

CABINET**Thursday, 17 February 2022**

Attendance:

Councillor Thompson (Chairperson)	– Leader and Cabinet Member for Partnership Working
Councillor Cutler (Vice-Chair)	– Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Service Quality
Councillor Clear	– Cabinet Member for Communities and Wellbeing
Councillor Gordon-Smith	– Cabinet Member for Built Environment
Councillor Learney	– Cabinet Member for Housing and Asset Management
Councillor Williams	– Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillors Godfrey and Horrill

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor Tod

[Full audio and video recording](#)

1. MEMBERSHIP OF CABINET BODIES ETC.

Cabinet noted that nominations had been received for the vacancies set out on the agenda as follows:

- a) Winchester Charity School Educational Foundation (vacancy for two trustees) – Councillors Achwal, Ferguson and Read

In addition, the Conservative group had requested changes to the membership of two Open Fora which were agreed as set out in the resolution below.

Cabinet agreed the following.

RESOLVED:

1. That the following appointments to external organisations be made:

- a) Winchester Charity School Educational Foundation (until May 2025, to be confirmed May 2022) – Councillors Achwal (from May 2022) and Ferguson

2. That the following changes to Cabinet bodies be made (for the remainder of 2021/22):

- a) Central Winchester Regeneration Open Forum – Councillor Godfrey to replace Councillor Lumby
- b) Sports and Leisure Park Open Forum – Councillor Kurn to replace Councillor Lumby

2. **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

There were no disclosures of interest made.

3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 25 JANUARY 2022**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 January 2022 be agreed as a correct record.

4. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no questions asked or statements made.

5. **LEADER AND CABINET MEMBERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Leader and Cabinet members made a number of announcements as summarised briefly below.

Councillor Thompson

Reported on the recent unveiling of the statue of Licoricia of Winchester outside The Arc (formerly the Winchester Discovery Centre). Unfortunately, HRH The Prince of Wales was unable to attend as had been originally planned but an alternative date for him to visit was hopefully being arranged.

Councillor Learney

Announced the public launch of the opportunity to secure a development partner to help deliver its vision for the Central Winchester Regeneration (CWR) area.

Announced that Studio Multi architects had been appointed to undertake work on the proposed Kings Walk improvements.

6. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET 2022/23**
(CAB3334)

Councillor Learney introduced the report and stated that it was considered by the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 15 February 2022 where a number of questions were responded to. Members raised concerns regarding the importance of homelessness prevention and queried why this item did not specifically feature in this or the General Fund report (CAB3335). It was confirmed that the detailed spending proposals to support homelessness

prevention, which did not form part of the HRA, would be considered by the Business and Housing Policy Committee on 1 March 2022.

Cabinet noted that representatives from TACT had sent their apologies for Cabinet as they had no further queries in relation to this item following their opportunity to ask questions at the Scrutiny Committee meeting.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor Horrill addressed Cabinet as summarised briefly below.

Welcomed the opportunity for a full discussion of the report at Scrutiny Committee and the assurances provided in relation to homelessness prevention. Welcomed the recommendation to limit the rent increase to 3.1% and in general supported the contents of the report, including the continued commitment to the new homes programme. Highlighted that the approach to void turnaround should be discussed further to minimise the period properties remained unoccupied.

The Leader and Councillor Learney thanked Councillor Horrill for her support and responded to the point relating to void property turnaround.

Cabinet agreed the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the report.

RECOMMENDED (TO COUNCIL):

1. **That the 2022/23 Housing Revenue Account budget be approved, as detailed in Appendices 1 and 2 to report CAB3334.**
2. **That the 10 Year indicative HRA capital programme be approved as set out in appendices 3 and 4 of the report.**
3. **That capital expenditure in 2022/23 of £9.289m be approved for the Maintenance, Improvement and Renewal programme as detailed in Appendix 3 of the report in accordance with Financial Procedure Rule 7.4**
4. **That the proposed indicative funding for the HRA Capital Programme be approved, as detailed in Appendix 5.**
5. **That the HRA Financial Plan operating account extract, including annual working balances be noted, as detailed in Appendix 6 of the report.**
6. **That the proposal to fund £0.300m new initiatives around the Housing White Paper – “The charter for social housing residents” be supported and additional resources be invested in the capacity of the new homes delivery team, the decent homes team and Neighbourhood/Estate Management.**
7. **That the proposal to increase the revenue funding for planned and reactive repairs by £0.500m to reflect both increased**

budget pressures and the cost of delivering an improved void standard to properties prior to letting be supported.

