



To be submitted to the Council at its meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2022

## **BUDGET SCRUTINY**

**25th January 2022 at 2.00 p.m.**

### **Present:**

Councillors Abel, Aisthorpe, Batson, Beasant, Brookes, Callison, Croft, Green, Patrick, Reynolds, Smith, Westcott and Wilson.

### **Officers in Attendance:**

- Rob Walsh (Joint Chief Executive)
- Joanne Hewson (Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director for People, Health and Care)
- Sharon Wroot (Executive Director for Environment, Economy and Resources) (Section 151 Officer)
- Simon Jones (Assistant Director Law, Governance and Assets (Monitoring Officer))
- Mark Nearney (Assistant Director for Housing, Highways, Transportation and Planning)
- Carolina Borgstrom (Assistant Director, Environment)
- Paul Windley (Democratic and Scrutiny Team Manager)

### **Also in attendance:**

- Councillor Shreeve (Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets)
- Councillor Procter (Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Housing and Tourism)
- Councillor Shepherd (Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities)
- Councillor S Swinburn (Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport)
- Councillor Lindley (Portfolio Holder for Children and Education)
- Councillor Cracknell (Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care)
- Assistant Directors attended this meeting remotely.

## **SPBS.4 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**

RESOLVED – That Councillor Brookes be appointed as the Chair for this meeting.

COUNCILLOR BROOKES IN THE CHAIR

**SPBS.5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Procter declared a personal interest as the employee of a business situated on Sea Road, Cleethorpes when a question was asked regarding car parking in the area.

**SPBS.6 BUDGET AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2022-2025**

Members received a report from the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets outlining how the Council plans to deliver its agreed financial strategy over the coming three-year period.

Councillor Shreeve, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets, introduced the report and members were then invited to ask any questions on the draft budget, medium-term financial plan, the draft commissioning plans by area and the capital programme.

Medium Term Financial Plan

Councillor Wilson raised concerns about some of the language used in the report and called for the use of plain English to make it more accessible for Members and the public.

Adult Services

There were no questions raised by members.

Children and Family Services

Members enquired whether any contingency was in place regarding the required improvement in children's services. Councillor Shreeve noted that the improvement plan was currently under discussion with the commissioner but he had complete confidence in the work that officers were doing and he hoped that it would not be necessary to draw on reserves.

Councillor Wilson sought an explanation of the aims of the children's commissioning team as well as the expected level of savings for this and other projects. Councillor Shreeve explained that the annexes to the commissioning proposals included this information.

Councillor Patrick sought further clarification over the decision to close family hubs. It was noted that a decision had been taken but the matter had also been subject to consultation which was due to be considered by the relevant scrutiny panel.

## Public Health

Councillor Wilson felt that there needed to be more investment in public health and sought an assurance that long standing issues, such as health inequalities, would be addressed. Councillor Cracknell responded that issues such as health inequalities included a number of related matters that were not solely the responsibility of the local authority. The health inequalities agenda was a priority for the Humber, Coast and Vale integrated care partnership.

Concerns were also raised about the decision to share the Director of Public Health post with Lincolnshire County Council and North Lincolnshire Council, particularly given that the Humber Coast and Vale integrated care partnership footprint was not shared with all of greater Lincolnshire.

## Economy and Growth

Councillor Wilson enquired whether the revenue coming in was more than the borrowing costs in terms of efforts made to stimulate the local economy. Councillor Shreeve confirmed that there was an excess, mainly as a result of the growth seen in housing. He was relatively comfortable with the level of borrowing, which he felt was well within limits.

Councillor Wilson requested a copy of the business case for the Grant Street car park project so that he could properly scrutinise the proposal. Mr Jones advised that this was an internal governance document which did not form part of the budget papers but he was happy to further discuss this with Councillor Wilson outside this meeting.

Councillor Green further questioned the rationale for the car park, to which Councillor Procter responded. Councillor Green enquired about consultation with local residents. Councillor Procter agreed to provide details of the consultation undertaken.

Councillors Patrick and Wilson challenged the proposed increase in off street parking. Councillor Procter noted that it had been nearly ten years since the last increase and he felt that they remained competitive.

## Environment

Councillor Wilson enquired whether funding would be made available to the whole of the Borough. Ms Borgstrom noted that there was already a uniform recycling offer consisting of either recycling boxes or bins.

Councillor Patrick enquired how the increased charges for Bereavement Services had been calculated and was interested in how risks had been analysed. Ms Borgstrom noted that there had been a commitment to use the published inflation rate as used by the government. Risks had been considered as best as was possible.

Councillor Beasant enquired whether the option of underground recycling bunkers had now been ruled out for those properties without access to the recycling bin offer. It was noted that all options were being considered but where the offer of a recycling bin had not been taken up then the option of recycling boxes or dedicated community recycling bins was available.

Councillor Green enquired about the budget for maintenance of pavement gullies. Ms Borgstrom explained that there was a budget for cleaning of the gullies but responsibility for their repair fell to the water authority.

### Resources

There were no questions raised by members.

### Capital Programme

There were no questions raised by members.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and the minutes of this meeting be included as part of the response to the consultation on the proposals.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.45 p.m.