

ITEM 8 – REFERRALS FROM CABINET

15th February 2022

Item 8a CA/07/22 SENIOR OFFICER PAY POLICY

Decision

To set the Council's pay policy for the financial year 2022/23, as required by Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

- (1) That Cabinet recommends to Council that it adopts the Pay Policy for 2022/23 as set out in appendix 1 to this report.
- (2) That Cabinet recommends to Council that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive in conjunction with the Council's Monitoring Officer to approve any amendments to the Pay Policy throughout the financial year 2022/2023, which may be required as a result of legislative changes.

Corporate Objectives:

The Council's policies in respect of pay and terms and conditions support all five of the Council's strategic objectives as part of ensuring that services to the community can be delivered to the required standards and with due regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer Comments

Deputy Monitoring Officer:

The Senior Pay Policy is required by virtue of section 38 of the Localism Act 2011 and this Pay Policy complies with the statutory requirement and associated guidance.

Deputy S.151 Officer:

No further comments to add to this report

Advice

Cllr Williams advised this was a standard report that comes to Cabinet every year; there was requirement for Council to approve the Senior Officer Pay Policy.

Item 8b CA/10/22 CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY

Decision

1. To provide Cabinet with an update on the work undertaken in phase one of the Council's development of a Customer Strategy,
2. To request the drawdown of £150,000 from the Council's reserves to fund phase two of the Customer Strategy work,
3. To request the drawdown of £180,000 from the Council's reserves to fund a Head of Transformation post for a fixed period of 2 years.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

That Council:

1. Approves the outline plan for phase two implementation and recommends to Council the drawdown from reserves of £150,000 to complete the phase 2 work.
2. Approves the principle of a new Head of Transformation post to lead the on-going transformational change programme, including the Customer Strategy, and recommends to Council the drawdown from reserves of £180,000 to fund the post.

Corporate Objectives

Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery

Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer Comments

Monitoring Officer

As noted in the report, a procurement process to be conducted in accordance with the Council's procurement standing orders, must be followed when procuring consultants for the phase 2 work.

S151 Officer

These projects require one-off funding of £330k over the next 2 years to ensure these transformational projects can be delivered.

As the financial requirement is one off in nature and the project aims to deliver change improvements these funds will be drawn down from the Management of Change Reserve.

Advice

JNason introduced the report and advised this report requests that Cabinet reviews and approves the strategy that completes part of phase 1 which is appendix 1, also an outline plan for phase 2 implementation and the funds that are required to complete work and the principle that the Head of Transformation post is recruited to oversee this and other parts of the transformation programme. To summarise the work that had been undertaken to date and the next steps, the draft strategy which they seek to implement across the council. The vision was co-developed with staff and shared with members before Christmas with an activity analysis. The contact points had been mapped for customers across the organisation

and alongside technology that had been assessed. Essentially what phase 2 would do was embed that vision and strategy and work alongside them for requirements and ultimately the procurement of a customer relationship management tool to support with the front line facing services.

Cllr Griffiths said she thought this was a good strategy, which cover all the bases that they'd been looking at for quite a few years and pulling it all together. She would be relived and excited when the council get a CRM system, which they had been talking about for a very long time. She knows that they do already split out so they know how many MP enquiries they get but she requested that in future they would be able to know how many councillor enquiries they get as she thought that would be useful information to feed into the whole of this strategy, looking at complaints or compliments that they are getting. She said that would be a useful tool.

JNason said that she would include that in her piece of work, a CRM system where they can include councillor enquiries as well as MP and FOI's. The idea is that it would capture the background information for officers to respond so that they can then report on management information where it is captured.

Cllr Anderson said that he thought this was a good improvement.

Item 8c CA/11/22 TREASURY MANAGEMENT- MID YEAR REVIEW

Decision

To provide Members with mid-year information on Treasury Management performance for 2021/22.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

That Council accepts this report on mid-year treasury management performance and prudential indicators for 2021/22

Corporate Objectives

Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery.

Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer Comments

Monitoring Officer:

No comments to add to the report.

Deputy S.151 Officer

This is a Deputy Section 151 Officer Report.

Advice

NHowcutt introduced the report and said it is the statutory report mid-year performance on the treasury performance, advising it had been through scrutiny. Performance is in line with what they had been expecting that revenue monitoring and all statutory prudential indicators had been achieved in year. In terms of their security and treasury governance, they had stuck to their principles based on security and then liquidity and finally yield. They were

seeing improvements in interest rates and some projections increase further in 22/23, overall performance of this service would improve.

