

Cabinet

MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 2 FEBRUARY 2021 AT ONLINE.

Present:

Cllr Richard Clewer (Vice-Chairman, in the Chair), Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling, Cllr Pauline Church, Cllr Simon Jacobs, Cllr Laura Mayes, Cllr Toby Sturgis and Cllr Bridget Wayman

Also Present:

Cllr Jo Trigg, Cllr Phil Alford, Cllr Chuck Berry, Cllr Andrew Bryant, Cllr Allison Bucknell, Cllr Clare Cape, Cllr Trevor Carbin, Cllr Peter Fuller, Cllr Richard Gamble, Cllr Gavin Grant, Cllr Jose Green, Cllr David Halik, Cllr Alan Hill, Cllr Sven Hocking, Cllr Ruth Hopkinson, Cllr Jon Hubbard, Cllr Chris Hurst, Cllr Tony Jackson, Cllr Bob Jones MBE, Cllr Carole King, Cllr Gordon King, Cllr Jerry Kunkler, Cllr Jacqui Lay, Cllr Brian Mathew, Cllr Steve Oldrieve, Cllr Stewart Palmen, Cllr Horace Prickett, Cllr Fleur de Rhé-Philippe MBE, Cllr Pip Ridout, Cllr James Sheppard, Cllr Ian Thorn, Cllr Tony Trotman, Cllr Philip Whalley, Cllr Stuart Wheeler, Cllr Suzanne Wickham, Cllr Christopher Williams, Cllr Graham Wright and Cllr Robert Yuill

14 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Philip Whitehead.

15 **Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 January 2021 were presented.

Resolved:

To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 5 January 2021 at a later date, subject to the inclusion of Cllr Clare Cape as an attendee at the meeting.

16 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillors Richard Clewer, Bridget Wayman and Ian Thorn declared disclosable pecuniary interests in agenda items 18 and 22 – Stone Circle Company Business Plans as they were Directors of the Companies referred to in the report. Councillors Clewer, Wayman and Thorn indicated that they would leave the meeting for these items and take no part in any discussion or decisions made.

17 **Leader's announcements**

The Deputy Leader made the following announcements:

1. The Leader sends his apologies as he had a planned hospital procedure brought forward and is now recuperating for a short time.
2. Agenda Item 11 – Town and Parish Council Four Yearly Election Cycle Costs was being withdrawn from the agenda for today's meeting to enable further scrutiny and consultation of the proposals.

18 **Public participation and Questions from Councillors**

Questions were received from the following members of public:

- Helen Stuckey – Chippenham HIF and the Local Plan
- Kim Stuckey – Chippenham HIF and Chippenham Town Council involvement
- Kathy Laurence – Wiltshire Housing Scheme / Purchase of homes
- Ian James – Traffic Management in Chippenham, Chippenham HIF, development in Rawlings Green site/Parsonage Way and the Local Plan
- Peter Cousins - Chippenham HIF and Chippenham Town Council involvement
- Isabel McCord – Chippenham HIF
- Melanie Boyle – Chippenham HIF and associated general questions
- Amy Davis – Local Plan, Chippenham HIF and climate emergency
- Chris Caswill - Chippenham HIF
- Myla Watts – Chippenham HIF and Chippenham Town Council involvement

Cllr Clewer explained that the questions had received written responses which were published on the Council's website. Supplementary questions were received from Kim Stuckey, Melanie Boyle and Chris Caswill. The supplementary questions with responses are included in a re-published Supplement 2 to the agenda at this [link](#).

In addition to the above public questions, a number of questions were received from Cllr Nick Murry about the Local Plan and Chippenham HIF, Cllr Clewer explained that the questions had received written responses which were published on the Council's website in agenda Supplement 2 . There were no supplementary questions. In addition, Cllr Ian Thorn asked a number of questions in relation to Furlong Close. Written responses would be provided following this Cabinet meeting and published in agenda supplement 2.

19 **COVID 19 Update**

Cllr Richard Clewer, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet member for Corporate Services, Heritage, Arts & Tourism, Housing and Communities

introduced the report which provided a summary of the key activities to mitigate the impact of the coronavirus in Wiltshire since the last update to Cabinet in January 2021.

Cllr Clewer explained that since the last report the country has been placed into a third national lockdown. Mass vaccination programmes commenced from 7 December 2020, with local vaccination centres opening on 16 December 2020 in Wiltshire. Cllr Clewer referred to Appendix 2 of the report which highlighted in particular the work of the Highways Service.

