

Group Leaders Meeting with Trade Union Representatives

MINUTES OF THE GROUP LEADERS MEETING WITH TRADE UNION REPRESENTATIVES MEETING HELD ON 2 FEBRUARY 2021 AT ONLINE MEETING.

Present:

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

Union Representatives

John Hawkins – NEU
Mike Harrison - NEU
John Drake – Unison
Mike Osment – Unison

Officers

Andy Brown - Corporate Director Resources & Deputy Chief Executive (S.151 Officer),
Joanne Pitt - Director - HR & Organisational Development

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
- Alan Tomala – Unite representative

3 Notes from the previous meeting

The notes of the previous meeting held on 5 February 2020 were received and noted as a correct record.

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. 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, Cabinet earlier in the day prior to this meeting and ultimately Council at the end of February 2021.

In presenting the overview, 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.

Cllr Church commented further on (i) the quarter 3 forecast position; (ii) the Local Government Provisional Settlement on 17 December 2020; (iii) Council tax; (iv) Business rates; (v) proposals to reduce the budget gap; (vi) significant service investment – Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Waste Services and Leisure; (vii) the Capital Programme for 21/22; and (viii) the proposals considered by Cabinet on 2 February 2020.

The union representatives then had an opportunity to make statements and ask questions regarding the Budget.

Mr John Drake (UNISON) asked about the representations being made to government in relation to future pay awards. Cllr Church and the Director of HR & OD reported that the Council is working alongside the South West Councils on this and provided assurances that representations on the matter were taking place.

Mr John Hawkins (ATL) highlighted concerns about the Dedicated Schools Grant and High Needs spending. Cllr Church and the Interim Corporate Director of Resources (S151 Officer) confirmed that the Council continues to make representations to MP's for additional funding in this area, however, it was a challenge that all local authorities have to manage.

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

(Duration of meeting: 4.00 - 4.30 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Stuart Figini of Democratic Services,
direct line 01225 718504 , e-mail stuart.figini@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line ((01225) 713114 or email
communications@wiltshire.gov.uk

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