations.

Councillor Richard Samuel seconded the motion by saying that this was a scrupulous tender process that was conducted and guided by the law. The tender process sought expressions of interest and six tenders have put themselves forward. Their bids were received and were evaluated against most economically advantageous criteria. Each tender was scored and praised against known criteria available to each tender, as set out in the report.

Councillor Samuel added that the public has been heavily engaged in the process, that this was a properly conducted process and that he was happy to second the motion from Councillor Crossley.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously) that the Cabinet support the appointment of Company E as the Council's preferred bidder. The preferred bidder will engage with the local community on their proposals and once terms are agreed final contracts will be completed, after a standstill period of 10 days.

## 94 PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE PROGRAMME

Councillor Richard Samuel introduced the report by saying that the pandemic has had profound impact on the way the Council had to organise its staff to provide services. During the past year there were over 1,000 staff members working from home which presented a major challenge to IT systems as well as establishing wholly new patterns of work. The Council had to adapt to new ways of working which had forced a major rethink about the use of office space.

The Council's preparing for the future programme sets out the next stages of the programme for which the resources have been allocated within the forthcoming budget.

Councillor Richard Samuel moved the recommendations.

Councillor Dine Romero seconded the motion by saying that it was important for the Council staff to be able to work in an environment that best suits their individual needs. For many this has been working from home but for some this has proven to be much more of a challenge. Councillor Romero added that Keynsham Civic Centre has not been used as effectively as it could be and the preparing for future programme would allow more flexibility for the staff to consider each individual's needs.

The Chair invited Amanda George (Interim Director of Business Recovery) to take the Cabinet through the details of this report.

Amanda George thanked the Chair and read out the following:

'This paper follows the Cabinet paper presented on 10 December 2020 which provided an update on the property services service review and included a summary of the preparing for the future programme. This paper provides further detail on this programme of work.

The Council has for some time been reviewing the way we work. Prior to the Covid pandemic progress had been made on plans to adapt Keynsham Civic Centre to improve utilisation, provide a more modern working environment and create greater flexibility to enable more effective collaboration.

In common with many organisations the pandemic has now accelerated the progress of these plans. A great deal has been learnt, both from staff surveys and engaging with staff, about how staff have adapted to working flexibly during the last 10 months and this has meant we are able to now consider how a blended working approach, where staff have the choice in how and where they work, is possible for the future. The Preparing for the Future Programme has many benefits for both the Council and staff as follows:

- an opportunity to allow blended working for most office-based staff which will mean that they can organise their time and working location to benefit themselves,



their team, and their clients. For many staff this will include a reduction in commuting stress, time and cost and enable a better work-life balance.

- a break-down of silo working between services and the opportunity for increased collaboration between teams leading to improved staff morale, well-being and productivity.
- greater flexibility and increased efficiency of staff who will be provided with the right IT equipment to complement the new ways of working.
- reduced operating costs through a reduction of office buildings and rationalisation of office space along with the opportunity to create revenue through the commercial letting of Lewis House.
- an internal re-design of Keynsham Civic Centre which will enhance the space, resolve some existing equalities issues, contribute towards climate change initiatives and improve the capacity and efficiency of the office building across the week.
- increased hot desking arrangements in some of our offices in the Guildhall for staff who need touch down spaces in Bath.
- reciprocal arrangements with our key partners so that staff have some options about where they work, which are not just at Keynsham Civic Centre, the Guildhall or at home. These options could also help to reduce travel time and cost for some staff and contribute to a better work life balance.

A communication change management and engagement plan is in place with staff. Regular written communications are issued to staff and members, and a service user group is in place to allow full consultation with all service areas. The trade unions are also updated on a monthly basis.

The focus for the next stage of the programme is on the re-design of Keynsham Civic Centre to increase capacity, maximise utilisation of the building and enable staff to work differently. The short-term investment plans associated with the redesign are set out in the report and these costs will be recovered over time.

The concept designs for the internal re-design of the building will be confirmed by the end of March 2020 with the final designs and the technical specification for any works needed by end of June 2020. Whilst the designs are taking shape work will also take place to test prototypes and re-arrange existing furniture to create activity based working areas.

So, to summarise the aim of the preparing for the future programme is to create a workspace that really enables modern and efficient service delivery and fully supports the needs of our staff and the Council.'