The Chief Executive explained that the Council has moved fully into response resulting in some of Wiltshire's multi-agency long term recovery work being temporarily paused. He highlighted that new vaccination hubs have opened throughout January 2021 and support for businesses, vulnerable groups, care homes and educational settings continues. Significant developments since the last report were summarised in appendix 1 under the following areas:

- Test and Trace
- Community mass testing
- Mass vaccinations
- Outbreak management
- Public Health support to Schools & Educational settings
- Community spaces and engagement
- Wellbeing Hub
- Care Homes
- Health and Care
- Education
- Economy
- Safe Spaces
- Wiltshire Highways achievements during COVID-19
- Organisational Recovery

Cllr Clewer thanked officers for their continued hard work and resilience during this difficult and testing time.

Cllr Graham Wright, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, reported that the Committee met on 26 January 2021 to consider the Cabinet report. Robust Scrutiny was undertaken, and the Committee were satisfied with the updates and responses to questions received and supported the proposals in the report.

Cllr Ian Thorn, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, echoed the comments of others paying tribute to officers across all services. In particular he paid tribute to the waste and recycling collection service officers. In response to comments about students ability to access the internet for live teaching sessions, officers explained that live teaching was just one method employed by schools and many schools were now providing a hybrid/blended solution which included a variety of methods to teach students.

In response to questions, comments and issues raised by Councillors, officers explained the following:

- Community testing using rapid lateral flow devices helps to identify those people who are infectious but asymptomatic and unaware they may be spreading the disease. This helps trace their contacts, support them to isolate and prevent transmission to others.
- National guidance gives priority to Groups 1-4 as identified by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation. The Council is working with CIL to identify Carers and personal assistants and the appropriate category.

Resolved:

- 1. Continue to encourage all residents to download the NHS Test and Trace app on their phone.**
- 2. Encourage all residents to answer a call received from 0300 456 0100 as it may be the local contact tracing team within the Council**
- 3. Continue to encourage all residents to follow national guidance**
- 4. Continue to encourage residents who have received a vaccination to continue to follow national guidance**
- 5. To note the work underway to support response activities**

Reason for Decision:

Wiltshire Council continues to work closely with partners to deliver in a rapidly changing environment.

20 **Wiltshire Council's Budget**

Cllr Pauline Church, Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement introduced the report which proposed the 2020/2021 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2020/2021 to 2024/2025 and set out the budget setting proposals, giving details that fed into the budget setting reports.

The Cabinet received a statement from Adrian Temple-Brown in relation to this agenda item. A copy of the statement is available to read in agenda supplement 2 on the Council's website [here](#).

Cllr Church reported that the process undertaken to consult on the Budget was open and transparent. She confirmed the budget timetable and confirmed that the budget papers had been discussed in detail with members at their briefing on 20 January 2021, the Financial Planning Task Group on 20 January 2021 and the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 26 January 2021 prior to its consideration by the Cabinet and ultimately Council at the end of February 2021.

In presenting the report, Cllr Church indicated that despite it being an extraordinary year dealing with and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council's financial management and spending controls together with emergency funding from Government has seen a forecast balanced budget by the end of the 2020/21 financial year, placing the Council in a strong position going into 2021/22. The 2021/22 budget will ensure that vital services to the residents, businesses and communities of Wiltshire are continued to be provided during the pandemic and the recovery that will follow the emerging vaccine rollout. In recognition of this the Cabinet is proposing in this budget to set aside £1m a year over the life of the four year MTFS to aid recovery in Wiltshire's market towns.

Cllr Church commented further on (i) the Council tax and the Social Care Levy; (ii) significant service investment – Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Waste Services and Leisure; (iii) reserves; (iv) budget assumptions for future years.

Cllr Graham Wright, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, reported that the Committee met on 26 January 2021 to consider the Cabinet report. Robust Scrutiny was undertaken, and the Committee were satisfied with the updates and responses to questions received and supported the proposals in the report. The report of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee was published as an agenda Supplement.

Cllr Pip Ridout, Chair of the Financial Planning Task Group, reported that the Task Group met on 20 January 2021 to consider the Cabinet report. Many complex questions were raised and she thanked the Cllr Church and the Interim Corporate Director of Resources (S151 Officer) for summarising the critical issues and for the clarity and transparency of the budget papers.

