

CABINET

17 February 2022

Minute Extract

1. **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:

- a) To reinstate the annual contribution of £250k to the Asset and Property reserve to support future investment and maintenance of council assets**
- b) 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**
- c) 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**
- d) Increasing the annual staffing budget by £60k per annum from 2023/24 to create additional capacity in the Strategic Planning team**
- e) 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%.