

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1

THURSDAY, 2 FEBRUARY 2023

Present:

Councillors H Cox (Chair), Jenks (Vice-Chair), Parker, Rollason and Thorne

Members Attendance:

Councillors Keeling and Wrigley

Apologies:

Councillors D Cox, Foden, Hocking, MacGregor, Mullone, Orme and Khan

Officers in Attendance:

Martin Flitcroft, Chief Finance Officer & Head of Corporate Services

Amanda Pujol, Head of Community Services and Improvement

Rebecca Hewitt, Community Safety and Safeguarding Manager

Gary Wilson, Anti- Social Behaviour and Community Safety Officer

Trish Corns, Democratic Services Officer

Christopher Morgan, Trainee Democratic Services Officer

10. MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor H Cox, seconded by Councillor Parker and

RESOLVED

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

11. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None.

12. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None.

13. COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS

None.

14. EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN

The Executive forward plan listing items to be considered over the next few months was noted.

15. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee's work programme as circulated with the agenda was noted.

16. FINAL FINANCIAL PLAN PROPOSALS 2023/24 TO 2025/26

The Chair referred to the agenda report on the final financial plan proposals 2023/24 to 2025/26 to be considered by the Executive on 7 February 2023.

The Executive Member for corporate resources presented the proposals including draft revenue and capital budgets for the three years 2023/24 to 2025/26. The budget was balanced using earmarked reserves. The main issues taken into account were detailed in the report.

Parish and Town councils had been consulted, along with a public survey on the council's website. The results of the survey would be circulated as an appendix to the final budget papers for Council on 21 February 2023. In summary: 78.33% agreed with generating more income to reinvest in council services; 34.71% agreed with making more budget savings; 8.43% agreed with reducing services; and 23.04% agreed with increasing the council tax further.

In response to questions the Executive Member for corporate resources advised:

- the work of scrutiny over the next couple of years in reviewing the budget and coming up with recommendations to reduce the deficit would involve comparisons with the private sector and investing to save or generate more income.
- Full results of the consultation survey would be circulated as an appendix to the Council agenda for the meeting on 21 February 2023.
- The £5.54 would be paid to households automatically for those paying through direct debit. The 20% households not paying by this method would be contacted to enable the payment.

It was proposed by Councillor H Cox, seconded by Councillor Parker and unanimously,

RECOMMENDED

- a) That the proposals set out in the agenda report be considered together with any subsequent consultation comments for approval by Council as the final budget for 2023/24 and the outline plan for the subsequent years 2024/25 and 2025/26.

The proposed budget includes:

- An increase in council tax of £5.54 or 2.99% to £190.71
- Providing a one-off cost of living payment of £5.54 to households liable to pay council tax on their main home on 1 April 2023 in 2023/24

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- Maintaining 100% council tax support
- Continuing to react to the climate change emergency by maintaining ongoing revenue budgets for a climate change officer and associated spending, temporary staffing resources in revenue and provision in the capital programme, including ongoing provisions for corporate decarbonization schemes as per agenda report paragraph 5.5
- A £2 million provision for employment sites funded by borrowing
- Provision for an Emergency Planning officer
- Temporary funds for a Scrutiny Officer to assist Members with the Scrutiny function and working groups; appointment of a Digital transformation Manager and other temporary resources including for facilitating the Modern 25 work
- Support for housing including the Teignbridge 100 as per agenda report paragraph 5.3, whilst backing business and bringing people and organisations together for local neighbourhood planning
- The continuing reduction in new homes bonus
- Other central funding reductions – in particular provisional assumptions for business rates for future years and reset of the baseline
- Reserves at 13.0% of the net revenue budget or £2.3 million
- Infrastructure delivery plan investment funded by community infrastructure levy and external sources where available
- Continuation of grant funded South-West Regional Monitoring Programme as per agenda report paragraph 5.6
- Town centre investment in infrastructure and employment as per 5.7
- Re-establishing revenue contributions to capital initially at £300,000 per annum
- Continuation of enhanced Planning funding
- Councillors community fund set at £1,000
- Provision of £20,000 for year 2 of the 'Tidy Teignbridge' initiative to improve cleanliness for town and parish councils
- Paying £500,000 off our pension deficit in 2023/24 to reduce ongoing contributions
- An additional document - the Financial Plan 2023 – 2028 for adoption (at Appendix 8) and to facilitate Member progression of work plans by Overview & Scrutiny to address the budgetary position and deliver savings

b) That Council notes the mid-year review of Treasury Management at appendix 9 of the agenda report.

17. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

The committee welcomed Inspector Hammond.

The community and safeguarding manager presented the agenda report which provided Members with the opportunity to scrutinise the work of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) as defined by Sections 19 and 20 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 and the Crime and Disorder (Overview & Scrutiny) Regulations 2009.

Members commended the work of the partnership in prevention of crime and increasing knowledge and awareness in the community through the successful partnership working and community safety projects detailed in the report. Increasing young people's confidence to contact the police and reducing young persons' mental health cases was one of many priorities with the work of youth intervention workers, police visits to schools and neighbourhood policing. It was acknowledged that significant resources were required to deal with complex safeguarding cases.

RESOLVED

The report be noted.

18. EXECUTIVE MEMBER BIENNIAL UPDATE - HOMES, COMMUNITY, IT AND COST OF LIVING CRISES

Councillor Wrigley the Executive Member for homes, communities, IT and the cost of living crises updated the Committee on progress of services within the portfolio. The update included the previous community safety update at Minute 17 above and the following:

- Housing enabling – Teignbridge 100 rolling delivery of 100 homes -21 properties delivered, 25 progressing and a further 12 being delivered through partnership working.
- Empty homes had decreased to 292.
- 130 homes have been assisted by Warm Homes energy grants.
- 3 people were currently sleeping rough. Staff ensure frequently enquire after their welfare which includes offering housing.
- The housing waiting list had increased slightly from 1,000.
- The cost of living crises household support grant round 3 opened at the beginning of February 2023, and partnership working with the CVS to respond to the crises and the rising demand for help on debt, fuel and food issues.
- Housing of refugees from Ukraine. 156 homes have been utilised.
- Councillor's IT progressed with the rollout of M365 to 14 Members. Full rollout after the May elections to new and returning members. Huge transformation of working practices for both staff and members.

19. FEEDBACK ON TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

The Chair referred to the Executive and overview and scrutiny (O&S) working more closely going forward, with organisations being invited to O&S meetings to report of current issues.

CLLR H COX
Chairman