Resolved: To recommend that Council

- 1. That a net general fund budget of 2021/22 of £412.561m is approved;**
- 2. That the Councils Tax requirement for the Council be set at £298.265m for 2021/22 with an average Band D of £1,590.60;**
- 3. That the Wiltshire Council element of the Council Tax be increased in 2021/22 by the following:**
 - i. A 1.99% general increase;**
 - ii. Plus a levy of 3% to be spent solely on Adult Social Care;**
- 4. That the Corporate Leadership Team be required to meet the revenue budget targets for each service area as set out in Appendix 1 to this report, for the delivery of Council services in 2021/22;**
- 5. Delegate changes in fees and charges as set out in the report;**

6. That the Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2029/30 is approved;
7. That the Capital Strategy set out in Appendix 9 is adopted;
8. That the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2021/22 is set at £23.626m;
9. That a 1.5% increase is set for social dwelling rents, except for rents currently over the formula rent which will be capped at formula rent as per national guidance;
10. All service charges related to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) being increased to cover costs and garage rents increased by 1.5%;
11. Endorses the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the forecast budget gap of £45.512m for the 2022/23 financial year with regular updates to be received on delivery against strategy and addressing the forecast budget gap.

Reason for decision:

To enable the Cabinet to recommend to Council a balanced revenue budget for the financial year 2021/22 and to set the level of Council Tax.

To enable effective, transparent decision making and ensure sound financial management as part of the Councils overall control environment.

The Cabinet also sets out the final assumptions being used in the budget for growth, inflation, demand for services, the estimated level of income from sales, fees and charges and the level of income estimated from core funding e.g. council tax, business rates and government grants and how all of these aspects have been impacted by COVID-19 pandemic as well as the level of reserves held and assessed by the Councils Section 151 Officer, as required, to provide future financial resilience.

This provides the Council with a MTFs to begin to drive long term financial sustainability, look towards recovery and continue to deliver on the Councils business plan.

21 **Treasury Management Strategy**

Cllr Pauline Church, Cabinet Member for Finance, Procurement and Commercial Investment presented the Treasury Management Strategy for 2021/22.

The report included information about:

- Prudential and Treasury Indicators for the next three years

- Debt management decisions required for 2021/2022 that do not feature within the Prudential or Treasury Indicators (paragraphs 74 to 81)
- Minimum Revenue Provision Policy 2021/2022; and
- Annual Investment Strategy for 2021/2022

In response to comments from Cllr Ian Thorn, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, Cllr Church and officers explained:

- With regard to the potential for restructuring of existing long-term loans, the situation would be monitored and if savings could be generated, then appropriate action would be taken to achieve these.
- That a written response would be provided in relation to the original Capital budget for 2020/21
- Future Capital expenditure plans and investment levels are dictated by receipt of grants and future commercial activities

Resolved: To recommend that Council

- a. **Adopt the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy (paragraph 31 – 33)**
- b. **Adopt the Prudential and Treasury Indicators (paragraphs 24 – 30, 43 – 49 and Appendix A)**
- c. **Adopt the Annual Investment Strategy (paragraph 82 onwards).**
- d. **Delegate to the Interim Corporate Director of Resources the authority to vary the amount of borrowing and other long-term liabilities within the Treasury Indicators for the Authorised Limit and the Operational Boundary**
- e. **Authorise the Interim Corporate Director of Resources to agree the restructuring of existing long-term loans where savings are achievable or to enhance the long-term portfolio**
- f. **Agree that short term cash surpluses and deficits continue to be managed through temporary loans, deposits and money market funds**
- g. **Agree that any surplus cash balances not required to cover borrowing are placed in the most appropriate specified or non-specified investments, particularly where this is more cost effective than short term deposits; and delegate to the Interim Corporate Director of Resources the authority to select such funds**
- h. **Adopt the Third Party Loans Policy (paragraph 97 and Appendix F)**

Reason for decision:

To enable the Council to agree a Treasury Management Strategy for 2021/22 and set Prudential Indicators that comply with statutory guidance and reflect best practice.

22 **Q3 Budget Monitoring**

Cllr Pauline Church, Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement introduced the report which informed members of the third quarterly budget monitoring forecast position (as at 31 December 2020) for the financial year 2020/21 for revenue and capital as well as an update on the forecast financial impact of COVID-19.

Cllr Church commented on the impact of COVID-19 on the Council finances, monitoring of quarter 3 revenue and capital budgets, which transparently estimates the most realistic overall financial position.

Cllr Pip Ridout, Chair of the Financial Planning Task Group, explained that the report was not included in the agenda for the Task Group meeting on 20 January 2021 to devote more time to consider the Budget 2021/22, however, she was aware of the reports contents and very happy with the prudent way forward suggested in the report.