Councillor David Wood welcomed the report as being a forward-thinking way for the Council. There was a necessity to change the way we work, due to the pandemic, but also to allow greater flexibility to Council staff in terms of the new working patterns.

Councillor Richard Samuel added that it would be useful for the Cabinet to receive an update on the progress of Keynsham Civic Centre re-design at one of the future meetings.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously) that the Cabinet agreed with the aims of the Preparing for the Future programme and to note the progress that has been made with the programme to date.

Councillor Richard Samuel introduce the Budget & Council Tax 2021/22 by reading out the following statement:

'This 2020/2021 has been an extraordinary year for our country. COVID has wreaked destruction and damage to our economy and our very way of life. And as of yesterday, nearly 115,000 people have died in the UK, with 4 million people testing positive for Coronavirus. Job losses due to pandemic, as we know, have amounted to nearly 1 million jobs. And the retail and hospitality sector have been particularly badly hit. In Bath and North East Somerset where we have traditionally had strong dependence on this the impact was quite serious. This isn't an emergency situation in every sense of the word, and one that has hit our Council was hard as it has hit our residents and local businesses. As 20/21 was a difficult year, I fully expect 21/22 to also be a very difficult year for the Council's finances and the succeeding years until 2025. I do expect some recovery for next year, but we also have to be prepared for setbacks along the long road to normality. It was only six months ago that we were forced to introduce an emergency budget in the form of a financial recovery plan that aim to save £20m during the year and stabilise our finances. And I'm pleased to say this decisive action has meant that the Council is on course to balance the books in the current financial year. This is very important because had the Council being forced to draw on its reserves this year, this would have left us very exposed in future years. I am bound at this point say something about the support we have received from the government. Promises at the start of the pandemic made by Robert Jenrick MP, the local government minister have turned out to be based on foundations and sound. He promised we would have all the resources we needed to tackle the pandemic. Well, so far, we have received unrestricted grants of £12m from the government and expect to be able to claim back £18m for income loss. However, this does not fully compensate our income shortfall, as the government scheme only provides 70% reimbursement and excludes all of the Council's commercial income losses. This means that a £14m shortfall exists that we have we have to make up by service cuts and in the main the slowing down of our capital programme. To sum this up, we have been short-changed. So, against this background, we have been forced to plan for the next financial year. Much of the impact on the Council has been a substantial loss of income which is experienced from the closure of our world heritage assets such as the Roman Baths and Pump Rooms. Other major losses have occurred from reductions in parking and other related transport income. And finally, our commercial estate operating in the marketplace as it does has seen a huge pressure on rental income. Tenants who have received inadequate support from the government have turned to us for help, whether through rent restructuring, payment deferment, or defaults. And as businesses have ceased to trade, income has reduced and for the moment units remain difficult to let as private confidence is drained away. Business confidence measured by the CPI Business Confidence Index is now at -22. Well, this is better than the -87, recorded in quarter two last year. But it reflects not only the pandemic woes, but the double whammy of break of the Brexit chaos caused by the government's botched trade agreement. All of these factors mean that our planning assumptions to 21/22 to have had to be downgraded as a starting point in building this budget. I made an early decision that given the extreme economic turbulence I have described; we should smooth the impacts of reduced income until the local national economy recovered and income levels began to return to pre COVID levels. If we had not taken this decision, we will be looking at making £20m of cuts on top of those we made only six months ago. And I was clear at the time that this would have been difficult at any point let alone while we were still dealing with the pandemic. The Council will therefore be recommended to 'borrow' £13m from our reserves to be repaid by 2025 as a means of smoothing out cash flow.