Item 8d CA/12/22 BUDGET REPORT

Decision

To present to Cabinet budget proposals for recommendation to Council in relation to:

- Revenue and Capital Expenditure for 2022/23 together with the potential use of reserves
- The setting of the Council Tax for 2022/23
- The Treasury Management Strategy 2022/23
- The Capital Strategy 2022/23
- The level of fees and charges for 2022/23
- Advice to Councillors on the robustness of the Budget proposals and adequacy of balances and reserves as required by the Local Government Act 2003.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

Cabinet recommends Council to:

General Fund Revenue Estimate

- a) set a Dacorum Borough Council General Fund Council Tax requirement of £12.836m, and a provisional amount of £13.851m for the combined Borough Council and Parish Councils' requirement for 2022/23;
- b) approve a Band D Council Tax increase of £5 (2.4%) for Dacorum Borough Council;
- c) approve the base estimates for 2022/23, as shown in Appendix A1, and the indicative budget forecasts for 2022/23 – 2025/26, as shown in Appendix A2;
- d) approve the forecast balances of Revenue Reserves as shown in Appendix J, and approve section 11 of this report as the updated Reserves Strategy;
- e) approve increases in Fees and Charges for 2022/23 as set out in Appendices C3, D3, and E3;
- f) approve and adopt the Treasury Management Strategy for 2022/23, attached at Appendix K;
- g) approve and adopt the Capital Strategy for 2022/23, attached at Appendix L;

h) note that this budget paper, if approved by Council, will form part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Capital Programme

- i) approve the Capital Programme for 2022/23 to 2026/27, as detailed in Appendix I;
- j) approve the financing proposals in Appendix I subject to an annual review of the financing options by the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources, during the preparation of the Statement of Accounts.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

- k) set dwelling rents according to the new MHCLG Rent Standard, which provides for a rent increase of CPI+1% (4.1% in total). The average dwelling rents is proposed to be £111.23 in 2022/23 (based on 52 weeks);
- l) approve the HRA estimate for 2022/23 as shown in Appendix F.

Employer Terms and Conditions

- m) note that the hourly rate of all Council employees continues to exceed the rate proposed by the rates of the Living Wage Foundation, for 2022/23 (to be reviewed annually thereafter).

Statement by Chief Finance Officer

- n) approve the statement by the Chief Finance Officer regarding the robustness of the budget estimates and level of reserves as set out in Appendix M.

In addition, Cabinet agreed the following recommendation:

Cabinet **resolved to recommend** to Council that Dacorum Borough Council is to set aside £135k towards the Wendover Canal Trust restoration project. This is made up of a £25k initial payment to the trust and £110k that will be set aside to fund the final £110k once all other funding requirements have been achieved

Corporate Objectives

All of the Council's corporate objectives are reflected in the Budget proposals.

Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer Comments

Monitoring Officer:

Under the Council's Constitution it is the responsibility of Cabinet to draw up firm proposals for the Budget, having regard to the responses to the consultation, and to present those proposals to Full Council for approval. Once Full Council has approved the Budget it is the responsibility of Cabinet to implement it.

S.151 Officer:

Comments contained in body of report. Chief Finance Officer Statement contained in Appendix M of the report.

Advice

Cllr Williams said that this had been through scrutiny and asked if NHowcutt had anything to add.

NHowcutt agreed it had been through scrutiny and that nothing notable to add.

Cllr Williams advised that during the scrutiny committees there were proposals put forward by the Liberal Democrat group, at the time he expressed gratitude to Cllr Tindall, during that discussion he noted that he would reflect on those and make its thoughts this evening.

Two of those items were in relation to home insulation from the general fund and creating a specific reserve to support the introduction of an electric fleet. Neither of those they feel it would be necessary to create specific reserves for, they have a fleet reserve and if need be they could vire cross reserves to support that fleet reserve for the purchase of electric vehicles. He had already discussed at length with the Chief Executive about how important his view was that they move towards a different method of powering the commercial fleet vehicles, at this stage electric was being considered by the organisation.

In relation to the insulation of properties, they have had some good news this week that they have received funding from the HRA to create a project in Northend to insulate 4 blocks of flats.

Cllr Williams asked Cllr Anderson to comment on a 3rd proposal from the Liberal Democrats.

Cllr Anderson said that he wanted to propose that a Cabinet proposal goes forward to Full Council. That proposal would be that they grant the Wendover Canal trust £25000 of the £135000 towards the costs and that they hold the remaining £110000 in reserve so they can contribute to the restoration of the Canal as and when the trust achieves the funding elsewhere to complete the project.