In response to comments from Cllr Ian Thorn, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, Cllr Church and officers explained:

- That COVID-19 had an impact on the Learning Disabilities and Mental Health budget underspend due to a freeze in recruitment and receipt of grants towards infection control.
- The report contains specific assumptions about the impact of COVID-19 now and in the future and therefore the report contains analysis of the financial position sometimes in great detail.
- The Council has benefited from emergency Government grants to help ease the impact of COVID-19 and there is always an element of risk whether the grant would be sufficient enough to cover this financial impact in a positive and negative way.

Resolved:

1. That Cabinet note:

- a) the Section 151 officer's summary of the impact of COVID-19 on the Council's 2020/21 budget;**
- b) the current revenue budget is forecast to balance by the end of the financial year;**

- c) the current savings delivery performance for the year;
- d) the forecast level of reserves;
- e) the current capital budget movements and spend as at 31 December 2020

2. To approve the transfer to new Earmarked Reserves of £4.958m to a Latent Demand reserve and £8.613m to a Collection Fund Volatility reserve

Reason for decision:

To enable the Cabinet to recommend to Council a balanced revenue budget for the financial year 2021/22 and to set the level of Council Tax.

To enable effective, transparent decision making and ensure sound financial management as part of the Councils overall control environment.

The Cabinet also sets out the final assumptions being used in the budget for growth, inflation, demand for services, the estimated level of income from sales, fees and charges and the level of income estimated from core funding e.g. council tax, business rates and government grants and how all of these aspects have been impacted by COVID-19 pandemic as well as the level of reserves held and assessed by the Councils Section 151 Officer, as required, to provide future financial resilience.

This provides the Council with a MTF5 to begin to drive long term financial sustainability, look towards recovery and continue to deliver on the Councils business plan.

23 Returning Officer Fees and Charges

Cllr Richard Clewer, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Heritage, Arts & Tourism, Housing and Communities introduced the report which proposed the Returning Officer's scale of fees and charges scheme to run local elections and referenda effective from 1 April 2021.

The report indicated that the Returning Officer is appointed by the local authority to conduct elections and referendums within the local authority area. The current 2013 scale is outdated in terms of pay rates and inadequately reflecting the job roles and services required. There was now a need for specific job roles and services to be identified and included in the fees and charges scheme. The report also includes information relating to the Returning Officer as the designated Counting Officer for Neighbourhood Planning Referendums.

Cllr Graham Wright, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, explained that he and Cllr Alan Hill (Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee) received a briefing on the report on 1

February 2021. Cllr Wright confirmed that he and Cllr Hill were comfortable with the proposals.

In response to comments from Cllr Ian Thorn, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, about budget costs and Chief Executive fees, Cllr Clewer and the Director of Legal and Governance explained that due to the complexity of the four different types of elections due, a written response would be prepared to respond to the issues raised.

Resolved:

To recommend Council to:

- a. approve the revised scale of fees and charges effective from April 2021;**
- b. note the inclusion of fees for Neighbourhood Planning Referendums;**
- c. approve a revised scale of charging for uncontested elections;**
- d. approve a revised scale of charging for countermanded or postponed elections.**

Reason for decision:

The existing 2013 scheme is outdated and does not reflect all the job roles, pay rates and services required to run an election/referendum. The proposed new scheme addresses this and provides a clear and transparent scale of election/referendum costs. It also captures costs for all scenarios whether the election is contested, uncontested, countermanded or postponed.

24 Town and Parish Council four-yearly election cycle costs

This report was withdrawn from the agenda. See minute 17 for detail.

25 Extra Care Housing

Cllr Simon Jacobs, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Public Protection introduced the report which provided recommendations for the future commissioning of support to residents living in the four Extra Care Housing (ECH) sites supported financially by Wiltshire Council: Needham House, Crammer Court, Meadow Court & Bell Orchard.

Cllr Jacobs reported that ECH services are discretionary rather than statutory, which offer support to residents in emergencies. It is provided under contract by

Somerset Care and Cera Care (formerly Mears). However, the service model is no longer considered fit for purpose when viewed against more effective models of independent living. The report detailed three principal options, in producing the options officers considered the first stage consultation findings, range of alternative means of supporting residents' outcomes effectively, as well as the need to ensure efficient use of public money and focus investment on those in greatest need in a challenging financial climate for the Council. The preferred option being option C – Hub & Spoke ECH model.

Cllr Chuck Berry, Chair of the Health Select Committee received a briefing alongside Cllr Graham Wright, Chair and Cllr Alan Hill, Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, and Cllr Pip Ridout, Chair of the Financial Planning Task Group on 27 January 2021. Cllr Berry and Cllr Ridout confirmed that they supported the proposals detailed in the cabinet report.