This is an exceptional action for exceptional times. But it is necessary to avoid damaging those vital services or residents need. Because I expect 21/22 to be a turbulent year, I am making one off provision of £5m into a special COVID contingency reserve. I hope of course that we will not need to draw down any of this reserve and if that turns out to be the case it will be returned to our main reserves when it is prudent to do so. I now want to turn up the main thrust of this budget. It would have been tempting for someone to say these are tough times abandon your ideas for saving the planet and its ecology stop your transport plans forget building affordable housing for the moment. Well, the Cabinet considered this for no longer than it takes me to do my shoelaces. We are clear that the existential threat that climate change poses must be tackled. This includes continuing to bear down on carbon emissions from vehicles and taking other carbon reduction measures. Our budget also contains a range of measures to help our local economy recover, with emphasis on our high streets, enterprise parks and of course of continuing work on Bath Keys. Our own commercial estate will spearhead this renewal work together with valued partners such as our two outstanding universities. We will continue to collaborate and secure funding from the West of England Combined Authority, focusing particularly on transport improvements, investment funding for local acquisition, and support for our economic recovery plans. In addition to these initiatives, I've made clear that it is essential to do as much as possible to cushion any financial impacts on our services for children and vulnerable adults. Nevertheless, our budget can set £8.5m of savings that it is necessary to undertake to balance the books. Wherever possible. I have tried to ensure that these have the least possible impact on our frontline services. We aim to minimise redundancies and there are no imposed cuts. But there are changes which we are funding that will improve our working environment for staff reflecting the dramatic shift to home working as you've just heard. Our budget also makes provision for a modest pay increase that is favourable, particularly to lower paid employees. During the pandemic and in the future over the next year the Council has run the wellbeing hub providing free school meals distributed millions of pounds of business grants kept the refuse and recycling service literally on the road, as well as the whole range of services to the neediest residents. Our pandemic planning with the NHS at a local level has been top rate and the communication of messages on the progress of the pandemic has been faultless in my view. Our administration wants this to continue as long as it is needed. I want to end by setting out our plans for Council Tax levels next year, and how we intend to cushion the impact from lower income households. Nobody wants to pay more tax, but at the same time, most residents value the services they received from the Council. I believe that given the choice, most residents would support modest increase in their Council Tax. And that is why I'm proposing a 1.99% increase in council tax in 21/22. This increase is necessary to bridge the financial gap left by the income reductions I previously described and to avoid further damaging cuts. It also enables the continuing delivery of the programme we were elected to implement. In addition to the basic Council Tax rate, as I've described, but I'm also proposing a 3% increase in social care precept. This will be used to fund improvements in our Adult Social Care Services which were under such severe pressure during the last year. The total Council Tax and social care precept increases amount to £1.40 a week at the end of which the council tax element is 56p per week. Now, I realised that even this amount of increase will be a struggle for some people. That is why I've increased the funds available for Council Tax support and also funds for welfare support by £400,000 per year increase. This is a robust budget for challenging very challenging times it seeks to restore stability in the Council's finances offer a truly dreadful year. And I cannot finish without paying tribute to Andy Rothery and his excellent finance team, as well as

other directors and officers who have supported our work to bring this budget forward. They have worked tirelessly to bring these proposals before us today and help us rebuild our financial strength. So, I commend this budget to the Cabinet, and I move the recommendations set out in the report.'

Councillor Richard Samuel moved the recommendations.

Councillor Dine Romero seconded the motion by thanking Councillor Samuel, Cabinet Members and Council officer for setting this budget. The Council have had a very challenging past year, with huge losses in revenue from heritage services, commercial loans and parking income. The government has compensated for some of this lost income, but not entirely. The Cabinet set a mid-year financial recovery plan which has helped in resetting Council's finances. The pressures on all Council services, especially adult and children services, have remained high and revenue sources remain precarious.

With the prudent action recommended and the increase in council tax, the Cabinet would still be able to ensure that key priorities for this administration are being delivered.

The rest of the Cabinet Members agreed with the proposed Budget and Council Tax for 2021/2022 by highlighting pressures and issues within their Cabinet portfolios, as outlined in the report, and expressed their commitment to continue with the delivery of priorities set by this administration.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously) that the Cabinet agreed to:

1.1 Recommend that the Council approves-

- a) The General Fund net revenue budget for 2021/22 of **£130.07m** and the individual service cash limits for 2021/22 as outlined in Annex 1.
- b) The savings plans outlined in Annex 2(i), growth and pressures 2(ii), in conjunction with the Equalities Impact Assessment Report in Annex 3.
- c) An increase in Council Tax of 1.99% in 2021/22 (an increase of £28.99 per Band D property or 56p per week).
- d) An increase of 3% to Council Tax for the Adult Social Care Precept is approved in recognition of the current demands and financial pressures on this service. This is equivalent to an increase of £43.70 on a Band D property (84p per week).
- e) The movement in reserves outlined in section 5.6 and the adequacy of Un-earmarked Reserves at £12.59m within a risk assessed range requirement of £11.6m - £12.8m.
- f) The Efficiency Strategy attached at Annex 4.
- g) The Capital Programme for 2021/22 of £69.506m including new and emerging capital bids outlined in Annex 5(i), planned sources of funding in 5.8.2, and notes the programme for 2021/22 to 2024/25 and that any wholly funded projects coming forward during the year will be added to the Capital Programme in line with the Budget Management Scheme.
- h) The delegation of implementation, subject to consultation where appropriate, of the capital programmes set out in Annex 5(ii) to Annex 5(iii) to the relevant Director in Consultation with the appropriate Portfolio Holder.

