

MINUTES OF COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

At an extraordinary Meeting of the Council for the Borough of Slough held as a Virtual Meeting on Monday, 8th March, 2021 at 7.00 pm

Present:- The Worshipful the Mayor (Councillor Brooker), in the chair; Councillors Ajaib, Akram, Ali, Anderson, Bains, Basra, Bedi, Begum, Carter, A Cheema, H Cheema, Dar, Davis, Dhaliwal, Gahir, M Holledge, Hulme, Kelly, Mann, Matloob, Minhas, Mohammad, Nazir, Pantelic, D Parmar, S Parmar, Plenty, Qaseem, Sabah, A Sandhu, R Sandhu, Sharif, Smith, Strutton, Swindlehurst and Wright

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor N Holledge

61. Declarations of Interest

None declared.

62. Five Year Plan 2021-26 and Slough 2040 Vision

It was moved by Councillor Swindlehurst,
Seconded by Councillor Akram,

“ (a) That the refresh of the Five Year Plan, as attached at Appendix A to the report, be approved.

(b) That it be noted that the Cabinet endorsed the Slough 2040 Vision as attached at Appendix B to the report, on behalf of Slough Borough Council at its meeting held on 22nd February 2021.”

The recommendations were put to the vote and agreed unanimously.

Resolved –

(a) That the refresh of the Five Year Plan as attached at Appendix A to the report, be approved.

(b) That it be noted that the Cabinet endorsed the Slough 2040 Vision as attached at Appendix B to the report, on behalf of Slough Borough Council at its meeting held on 22nd February 2021.

63. Meeting Procedure

A suggested procedure for debating the item on the Revenue Budget 2021/22 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22 - 2023/24 had been circulated to all Members of the Council.

It was moved by Councillor Swindlehurst,
Seconded by Councillor Akram,

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“That in accordance with procedure rule 27.1, Rule 16.5 on rules of debate be suspended insofar as is necessary to enable the procedure as circulated to be adopted and that the Council consent to:

- Members of the Leadership speaking for up to 45 minutes in total on the Revenue Budget 2021/22 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22-2023/24;
- Members of the Opposition speaking for up to 20 minutes in total on the same item;
- Independent Members speaking for up to 5 minutes in total, and
- All subsequent speeches in the debate being limited to 3 minutes, other than the winding up speech by the Leader of the Council which shall not exceed 10 minutes.”

The procedural motion was put and carried.

Resolved – That the proposed procedure for the debate on the Revenue Budget 2021/22 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22 - 2023/24 be approved and adopted.

64. Revenue Budget 2021/22 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22 - 2023/24

The Leader of the Council and Lead Members for Governance and Customer Services, Children and Schools, Transport and Environmental Services, Housing and Community Safety, Health and Wellbeing, Inclusive Growth and Skills and Planning and Regulation presented the Leadership Proposals for the Revenue Budget 2021/22 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22-2023/24. On completion of the presentation:

It was moved by Councillor Swindlehurst,
Seconded by Councillor Akram,

“That the statutory S25 report of the S151 officer at Appendix M be noted and taken into account in determining:

- (a) The proposed budget for 2021/22;
- (b) The medium term financial plans for 2021/22 – 2023/24;
- (c) The level of reserves.

That the following be noted:

- (d) The use of £5.106m of Capital Receipts to fund the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) in 2021/22 and £3.144m in 2022/23;
- (e) In 2021/22, £12.200m of revenue spend will be capitalised in accordance with the Capitalisation Directive from MHCLG (see section 14);
- (f) The Dedicated Schools Grant [DSG] settlement for 2021/22 (see Section 13) and the allocation of £193.905m as set out in Appendix L;

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That the following be approved:

- (g) That the Council Tax Support Scheme (CTSS) is not to be varied or revised for 2021/22;
- (h) With regard to the 2021/22 General Fund and Housing Revenue Account budgets, and the Medium Term Financial Strategy:
 - I. The General Fund Budget Requirement of £133.574m for 2021/22;
 - II. Proposed savings of £15.576m for 2021/22 and overall savings of £23.573m for the three years to 2023/24;
 - III. Growth and pressures of £12.593m for 2021/22 and overall pressures of £19.178m to 2023/24;
 - IV. The Housing Revenue Account budget for 2021/22 of £36.790m as set out in Appendix F;
 - V. The forecast reserves of £14.458m at the end of 2021/22 as set out in Appendix G;
- (i) The strategy for the use of flexible capital receipts to deliver transformation and ongoing savings as set out in Appendix H;
- (j) The calculations for determining the Council tax requirement for the year 2021/22 in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as set out in the Council Tax Resolution in Appendix J;
- (k) The Council increase the Council tax for a band D property by £70.83 for 2021/22, giving a band D Council Tax of £1,490.30 per year, excluding the precepts from Police, Fire and parishes as set out below:
 - i. Its general band D Council Tax by 1.99%, the maximum permitted without a referendum as previously planned; and
 - ii. Its Adult Social Care Precept by 3.00% as confirmed by Government in the Final Local Government Settlement.