In response to comments from members, Cllr Clewer, Cllr Jacobs and officers explained:

- That consideration would be given to the results of the consultation and the final model would be finalised accordingly.
- The Council is using its rights under the shared ownership leases to buy back those leases on the death of the leaseholder or when the leaseholder wishes to move.
- The request to consider a model with 2 hubs rather than 1 would be taken on board with all other comments from the consultation.

Resolved:

- 1. To note the indicative timetable and the requirement to extend current provision as an interim stage to support the service design and transition to a new model.**
- 2. To endorse the recommended option of ending the current contracts and transitioning to a new support model identified in section 6c. This model would retain an onsite presence at Needham House with visiting support being available to the other three sites with additional community alarm capacity.**
- 3. That residents are consulted on the recommended option and their views inform the final decision.**
- 4. That residents continue to be involved in the design of new support arrangements, alongside engagement with potential providers.**
- 5. That the final decision on the future means of supporting ECH residents and any associated contract award decisions is delegated to the Director Joint Commissioning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Public Protection and the Corporate Director of Resources.**

- 6. To extend the suspension of core charge contributions at Needham House and Bell Orchard until the expiry of the current contractual arrangements to support consultation, service redesign and any necessary procurement.**

Reason for decision:

- 1. Current contractual arrangements cannot run 'at will' indefinitely.*
- 2. Initial resident consultation suggests low utilisation or need for the services in their current form, suggesting better alternatives for support residents' continued independence.*
- 3. Residents' views should be sought on the Council's recommended option.*

26 **School Admissions Policies 2022-2023**

Cllr Laura Mayes, Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills presented a report which detailed the School Admission Policy 2022/2023, as part of the statutory process for the determination of admission arrangements to maintained schools.

In response to comments from members, Cllr Mayes and officers explained:

- That 13 schools were opting out of in year coordination for the 2022/23 academic year due to there being no legal requirement to coordinate in year applications.
- The School Admissions Team work with colleagues in Academies, Foundation and Aided schools in Wiltshire and other local authorities.

Resolved:

- a) Approve the proposed scheme for the co-ordination of admission to secondary schools for 2022/23.**
- b) Approve the proposed scheme for the co-ordination of admissions to primary schools for 2022/23.**
- c) Approve the proposed admission arrangements for Voluntary Controlled & Community Secondary Schools for 2022/23.**
- d) Approve the proposed admission arrangements for Voluntary Controlled & Community Primary Schools for 2022/23.**

Reason for decision:

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to have a determined admission policy for 2022/23 in place on or before 28 February 2021.

27 **Update on Council's Response to the Climate Emergency**

Cllr Richard Clewer, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Heritage, Arts & Tourism, Housing and Communities introduced the report which provided an update on the Council's response to the Climate Emergency.

The Cabinet received questions from Amy Davis in relation to this report, which were received under agenda item 5 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors, and a statement was read out on behalf of Amy Davis. A copy of the statement is available to read in agenda supplement 2 on the Council's website [here](#).

Additional questions and a statement were submitted from Bill Jarvis, although these were received after the deadline for their receipt. Cllr Clewer explained that these questions would receive a response after this meeting. A copy of the statement is available to read in agenda supplement 2 on the Council's website [here](#).

Cllr Clewer reminded Cabinet that a commitment was made to provide six-monthly progress updates on actions the council is taking to reduce carbon generation in Wiltshire. This is the third progress report to Cabinet following updates in October 2019 and July 2020. He commented specifically on the work being undertaken by the Council on investment in the existing council housing stock to increase its energy efficiency, Salisbury River Park Scheme, Green Homes Grant Scheme, Local Plan Review and conversion of streetlights to LED's

He referred to the discussion document in Appendix 1 setting out the proposed approach to developing a draft Climate Strategy and its outline content, navigating engagement and consultation through to final adoption. The document also introduces the provisional delivery themes, which will shape the organisation's approach to realising its climate ambitions. It was anticipated that the strategy would be adopted by Full Council following consultation during 2021.

Cabinet members congratulated Cllr Clewer and the officer team for the progress made with the projects and schemes detailed in the report, and encouraged them to continue their good work. It was noted that the Street lighting programme had completed 21,300 conversions to LED lights. The Cabinet were also informed of the preparations for a Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy to sit alongside the Local Plan Review. The strategy will both inform and support the implementation of policies within the Local Plan. It also plays an important role, as a corporate document, alongside the Climate Strategy that will be focused on delivering improvements to the natural environment and has shared objectives.

Cllr Stuart Wheeler, Chair of the Environment Select Committee reported that the Committee had considered the report of the Global Warming & Climate

Change Task Group at its meeting on 13 January 2021. The Committee welcomed the level of detailed evidence contained in the report and the Committee is fully convinced about the Council's commitment to the process. The Committee will respond further in due course.