- i) The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allocations and amendments outlined in Annex 5(iv).
- j) The Capital & Investment Strategy attached at Annex 6.
- k) The MRP Policy attached at Annex 7.
- l) The Capital Prudential Indicators outlined in 5.8.8.
- m) The Annual Pay Policy Statement at Annex 8.
- n) The Community Contribution Fund proposal outlined in Annex 10.
- o) The Council Tax Support Scheme for 2021/22 shown in the following link: <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-01/Council%20Tax%20reduction%20scheme%20April%201%202021%20-%20March%2031%202022.pdf> and referred to in 5.3.4.

1.2 That the Council include in its Council Tax setting, the precepts set and approved by other bodies including the local precepts of Town Councils, Parish Councils, and Charter Trustees of the City of Bath, and those of the Fire and Police Authorities.

1.3 That Cabinet note the S151 Officer's report on the robustness of the proposed budget and the adequacy of the Council's reserves outlined in 5.7.

1.4 Authorise the Council's S151 Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources, to make any necessary changes to the draft budget proposal for submission to Council.

## **96 REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING, CASH LIMITS AND VIREMENTS – APRIL 2020 TO DECEMBER 2020**

Councillor Richard Samuel introduced the report by saying that this was a regular quarterly report it covers Quarter Three period. The Council was on course to end the year the balanced budget position, which was an outstanding achievement considering the impact that the pandemic had on the Council. This was achieved with swift actions taken by the Cabinet and the Council's senior management team to control Council's finances.

The capital budget has been impacted by the pandemic and Councillor Samuel highlighted the deficits on the collection of the Council Tax and Business Rates as a concern for future years.

Councillor Richard Samuel moved the recommendations.

Councillor Dine Romero seconded the motion and thanked Councillor Samuel, other Cabinet Members, and the relevant officers for ensuring that the Council was in the balanced budget position.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously) that the Cabinet agreed to:

- 1) Note the 2020/21 revenue budget position (as at the end of December 2020).
- 2) Note the revenue virements listed for information only in Appendix 3(i).
- 3) Note the capital year-end forecast detailed in paragraph 3.36 of this report;
- 4) Note the changes in the capital programme including capital schemes that have been agreed for full approval under delegation listed in Appendix 4(i).

## **97 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2021/22**

Councillor Richard Samuel introduced the report by saying that this was a Strategy that guides the Council's use of its Treasury funds which is annually reviewed and

updated to reflect wider changes in financial markets. Councillor Samuel highlighted the progress in moving the Council away from investing in funds that support unsustainable environmental activities and investing in funds that meet high ethical and environmental standards.

Councillor Richard Samuel moved the recommendations as printed.

Councillor Sarah Warren seconded the motion by welcoming the fact that the Council would be moving away from investing in non-ethical and non-environmentally friendly funds.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously) that the Cabinet agreed to:

- 1) Recommend the actions proposed within the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (Appendix 1) to February Council.
- 2) Note the Treasury Management Indicators detailed in Appendix 1 and delegate authority for updating the indicators prior to approval at Full Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021 to the Chief Finance Officer and Cabinet Member for Resources, in light of any changes to the recommended budget as set out in the Budget Report elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting.
- 3) Note that any comments made by the Corporate Audit Committee at their meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021 will be reported to Full Council on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021.

## **98 TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING REPORT TO 31ST DECEMBER 2020**

Councillor Richard Samuel introduced the report and moved the recommendations as printed.

Councillor Kevin Guy seconded the motion.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously) that the Cabinet agreed that:

- 1) The Treasury Management Report to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020, prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Code of Practice, is noted.
- 2) The Treasury Management Indicators to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 are noted.

The meeting ended at 9.45 pm

Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Date Confirmed and Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Prepared by Democratic Services