

Present: Councillor Ric Metcalfe (*in the Chair*),
Councillor Donald Nannestad, Councillor Jackie Kirk,
Councillor Neil Murray and Councillor Fay Smith

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Rosanne Kirk

90. Confirmation of Minutes - 7 January 2019

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 7 January 2019 be confirmed.

91. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Donald Nannestad declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest with regard to the agenda item titled 'Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019-2024'. Councillor Nannestad was an allotment tenant. A dispensation by the Monitoring Officer had been granted to enable Councillor Nannestad as an allotment tenant to participate in proceedings relating to the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the setting of the budget.

92. Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019-2024

Purpose of Report

To recommend to the Executive the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy for the period 2019-2024, the draft budget and Council Tax proposal for 2019/20 and the draft Capital Strategy 2019-2024 for consideration.

Decision

That the Executive:

- (1) Agrees for consultation and scrutiny the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019-2024 and the draft Capital Strategy 2019-2024, including the following specific elements:
 - a proposed Council Tax increase of 2.95% for 2019/20;
 - a proposed housing rent decrease of 1% for 2019/20;
 - the inclusion of the Council as a member of the Lincolnshire Business Rates Pool in 2019/20;
 - the draft General Fund revenue forecast 2019/20 – 2023/24 as shown in Appendix 1 of the report and the main basis on which the budget has been calculated;
 - the draft General Investment Programme 2019/20 – 2023/24 as shown in Appendix 2 of the report and the main basis on which the programme has been calculated;
 - the draft Housing Revenue Account forecast 2019/20 – 2023/24 as shown in Appendix 3 of the report and the main basis on which the programme has been calculated;
 - the draft Housing Investment Programme 2019/20 – 2023/24 as shown in Appendix 4 of the report and the main basis on which the programme has been calculated.

- (2) Agrees to delegate to the Chief Finance Officer approval of the final Business Rates base for the financial year commencing 1 April 2019 and ending 31 March 2020 and submission of the base, via the NNDR1 return, to the Department for Communities and Local Government by 31 January 2019.
- (3) Notes that all changes to the base estimated in the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019-2024 will be reported to the Executive as part of the final Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019-24 on 25 February 2019.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Reason for Decision

Prior to submission of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019-2024 and the budget and Council Tax proposal for 2018/19 to Full Council, the initial draft as appended to the report would be subject to public consultation and member scrutiny via the Budget Review Group.

The report provided an overview of the General Fund, which included updates on the following:

- provisional finance settlement 2019/20;
- Council Tax;
- spending plans;
- the Council's Towards Financial Sustainability Programme;
- robustness and adequacy of the budget and reserves.

An overview of the housing revenue account was also set out in the report and provided updates on the following:

- housing rents;
- financing the capital programme;
- robustness and adequacy of the budget and reserves.

The report also provided updates on the General Investment Programme, the Housing Investment Programme and the Capital Strategy.

93. Collection Fund Surplus or Deficit - Business Rates

Purpose of Report

To inform the Executive of the estimated balance for the Business Rates element of the Collection Fund and the surplus or deficit to be declared for 2018/19.

Decision

That the Executive:

- (1) Confirms the action of the Chief Finance Officer in declaring a Business Rates surplus of £2,463,740 for 2018/19 subject to the confirmation of the Business Rates base by 31 January 2019.

- (2) Notes that any amendments to the declared deficit will be notified to the relevant preceptors and be included in the final Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019-24 to be presented to the Executive on 25 February 2019.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Reason for Decision

Prior to the setting of the council tax for 2019/20 the Council was required to estimate whether there was to be a surplus or deficit on both the Council Tax and Business Rates elements of the collection fund for the current financial year.

At the meeting of the Executive on 7 January 2019 the Council declared a surplus on council tax of £267,780 for the financial year 2018/19. The Executive noted that the Council would declare a surplus on the business rates collection fund of £2,463,740 for 2018/19, subject to the confirmation of business rates by 31 January 2019, of which its share was £1,545,950. This surplus had arisen as a result of an over provision of outstanding ratings appeals.

94. Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business because it was likely that if members of the public were present there would be a disclosure to them of 'exempt information' as defined by Section 100I and Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

This item was considered in private as it was likely to disclose exempt information, as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. No representations had been received in relation to the proposal to consider this item in private.

95. Website Replacement

Purpose of Report

To provide an update on opportunities available regarding migration to a new web platform.

Decision

That the recommendation contained within the report be approved.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Reason for Decision

The current website content management system required replacement, which had been identified as a significant opportunity to maximise the Council's web channel and benefit from new technologies, ensuring adherence to new policies for accessibility.

Options had been considered as a result of a thorough market appraisal process for a replacement platform with an aim to implement in 2019.