Notes the following Council tax increases and precepts as detailed in Appendix J:

- (l) Parish Precepts of £185,244;
- (m) The Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley has increased Council tax for a band D property to £231.28 per annum, a 6.9% increase on 2020/21, resulting in a precept of £9,442,862;
- (n) The Royal Berkshire Fire Authority has agreed an increase of £1.35 for a band D property to £68.95 per annum, a 1.99% increase on 2020/21, resulting in a precept of £2,815,139;
- (o) This gives a total Band D Council Tax of £1,790.53 plus any Parish precept where applicable set out in Appendix J.

The Fees and Charges for 2021/22 as set out in Appendix K.”

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Members of the Opposition spoke on the Revenue Budget 2021/22 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22-2023/24 proposals, following which

It was moved by Councillor Strutton, as an amendment,
Seconded by Councillor Wright,

Growth

Christmas Relaxation of parking charges - Free parking in Slough Town Centre from November to January. This would result in a total growth of £0.440m.

Shop front enhancement grant – To support local businesses who rent their property from Slough Borough Council - a shop front enhancement grant – we would provide a one-year grant based on £1 per square foot at a total cost of £0.073m.

Funding for a local community engagement organisation – This increases awareness of air quality and stimulates an interest in local activism to tackle the issue here in Slough. We propose to provide £0.048m in 2021/22.

Expand Provision of Free School Meals- Additional support for vulnerable families in Slough, expanding the provision of good quality Free School Meals across the Borough during the summer holidays. We propose to provide £0.100m in 2021/22.

One to One Tuition for Vulnerable Children- We pledge to support our most vulnerable children in Slough, by providing a targeted One to One tuition programme, for those identified as being most impacted by COVID-19 by our education teams, to support them in their education. We propose to provide £0.100m in 2021/22.

Promotion and Employment of permanent staff- To tackle this authorities over reliance on agency and contract staff, we propose a designated fund with the objective of promoting, and covering some of the additional recruitment costs, of moving some of the contract/agency staff to permanent roles in this authority. We propose to provide £0.232m for 2021/22.

HR fund- To provide additional support to tackle ongoing HR issues in regards change management processes of moving from such an overreliance on contract/agency staff, to full time positions. We propose to provide £0.050m in 2021/22 to cover this.

Savings

Agency/Interim staff – the opposition note that in the latest figures SBC has provided, it is engaging 284 agency/interim staff. A number have been with the council for many years and we note that this is the most expensive way to populate an organisation. We also note that the Administration has a £1.5m saving in the budget in this area. Based on the figures provided, we calculate that they will have to exit in the region of 50 interim staff to achieve this. Our proposal is to double this saving and note it could impact up to potentially 100 agency staff (up to 35% of the current cohort). This will increase the savings in

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this area from £1.5m to £3m. We propose that no front-line care staff would be exited under this proposal, protecting our most vulnerable residents.

Sale of Windsor Road - We propose to sell the Windsor Road building. This will result in a capital receipt of £21m net of leaseback which can be used to repay debt. The consequential savings on interest charges will be £0.2m in 2021/22.

Reduction in the Collection of Green Bins –Expanding the proposed reduction in the collection of our green bins by an additional month, covering November-February at an additional saving of £0.024m.

Make CCTV fully funded by partners – rationalising provision and negotiating fully funding by partner agencies. This will deliver £0.180m.

Council Tax

Resulting from our changes above our proposals for Council Tax are as follows:

1. Setting the adult social care precept increase at £42.58 providing the full 3.00% uplift in the adult social care element of the Council Tax. This will provide for the full growth in adult social care as identified in the budget report.
2. Setting the general Slough Borough Council element of the tax at a 0.75% increase on this year's figure.

This would give a total council tax at band D of £1,472.20, a 3.75% increase overall on the previous year's figure.

3. The table below shows the level of the Council Tax over all eight bands (precepts from external bodies exclude):

Band	£
A	981.80
B	1,145.43
C	1,309.07
D	1,472.70
E	1,799.97
F	2,127.24
G	2,454.50
H	2,945.40

Reserves

The outstanding balance resulting from these proposals is £0.100m which we propose to deposit in the council's general reserve."

The amendments were put to the vote and lost with 4 votes for, 31 against and 2 abstentions.