8. That a rent increase of 3.1% from April 4th 2022 for Social and Affordable housing within the HRA be approved.

9. That a cap on service charges for 2022/23 for all tenants at £5.00 per week be approved.

**7. GENERAL FUND BUDGET 2022/23
(CAB3335)**

Councillor Cutler introduced the report and stated that this report had been considered by the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 15 February 2022. A number of questions were responded to and the Committee highlighted three errors in appendix B of the report as outlined below:

The spend proposals in the section headed Additional New Homes Bonus – Spending Plans should read the same as the recommendations and the table in 13.6 of the report:

<i>Historic Asset Monuments</i>	<i>£450k</i>
<i>Promoting Cycling Walking</i>	<i>£40k</i>
<i>Fly tipping/Street Scene</i>	<i>£185k</i>

All other figures and the total spend in this section remains the same and the recommendations are not affected.

In addition, it was agreed that officers would circulate to members the proposals for promoting the availability of the Hardship Fund recommended in the report as soon as it was confirmed. Members also requested that the Town Account summary in appendix D be amended to reflect staff costs recharged to Town Services and it was agreed to consider how best to reflect this in future reports.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor Godfrey addressed Cabinet as summarised briefly below.

Highlighted the continued uncertainties facing the council in relation to long term budgetary planning, including the government’s future decisions on the new homes bonus scheme and retention of business rates. Given this uncertainty, did not agree with all the proposals to spend the £1.3m “windfall” rather than saving it to reserves. Believed that maintenance of historic assets should be met from within the council’s asset property reserve and that the two trials proposed in table 13.6 of the report involved premature and unnecessary expenditure.

Councillor Cutler and other Cabinet Members responded to the comments made, including highlighting that there were inadequate resources in the existing asset property reserves to fund the backlog of repairs to historic monuments and emphasising the experience gained from trialling schemes locally.

Cabinet agreed the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the

report.

RESOLVED:

1 That a contribution of £200k to the Community Grants Reserve be approved, funded from the forecast surplus in 2021/22, to reduce the immediate impact of planned grant reductions over the next three year period of the programme 2022/23 to 2024/25.

2 That the 2021/22 contributions of £250k to the Asset and Property reserve and £200k to the Parking and Access reserve be reinstated to support future investment and maintenance programmes, funded from the forecast surplus in 2021/22.

3 That an increase to fees and charges of 3% for sessions at the Winchester Sport and Leisure Park and Meadowside Centre be approved, as set out in Appendix F of CAB3335.

RECOMMENDED (TO COUNCIL):

4 **That the level of General Fund Budget for 2022/23 be agreed, and the summary as shown in Appendix A be approved.**

5 **That the additional year of New Homes Bonus Allocation be used to fund the following proposals:**

- a) **Increased provision for Local Council Tax Support, with £100,000 additional one off provision to the Council's Hardship Fund**
- b) **£450k to fund essential maintenance work to Monuments and Historic Assets**
- c) **Low Carbon Transport - £250k to fund trials of low carbon bin lorries and/or buses operating existing Council services**
- d) **£40k to fund the installation of bike storage and other measures to support the promotion of cycling and walking**
- e) **£150k to fund feasibility work to prepare for the implementation of a food waste trial collection system in 2023.**
- f) **£185k to fund the cost of additional city and market town centre cleansing, the maintenance and replacement of street furniture (litter bins, seats, bollards bin stores etc) and also to fund an increased emphasis on fly tipping (additional clearance, surveillance and promotion)**
- g) **£25k to support work to embed the principles of the Council's "City of Sanctuary" commitments and to review the diverse needs of communities across the district.**
- h) **£100k to fund fixed term IT staff to develop council systems to meet the requirements of flexible/agile working**

6 **That the investment proposals set out in section 13.4 of report CAB3335 be supported, including:**

