

EXTRACT OF MINUTES

CABINET

16 SEPTEMBER 2020

1. **REVISED GENERAL FUND BUDGET 2020/21**

(Report CAB3256 refers)

Councillor Cutler introduced the report which was based on proposals which had been presented at an all Member briefing on 23 July 2020. He highlighted the intention to retain the Guildhall on a venue only hire basis for the next 12 months and also to continue with virtual meetings with the decision next reviewed at the end of 2020.

At the invitation of the Leader, six members of the shadow cabinet addressed the meeting, as summarised briefly below.

Councillor Miller

Queried the calculations on savings provided by the guildhall proposals, and also whether it was an appropriate time to restrict use. Questioned the possible effect on Abbey House.

Councillor Lumby

Questioned whether the guildhall proposals had adequate regard to the terms of the "Bapsy bequest" and requested that the related legal advice be shared with members.

Councillor Read

Requested assurances that the guildhall proposals would not impact on the operation of Abbey House.

Councillor Horrill

Noted the removal of the St Clements surgery replacement from the capital budget and requested an update on the current situation regarding this project. With regard to the Strategic Asset Purchase budget reduction, asked what projects would no longer be progressed? Reiterated comments made at Scrutiny Committee regarding the impact be of reductions to the housing repairs and fire safety budgets.

Councillor Pearson

Queried the figures relating to the reduction in carbon emissions from council buildings and also reduced vehicle emissions since the Covid restrictions came into place. Questioned when the proposals relating to garden waste would be communicated with residents and also queried the budget relating to open space.

Councillor Godfrey

Believed the proposals resulted in a reliance on use of council reserves which was unsustainable. Queried the level of capital savings set out in the report and the impact on current projects.

The Strategic Director: Services responded to comments made including confirming that full analysis on savings generated as a result of the guildhall proposals had been undertaken. He emphasised that it was not a proposal to close the guildhall, but continue to maintain as a community asset which would be available to hire on a venue only basis over the next 12 months. He emphasised it was a bequest to the city to develop a community asset, not specifically to the guildhall.

Cabinet Members also responded to a number of the comments made above, including confirming that all residents would shortly receive further details about the garden waste collection scheme. It was emphasised that a number of the points had already been raised and answered at the Scrutiny Committee on 7 September, a summary of which was contained at paragraph 6.4 of the report. The capital budget for the St Clements surgery replacement had been removed following agreement at a previous Cabinet that the project would be financed by private investment and a further report would be brought to Cabinet in the next few months.

Cabinet members also responded to comments made regarding reserve levels and the capital programme and requested cross party support for the further challenges that would be faced in determining the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Council budget for 2021/22.

Councillor Tod left the meeting prior to consideration of the recommendations.

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

RECOMMENDED:

1. THE REVISED REVENUE BUDGET AS SET OUT IN APPENDIX 1 BE APPROVED

2. THE REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME, AS SET OUT IN APPENDIX 3 BE APPROVED

3. THE EFFORTS OF COMMUNITY GROUPS AND LOCAL COUNCILS IN SUPPORTING ESSENTIAL WORK TO SUPPORT OUR DISTRICT IS RECOGNISED AND THAT THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL WRITES TO ALL GROUPS TO THANK THEM FOR THEIR ONGOING SUPPORT.

RESOLVED:

1. That due to the continuing restrictions on operation of public venues and associated operating costs of the Guildhall , that the Guildhall

remain closed to general public hire for the next 12 months but that a “venue only” service be provided.

2. That virtual meetings of the council’s committees continue for the remainder of the 2020/21 committee calendar but this be reviewed on a quarterly basis.