Cllr Williams clarified that the proposal is that the £110000 should be in reserve which they could release when they can match funding.

Cllr Anderson agreed and said they could protect the taxpayer against anything going wrong at the same time demonstrating that they are doing what they can to support.

Cllr Tindall thanked Cllr Anderson on what he had proposed, in relation to the other items he would report back to his group and they will reflect on the decision of the Cabinet and they may bring forward an amendment at Full Council depending on the outcomes of their discussion.

Cllr Williams pointed out that this was a recommendation of Cabinet and not a decision and the final decision rests with Full Council. An amendment can be introduced if its felt there would be a forceful difference to the view they had expressed.

Item 8e CA/13/22 Q3 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Decision

To provide details of the projected outturn for 2021/22 as at Quarter 3 for the:

- General Fund
- Housing Revenue Account

- Capital Programme

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

Cabinet considered the budget monitoring position for each of the above accounts and:

1. **Recommends to Council** approval of the revised capital programme to move £5.78m slippage identified at Quarter 3 into financial year 2022/23 as detailed in Appendix C

Corporate Objectives

Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery.

Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer Comments

Section 151 Officer:

This is a S.151 Officer report.

Monitoring Officer:

No comments to add to the report.

Advice

NHowcutt said that in terms of their financial position they were showing a slight pressure on the general fund with £130000 pressure. In terms of numbers that was less than 1% of their net costs of service, a small issue however they hope to have resolved this between now and year end. Turning to the housing revenue account, he said the current forecast is showing deficit in year, they've had significant changes to capital charges, depreciation as well as some of the losses that the general fund had suffered such as investment income, which had resulted in a bottom line pressure.

The news story in this report was additional capital slippage both in the general fund and in the HRA. At the moment they are looking at those in detail for 22/23 in understanding not only what should be slipped but what would be achievable in 22/23. They have some big challenges in that area at the moment particularly around delays on planning proposals as well as the issues in the construction sector around resource and materials so they are trying to put realistic proposals together that will be achievable for 22/23 including that slippage.

He said that this would go to scrutiny post Cabinet which is unusual but this was because they had budget Cabinet in February.

Item 8f CA/14/22 MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT

Decision

To consider adoption of a new Code of Conduct for Councillors

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

That Council approves the annexed Code of Conduct for Councillors

Corporate Objectives

The promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct by Members of the Council will assist the Council to achieve all of its corporate priorities.

Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer Comments

Monitoring Officer comments

This is a report prepared by the Assistant Director, Corporate and Contracted Services in his capacity as Monitoring Officer.

S151 Officer comments

No Further comments to add to this report.

Advice

MBrookes introduced the report and said that this was a new code of conduct for councillors, which was presented for approval before being referred to Council. He was following a recommendation from the government committee on standards in public life, The Local Government Association developed a new model code of conduct that they recommended Councils consider. The aim of the code was to add a level of consistency and national standard expected of local councillors.

The Standards committee has considered the model code on two occasions and the committee had recommended adoption in part. The committee recommended retaining most of the model code in respects of expected behaviours but have recommended that the Council would retain all of the existing provisions in our code in respect of registration and declaration of interest. He referred to appendix B of the code which is with the report. The reason for retaining the existing provision was because they were familiar to members and they felt that the model code provision were unnecessarily confusing. They felt that the existing provisions work well and suggested they were retained.

MBrookes was happy to take any questions.

Cllr Williams said that having an updated code of conduct was a good thing, if it lifts out the LGA rules.

Cllr Griffiths presumed that them leaving in our piece of the Code of Conduct it does not detract from what the LGA's model code of conduct was.

MBrookes said he does not believe so; the behaviours in the model code will be pretty much presented in the LGA code. He was happy that that was satisfactory, he felt it made sense to retain existing provisions in relation to declarations as members are used to them so it made sense to have a hybrid version.

Item 8g CA/15/22 COMMITTEE TIMETABLE

Decision

To seek approval of the Meeting Timetable for 2022/23

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

That Council approves the Meeting Timetable for 2022/23 as set out in Appendix A to this report.

Corporate Objectives

The various meetings of the Council, Cabinet and Committees support the achievement of the Council's Corporate Objectives.

Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer Comments

Deputy Monitoring Officer:

Further to Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council is required to determine the date and time of any meetings of its Committees, Sub-Committees and Panels.

Deputy S.151 Officer:

No further comments

Advice

No Further comments