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The original recommendations were put and carried and, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, a record of the vote was taken as follows:-

There voted for the recommendations:-

Councillors Ajaib, Akram, Ali, Anderson, Bains, Basra, Begum, Carter, A.Cheema, H.Cheema, Dar, Davis, Dhaliwal, Gahir, Hulme, Mann, Matloob, Minhas, Mohammad, Nazir, Pantelic, D.Parmar, S.Parmar, Plenty, Qaseem, Sabah, A.Sandhu, R.Sandhu, Sharif and Swindlehurst. 30

There voted against the recommendations:

Councillors Kelly, Smith, Strutton and Wright 4

There abstained from voting:

The Worshipful, The Mayor Councillor Brooker..... 1

Resolved -

That the statutory S25 report of the S151 officer at Appendix M be noted and taken into account in determining:

- (a) The proposed budget for 2021/22;
- (b) The medium term financial plans for 2021/22 – 2023/24;
- (c) The level of reserves.

That the following be noted:

- (d) The use of £5.106m of Capital Receipts to fund the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) in 2021/22 and £3.144m in 2022/23;
- (e) In 2021/22, £12.200m of revenue spend will be capitalised in accordance with the Capitalisation Directive from MHCLG (see section 14);
- (f) The Dedicated Schools Grant [DSG] settlement for 2021/22 (see Section 13) and the allocation of £193.905m as set out in Appendix L;

That the following be approved:

- (g) That the Council Tax Support Scheme (CTSS) is not to be varied or revised for 2021/22;
- (h) With regard to the 2021/22 General Fund and Housing Revenue Account budgets, and the Medium Term Financial Strategy:
 - I. The General Fund Budget Requirement of £133.574m for 2021/22;
 - II. Proposed savings of £15.576m for 2021/22 and overall savings of £23.573m for the three years to 2023/24;

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- III. Growth and pressures of £12.593m for 2021/22 and overall pressures of £19.178m to 2023/24;
 - IV. The Housing Revenue Account budget for 2021/22 of £36.790m as set out in Appendix F;
 - V. The forecast reserves of £14.458m at the end of 2021/22 as set out in Appendix G;
- (i) The strategy for the use of flexible capital receipts to deliver transformation and ongoing savings as set out in Appendix H;
 - (j) The calculations for determining the Council tax requirement for the year 2021/22 in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as set out in the Council Tax Resolution in Appendix J;
 - (k) The Council increase the Council tax for a band D property by £70.83 for 2021/22, giving a band D Council Tax of £1,490.30 per year, excluding the precepts from Police, Fire and parishes as set out below:
 - i. Its general band D Council Tax by 1.99%, the maximum permitted without a referendum as previously planned; and
 - ii. Its Adult Social Care Precept by 3.00% as confirmed by Government in the Final Local Government Settlement.

Notes the following Council tax increases and precepts as detailed in Appendix J:

- (l) Parish Precepts of £185,244;
- (m) The Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley has increased Council tax for a band D property to £231.28 per annum, a 6.9% increase on 2020/21, resulting in a precept of £9,442,862;
- (n) The Royal Berkshire Fire Authority has agreed an increase of £1.35 for a band D property to £68.95 per annum, a 1.99% increase on 2020/21, resulting in a precept of £2,815,139;
- (o) This gives a total Band D Council Tax of £1,790.53 plus any Parish precept where applicable set out in Appendix J.

The Fees and Charges for 2021/22 as set out in Appendix K.

65. Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2021/22

It was moved by Councillor Swindlehurst,
Seconded by Councillor Akram,

“That the Treasury Management Strategy for 2021/22 and the Investment Strategy 2021-22 be approved.”

The recommendation was put and carried and, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, a record of the vote was taken as follows:-

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There voted for the recommendation:-

Councillors Ajaib, Akram, Ali, Anderson, Bains, Basra, Begum, Carter, A.Cheema, H.Cheema, Dar, Davis, Dhaliwal, Gahir, Hulme, Mann, Matloob, Minhas, Mohammad, Nazir, Pantelic, D.Parmar, S.Parmar, Plenty, Qaseem, Sabah, A.Sandhu, Sharif and Swindlehurst. 29

There abstained from voting:

Councillors Kelly, Smith, Strutton and Wright and The Worshipful, The Mayor Councillor Brooker 5

Resolved - That the Treasury Management Strategy for 2021/22 and the Investment Strategy 2021-22 be approved.