Cllr Ian Thorn, Leader of the Liberal Democrats, congratulated Cllr Clewer and his officer team for the progress and developments made to date. He commented further on the Council's commitment to be carbon zero by 2030 and questioned whether the infrastructure would be in place.

Comments from members included the need to consider moving journeys to the most efficient and lowest emissions travel, to consider planning applications for incinerators very carefully and in light of the Council's ambitions in relation to reductions in carbon emissions, the need to build zero carbon homes in Wiltshire, Local Plan update, leisure centres heating, school buses emissions, new government funding for EV charging points, light spill from A36 upgrade scheme, impact of COVID-19 on expected carbon reduction figures.

Resolved:

- 1. That Cabinet notes the actions taken in response to the climate emergency following the last update in July 2020.**
- 2. That Cabinet gives delegated authority to the Director of Economic Development and Planning, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Heritage, Arts & Tourism, Housing and Communities, to proceed to:**
 - a. develop and implement a Climate Engagement Plan based on the appended discussion document; and,**
 - b. authorise a subsequent consultation on such draft proposals as may emerge from the engagement process; and,**
 - c. return to Cabinet with a final draft Climate Strategy, seeking approval to submit to Council for adoption**

Reason for decision:

To provide Cabinet with an update on actions taken in response to the climate emergency.

To ensure Wiltshire has in place a strategy to structure its response towards its 2030 climate ambitions.

28 Salisbury Future High Streets Fund: in-principle offer

Cllr Richard Clewer, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Heritage, Arts & Tourism, Housing and Communities introduced the

report which provided an update on the in-principle offer received from MHCLG in relation to the Salisbury Future High Streets Fund business case.

Cllr Clewer reported that following the submission of the Future High Streets Fund Salisbury business case in August 2020, MHCLG has made Wiltshire Council an in-principle offer of up to 69% of the original ask, amounting to £9,355,731. The report detailed the proposed response to secure the maximum funding available and shows that the projects developed to date remain deliverable with some adjustments.

Cllr Bob Jones MBE, Vice-Chair of the Environment Select Committee, explained that he had received a briefing of the issues on 29 January 2021 and was in support of the project and the reports proposals.

Cllr Ian Thorn, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group expressed his support for the project and urged the Cabinet and officers to secure appropriate funding to achieve the delivery of all elements of the project.

Resolved:

- **Agrees the contents of this report.**
- **Delegates authority to the Chief Executive - in consultation with the Director for Economic Development and Planning, and Legal, Electoral and Registration Services and the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Military-Civilian Integration and Communications to approve and submit the Salisbury Future High Street Fund response to the in-principle offer to MHCLG as well as accepting the grant.**
- **Delegates authority to develop individual workstreams within the business case and the response to the in-principle offer to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Director for Economic Development and Planning, the Director for Legal, Electoral and Registration Services and the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Military-Civilian Integration and Communications.**

Reason for decision:

Salisbury's economy is reliant on the retail, leisure and tourist offer within the city, which is responsible for a third of all employment. Salisbury City Centre economy has now experienced two economic shocks, the nerve attack in 2018 and now, COVID-19 in 2020, resulting in a significant decline of the vitality, attractiveness and perception of the city centre.

These shocks are exacerbated by seismic changes taking place in the retail market, as it moves to an on-line market place. In Salisbury, persistent structural challenges around transport access and poor linkages, demographic shift and heritage investment significantly threaten long term vitality.

Salisbury needs to restructure its offer to attract residents, visitors and workers to the city. A confirmation of the offer in-principle will enable Wiltshire Council to work with partners to initiate that process and attract in other public and private sector funding to rejuvenate the city.

29 **Trowbridge Future High Streets Fund: in-principle offer**

Cllr Richard Clewer, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Heritage, Arts & Tourism, Housing and Communities introduced the report which provided an update on the in-principle offer received from MHCLG in relation to the Trowbridge Future High Streets Fund business case.

Cllr Clewer reported that following the submission of the Future High Streets Fund Trowbridge business case in August 2020, MHCLG has made Wiltshire Council an in-principle offer of up to 69% of the original ask, amounting to £16,347,056. The report detailed the proposed response to secure the maximum funding available and shows that the projects developed to date remain deliverable with some adjustments.

It was noted that Cllr Bob Jones MBE, Vice-Chair of the Environment Select Committee, he had received a briefing of the issues on 29 January 2021 and supported the project and proposals in the report.

