

## REPORT OF CABINET

(Meeting held on 7 September 2022)

### 1. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (MINUTE NO 27)

At the Cabinet meeting, the Leader provided an update on rising inflation and energy costs, with more information expected soon as the Government considered national support measures. Eligible residents are encouraged to contact the Council for their Energy Council Tax rebate, noting that any unclaimed amounts would be credited to Council tax accounts and therefore not lost.

Furthermore, the Council would soon be commencing its telephone survey with residents as part of the Resident Insight 2022 initiative. This would engage 750 residents across a range of demographics, providing vital information for the Council in shaping its future priorities on behalf of the community.

### 2. VEHICLE AND PLANT REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME 2022/23 AND 2023/24 (MINUTE NO 31)

The Cabinet, having noted the intention to present the broader replacement programme for 2023/24 as part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan, is recommending to Council an overall budget for the programme of £2.400 million.

The Council's vehicles and plant, required for frontline services, are replaced according to an annual programme which is set as part of the annual budget process. The replacement programme for 2022/23 has been reviewed in light of procurement requirements and extended vehicle lead times, and this review indicates that 42% of the planned spend on replacements will not be achieved within the current financial year.

Latest market testing has shown significant increases in prices, which affects the size of the budget required in 2023/24.

The Council continues to demonstrate its commitment to the Climate and Nature Emergency with the commitment to investigating alternative fuels.

At the Cabinet meeting, it was noted that the economic life of Council vehicles and plant are continually reviewed to ensure the appropriate condition and reliability. However, there is an existing vehicle maintenance budget to assist with this.

#### **RECOMMENDED:**

***That the Council approves a 2023/24 Vehicles and Plant Replacement budget of £2.400 million, to accommodate the purchases originally intended to be made in 2022/23, whilst noting the revenue implications to be picked up within the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.***

### 2. UPDATED RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY AND STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER (MINUTE NO 32)

The Cabinet, having considered the development of the Risk Management Policy and Strategic Risk Register, including the detailed review by the Audit Committee, is recommending to Council.

The Risk Management Policy provides clarity of approach to risk management by the Council, ensuring a structured approach to ensure risks and opportunities are reviewed

across all services, portfolios and corporately, in a consistent manner. Risk Management should be considered a continuous process, allowing the Council to identify, understand and introduce appropriate mitigations in a responsive way.

The Strategic Risk Register focuses on the highest level of strategic risk to the Council, which assists the Council further in achieving the priorities of its Corporate Plan. The Strategic Risks cover the following seven areas, which will give a more focused and targeted approach to mitigation and maximise any opportunities as they arise:-

1. Supporting Communities
2. Achieving future financial resilience
3. Ensuring efficient and effective internal control, governance and compliance
4. Creating the right culture, capacity and capability
5. Ensuring robust security measures to protect the Council's data and assets from external threats
6. Ability to be agile and shift focus in response to policy and national political change
7. Delivering Council Services through adverse conditions

It should be noted that good risk management ensures the Council mitigates risk to a practicable and proportionate level, and that all risks cannot be completely eliminated.

At the Cabinet meeting, a number of Members welcomed the new framework as strong, dynamic and responsive in its approach.

**RECOMMENDED:**

***That the Council adopt the Risk Management Policy and the updated Strategic Risk Register.***

**3. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2022 ONWARDS (MINUTE NO 33)**

The Cabinet considered the initial development of the Medium Term Financial Plan and Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2023/24, including the factors that will influence delivery.

It should be noted that increased costs are expected to total £3.625 million over the next four year period. The current climate presents significant challenges, including rising inflation, energy costs and the cost of the national pay award for staff. Whilst the Council maintains an excellent track record of managing finances, the upcoming Transformation Programme will offer an opportunity in the medium to long term to provide new opportunities for the Council to modernise and protect service delivery, whilst delivering significant savings. Ahead of this, the Council must seek to address the forecast deficit through a range of initiatives detailed in the report.

The report includes a new Fees and Charges Policy, noting that fees and charges have a significant role to play in assisting the Council to achieve a balanced budget and providing finances for service enhancements.

Table 5 in the report details a timeline for Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet which supports the development of the Medium term Financial Plan, through to the final setting of the 2023/24 budget.

At the Cabinet meeting, the uncertainty around the Business Rate Reset was discussed. The Council will seek to maintain and enhance services to residents by managing the Council's finances effectively, with the reasonable assumption that this reset may take place in 2025/26.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- 1. That the revised MTFP forecasts, as outlined within the report and appendices be adopted;**
- 2. That the options identified to close the budget gap for 2023/24 and through to 2026/27 are developed further;**
- 3. That the Fees and Charges Policy set out in section 4e of the report be adopted; and**
- 4. That the reporting timeline as set out in section 6 of the report be agreed.**

**4. MEETING DATES (MINUTE NO 34)**

The Cabinet agreed the 2023/24 meeting dates as set out on the Cabinet agenda, and an additional February 2023 meeting date.

**COUNCILLOR E HERON  
CHAIRMAN**