- i) **To reinstate the annual contribution of £250k to the Asset and Property reserve to support future investment and maintenance of council assets**
- ii) **To increase the annual revenue contribution to the Parking and Access reserve by £200k per annum to support the implementation works set out in the annual Parking investment programme**
- iii) **Increasing the annual staffing budget by £175k per annum from 2022/23 to create additional capacity in the Legal Services, Communications and Economic Development teams**
- iv) **Increasing the annual staffing budget by £60k per annum from 2023/24 to create additional capacity in the Strategic Planning team**
- v) **An increase in the budget for annual audit fees of £30,000**

7 That the 2022 Council Tax Hardship Scheme allocation of £100,000 and the distribution of this funding as set out in Appendix F be approved; to be administered by the Revenues & Benefits teams under the Service Lead for Revenues & Benefits.

8 That the sum of £1,061,591 be treated as Special Expenses under Section 35 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 in respect of the Winchester Town area as set out in section 16 and Appendix D.

9 That the Council Tax for the Special Expenses in the Winchester Town area at Band D for 2022/23 be increased by 4.5% to £76.71, an increase of £3.30.

10 That the surplus balance on the Council Tax Collection Fund for distribution to this Council, calculated in January 2022 of £24,315, be approved.

11 That the level of Council Tax at Band D for City Council services for 2022/23 be increased to £151.29, an increase of £3.95 reflecting an average Council tax increase of 2.7%.

**8. CAPITAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2022-2032
(CAB3332)**

Councillor Cutler introduced the report and stated that this report had been considered by the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 15 February 2022 where a number of questions were responded to, but the committee did not ask for any specific issues to be considered by Cabinet. Officers were requested to feedback to scrutiny members on a matter in relation to the demolition and interim open space proposals for the Friarsgate Medical Centre.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillors Horrill and Godfrey addressed Cabinet as summarised briefly below.

Councillor Horrill

Welcomed the opportunity to ask questions at the Scrutiny Committee. Believed the Strategy lacked ambition, aside from proposals in relation to house building, disabled facilities and IT infrastructure. Considered the council was failing in its duty to ensure maximum returns from its assets and that it should also examine opportunities to use the strategic asset purchase scheme to acquire new assets to support regeneration.

Councillor Godfrey

Concurred with comments made by Councillor Horrill and expressed concern about a perceived lack of action by the council in relation to this Strategy. Emphasised the importance of the asset management strategy and sought assurances that this would be submitted for members' consideration as soon as possible.

Councillor Cutler and other Cabinet Members responded to the comments made, including in relation to the asset management strategy.

Cabinet agreed the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That, subject to Council approval of the capital programme, IMT equipment and software expenditure (£343,000 in 2022/23) be approved as detailed in paragraph 11.8.7 of report CAB3332.
2. That the requirement to ensure Members have the right knowledge and skills to undertake their governance role be noted.

RECOMMENDED (TO COUNCIL):

3. **The Capital Investment Strategy be approved including:**
 - i) **the Capital Programme and Capital Programme Financing (Appendices A and B to report CAB3332);**
 - ii) **the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement (Appendix E);**
 - iii) **the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy (Appendix G); and**
 - iv) **the prudential indicators detailed in the report and its appendices.**

9. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2022/23**
(CAB3333)

Councillor Cutler introduced the report and stated that this report had been considered by the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 15 February 2022

where a number of questions were responded to but the committee did not ask for any specific issues to be considered by Cabinet.

Cabinet agreed the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the report.

RECOMMENDED (TO COUNCIL):

- 1. That the Treasury Management Strategy Statement which includes the Annual Treasury Investment Strategy for 2022/23 (and the remainder of 2021/22) is approved;**
- 2. That authority is delegated to the Section 151 Officer to manage the council's high yielding investments portfolio and long term borrowing according to the Treasury Management Strategy Statement as appropriate; and**
- 3. That authority is delegated to the Section 151 Officer, who in turn discharges this function to Hampshire County Council's Director of Corporate Operations, as agreed in the Service Level Agreement, to manage all council investments (other than the high yield portfolio) and short term borrowing according to the Treasury Management Strategy Statement as appropriate.**

10. **FUTURE ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

RESOLVED:

That the list of future items, as set out in the Forward Plan for March 2022, be noted.

The meeting commenced at 9.30 am and concluded at 10.30 am

Chairperson