Comments from members included:

- The project is welcomed, and reassurances noted for the delivery of all aspects of the project with reduced funding.
- The need for Cabinet and officers to secure additional funding to achieve the delivery of all elements of the project, especially the leisure facilities.
- Involvement of local Council members in the early stages of the project, along with residents and the Town Council at the appropriate stages.
- The need for an appropriate transport management plan especially for car parking.

Resolved:

- **Agrees the contents of this report.**
- **Delegates authority to the Chief Executive - in consultation with the Director for Economic Development and Planning, and Legal, Electoral and Registration Services and the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Military-Civilian Integration and Communications to approve and submit the Trowbridge Future High Streets Fund response to the in-principle offer to MHCLG as well as accepting the grant.**
- **Delegates authority to develop individual workstreams within the business case and the response to the in-principle offer to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Director for Economic**

Development and Planning, the Director for Legal, Electoral and Registration Services and the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Military-Civilian Integration and Communications.

Reason for decision:

Trowbridge Town Centre has been negatively affected by a number of factors over a long period of time, resulting in a significant decline of the vitality, attractiveness and perception of the town centre. This has manifested in the following market failures:

- *a significant lack of activity and diversity of offer in the town centre core;*
- *many of the town's most unique assets are in need of urgent repair, resulting in these being vacant or significantly underused for c10 years;*
- *a lack of development within the town centre core, particularly of key sites adjacent to the town's unique natural assets like the River Biss;*
- *a disjointed experience with poor linkages between the retail core and new developments, the railway station, major employment sites and car parks.*

This has contributed to the evident decline of the town centre and continues to severely threaten its long-term viability.

Trowbridge has the chance through this funding to significantly reposition itself.

Key outcomes following securing funding could include:

- *Improving connections and legibility into the town centre*
- *Transforming the gateway experience*
- *Bringing more leisure, residential and culture activity into the town centre*
- *Making better use of vacant units to enable a diverse and sustainable mix of uses within Trowbridge Town Centre*
- *Accelerating future development by facilitating the strategic development of key sites within the town centre core*
- *A successful allocation of FHSF will enable Wiltshire Council to work with partners to initiate that process and attract in other public and private sector funding to rejuvenate the town.*

30 **Procurement of Joint Venture partner**

Cllr Richard Clewer, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Heritage, Arts & Tourism, Housing and Communities introduced the report which sought Cabinet's approval to procure a partner to form a joint venture ("JV") master developer with the Council to develop the Council's land holdings as part of the Future Chippenham programme and possibly other Council owned sites.

The Cabinet received a number of questions from Susan McGill. Cllr Clewer explained that the questions had received written responses which were published on the Council's website in Agenda Supplement 2, details of which can be found [here](#).

The report indicated that the Council has received expert advice on the model of a joint venture that would be attractive to the market. The advice tested the viability of the JV model based on the existing development model for Future Chippenham and this shows the Council would maximise its return from the JV model compared to the conventional approach of disposing of its land on the open market. The advice is provided in the exempt part of the agenda under minute 34.

The Cabinet noted that a briefing had been arranged for the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Environment Select Committee and Chair of the Financial Planning Task Group on 1 February 2021.

In response to comments from Cllr Ian Thorn, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, about the consultant '31 ten' and whether they would consider another option to the proposed JV detailed in the report; details about the financial analysis of the JV option and direct sale approach; and involvement in the appointment process; Cllr Clewer asked for the first two issues to be discussed with officers outside of the meeting due to their sensitive nature and Cllr Clewer confirmed that there was no definitive model for the appointment process, although members would be involved.

Resolved:

- 1. Agree to seek a joint venture partner to form a master developer for the Council owned land included in the Future Chippenham programme.**
- 2. Agree to procure specialist commercial advice to inform the JV procurement process**
- 3. Agree to procure specialist legal advice to inform the JV procurement**
- 4. Agree to procure specialist property advice to inform the JV procurement.**

Reason for decision:

The council owns a significant amount of the land which is included as part of the Future Chippenham programme. The council should seek to maximise the value from these important public assets and ensure that it achieves the objectives of the Future Chippenham programme while delivering the best possible return for the Wiltshire Council and its residents. The expert advice

received by the council strongly indicates that the optimum model for achieving these objectives is to seek a joint venture partner to form a master developer for the council-owned land included in the programme. Therefore, cabinet's approval is requested to endorse both this approach and to agree that the council team proceed with the procurement of specialist commercial, legal and property advice to deliver a successful and compliant procurement process to secure a joint venture partner.

