

Group Leaders and Non-Domestic Ratepayers

MINUTES OF THE GROUP LEADERS AND NON-DOMESTIC RATEPAYERS MEETING HELD ON 2 FEBRUARY 2021 AT ONLINE MEETING.

Present:

Cllr Pauline Church, Cllr Ernie Clark, Cllr Richard Clewer and Cllr Ricky Rogers

Non-Domestic Ratepayer:
Kent Barker

Officers:

Andy Brown - the Interim Corporate Director of Resources (S151 Officer)
Joanne Pitt - Director of HR & OD

1 Welcome and Introductions

The Deputy Leader welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

2 Apologies

Apologies were received from:

- Cllr Philip Whitehead – Leader of the Council
- Cllr Ian Thorn, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group

3 Wiltshire Council Financial Plan Update 2021/22

Cllr Pauline Church, Cabinet member for Finance, Procurement and Commercial Investment provided an overview of the Council's proposed budget for 2021/22.

Cllr Church reported that the process undertaken to consult on the Budget was open and transparent, and 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.

Cllr Church and the Interim Corporate Director of Resources (S151 Officer) commented further on the (i) Council tax; (ii) applying the Social Care Levy to relieve pressure on the Adult Social Care budget; (iii) Business rates.

The Deputy Leader welcomed Kent Barker, owner of a number of businesses in the Wiltshire area. Mr Barker had the opportunity to ask questions about the Budget. He commented specifically about his current business operations, a new venture in Salisbury and asked about how businesses are being encouraged into city and town centres in Wiltshire. Members commented generally on (i) the recent successful bid for High Streets Funding in Salisbury and proposals to improve access to the city centre and make improvements to the cultural quarter; (ii) business support provided by the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership, business support and funding from Wiltshire Council and information about business rates and business rate relief from Wiltshire Council.

The Deputy Leader thanked those for attendance for offering their views and questions.

(Duration of meeting: 4.40 - 5.10 pm)

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