31 **Stone Circle Company business plans**

Cllr Pauline Church, Cabinet Member for Finance, Procurement and Commercial Investment introduced the report which sought consideration of the business plans proposed by the Stone Circle Companies as required under reserved matter 26 of the shareholder agreement as well as to agree that a review of governance is undertaken to support the growth of the companies and protect the Council's interests as shareholder.

Cllr Pip Ridout, Chair of the Financial Planning Task Group confirmed that she had received a briefing on 27 January 2021 and supported the proposals.

Cllr Church indicated that a written response would be provided to questions received from Cllr Allison Bucknell about Stoneover Lane in Marlborough and the purchase of MOD housing in Lyneham.

Members also commented on the potential for Priestley Grove development plan being resolved through a governance review; and climate emergency measures being included in the Stone Circle business plans.

Resolved:

- 1. Agree the Stone Circle housing company business plan 2021/22 but serve notice on the company that the increased budget for individual acquisitions is not agreed and will be subject to a governance review and new business plan.**
- 2. Agree the Stone Circle development company business plan 2021/22**
- 3. Agree the Stone Circle holding company business plan 2021/22.**
- 4. Subject to agreeing the business plans to allocate the £34.40m loan finance required for the Stone Circle housing company business plan and £2.657m for the Stone Circle development company business plan in the 2021/22 capital programme.**
- 5. Delegate authority to agree the project plan for each development proposed by Stone Circle Development Company Limited to the Interim Corporate Director Resources (S.151 Officer) in consultation**

with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Procurement and Commercial Investment.

- 6. Note the Stone Circle companies intention to serve notice on the Council to end the accountancy service provided via the resourcing contract.**
- 7. Note that Hazlewoods remain the auditors of the companies as the first audit is yet to take place.**
- 8. Agree that a review of the governance arrangements for the Stone Circle Companies is undertaken by the Interim Corporate Director of Resources (S.151 Officer) and the Director of Legal and Governance / Monitoring Officer and that a report is brought back to cabinet for consideration within six months.**
- 9. Delegate authority to the Interim Corporate Director of Resources (S.151 Officer) to conclude detailed contract arrangements and serving of required notices under the shareholder agreement with and on the Stone Circle Companies including changes to the resourcing contract**

Reason for decision:

The shareholder agreement between the Council and the companies requires the companies to present their proposed business plans to the Council at least three months before the start of the financial year in question.

This report is the outcome of that proposal and the consideration of the Cabinet for the forthcoming financial year, which includes that a review of the governance of the Stone Circle Companies is necessary to ensure that they support the growth of the companies and protect the interests of the Council as shareholder

Note:

Councillors Richard Clewer, Bridget Wayman and Ian Thorn declared disclosable pecuniary interests and left the meeting for this item.

32 Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

33 Exclusion of the Press and Public

To agree that in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public from the meeting for the business specified in Item Numbers 21 and 22 because it is likely that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt

information as defined in paragraphs 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

34 **Procurement of Joint Venture Partner**

Cllr Richard Clewer, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Heritage, Arts & Tourism, Housing and Communities received comments on the financial, business and Joint Venture advice received from 31 Ten.

Resolved:

To note the exempt advice provided by 31 Ten.

Reason for decision:

The council owns a significant amount of the land which is included as part of the Future Chippenham programme. The council should seek to maximise the value from these important public assets and ensure that it achieves the objectives of the Future Chippenham programme while delivering the best possible return for the Wiltshire Council and its residents. The expert advice received by the council strongly indicates that the optimum model for achieving these objectives is to seek a joint venture partner to form a master developer for the council-owned land included in the programme. Therefore, cabinet's approval is requested to endorse both this approach and to agree that the council team proceed with the procurement of specialist commercial, legal and property advice to deliver a successful and compliant procurement process to secure a joint venture partner.

35 **Stone Circle Company Business Plans**

Cllr Pauline Church, Cabinet Member for Finance, Procurement and Commercial Investment introduced the appendices containing exempt financial and business information

Resolved: To note the appendices containing exempt financial and business information.

Reason for decision:

The shareholder agreement between the Council and the companies requires the companies to present their proposed business plans to the Council at least three months before the start of the financial year in question.

This report is the outcome of that proposal and the consideration of the Cabinet for the forthcoming financial year, which includes that a review of the governance of the Stone Circle Companies is necessary to ensure that they support the growth of the companies and protect the interests of the Council as shareholder

Note:

Councillors Richard Clewer, Bridget Wayman and Ian Thorn declared disclosable pecuniary interests and left the meeting for this item.

(Duration of meeting: 10.00 am - 2.00 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Stuart Figini of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 718221, e-mail stuart.figini@wiltshire.gov.uk

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