66. Capital Strategy and Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2023/24

It was moved by Councillor Swindlehurst,
Seconded by Councillor Akram,

“That the following be approved:

- (a) The General Fund capital programme 2021/22 to 2023/24 of £147.557m and the associated Minimum Revenue Provision.
- (b) The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital programme 2021/22 to 2023/24 of £161.743m, including £147.248m for Affordable Housing schemes.
- (c) The principles underpinning the capital programme in paragraph 5.1.2 and the Minimum Revenue Provision principles in Section 7.
- (d) The notional funding allocations for individual schemes as highlighted in Appendix A (General Fund), Appendices B and C (HRA and Affordable Housing) for the period 2020-2024.
- (e) The Prudential Indicators, as set out in Section 6 of the report, and the Operational Boundary and Authorised Limit as set out in Tables 1.7 and 1.8. in order to provide increased flexibility to fund the Council’s Capital Expenditure plans.

Members are asked to note:

- (f) The estimated interest costs of borrowing £119.4m to fund the entire capital programme, assuming an interest cost of 1%, excluding the Minimum Revenue Provision, is £1.194m pa. These costs have been included within the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- (g) The Council will withdraw from its reliance on using capital receipts to fund the Minimum Revenue Provision over the lifetime of this capital programme. The revenue impact of this decision results in a £6.573m

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pressure by 2023/24. These costs have been included within the Medium Term Financial Strategy.”

The recommendations were put and carried and, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, a record of the vote was taken as follows:-

There voted for the recommendations:-

Councillors Ajaib, Akram, Ali, Anderson, Bains, Basra, Begum, Carter, A.Cheema, H.Cheema, Dar, Davis, Dhaliwal, Gahir, Hulme, Mann, Matloob, Minhas, Mohammad, Nazir, Pantelic, D.Parmar, S.Parmar, Plenty, Qaseem, Sabah, A.Sandhu, Sharif and Swindlehurst. 29

There voted against the recommendations:

Councillors Kelly, Smith, Strutton and Wright..... 4

There abstained from voting:

The Worshipful, The Mayor Councillor Brooker 1

Resolved -

That the following be approved:

- (a) The General Fund capital programme 2021/22 to 2023/24 of £147.557m and the associated Minimum Revenue Provision.
- (b) The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital programme 2021/22 to 2023/24 of £161.743m, including £147.248m for Affordable Housing schemes.
- (c) The principles underpinning the capital programme in paragraph 5.1.2 and the Minimum Revenue Provision principles in Section 7.
- (d) The notional funding allocations for individual schemes as highlighted in Appendix A (General Fund), Appendices B and C (HRA and Affordable Housing) for the period 2020-2024.
- (e) The Prudential Indicators, as set out in Section 6 of the report, and the Operational Boundary and Authorised Limit as set out in Tables 1.7 and 1.8. in order to provide increased flexibility to fund the Council’s Capital Expenditure plans.

Members noted that:

- (f) The estimated interest costs of borrowing £119.4m to fund the entire capital programme, assuming an interest cost of 1%, excluding the Minimum Revenue Provision, is £1.194m pa. These costs have been included within the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

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- (g) The Council will withdraw from its reliance on using capital receipts to fund the Minimum Revenue Provision over the lifetime of this capital programme. The revenue impact of this decision results in a £6.573m pressure by 2023/24. These costs have been included within the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

67. Appointment of Non-Executive Directors to Board of Slough Children First Limited

It was moved by Councillor Swindlehurst,
Seconded by Councillor Akram,

- a) "That the Chief Executive has delegated authority to appoint up to 3 council officers or elected members to the Slough Children First Limited's board, following any change in its articles of association to make it a LA controlled company.
- b) That a report be presented to the annual Council meeting confirming the appointments and requesting that Council confirm the same."

The recommendations were put to the vote and carried with 29 votes for and 5 abstentions.

Resolved -

- a) That the Chief Executive has delegated authority to appoint up to 3 council officers or elected members to the Slough Children First Limited's board, following any change in its articles of association to make it a LA controlled company.
- b) That a report be presented to the annual Council meeting confirming the appointments and requesting that Council confirm the same.

68. COVID-19 Decisions Update

It was moved by Councillor Swindlehurst,
Seconded by Councillor Mann,

- (a) "That the report be noted; and
- (b) That the significant decisions taken by Silver as set out in the Appendix to the report be ratified insofar as they relate to Council functions."

The recommendations were put to the vote and agreed unanimously.

Resolved -

- (a) That the report be noted; and
- (b) That the significant decisions taken by Silver as set out in the Appendix be ratified insofar as they relate to Council functions.

69. Calendar of Meetings 2021/22

It was moved by Councillor Swindlehurst,
Seconded by Councillor Akram,

- (a) "That the Calendar of Meetings for the period May 2021 to May 2022, as set out in Appendix A of this report, be approved.
- (b) That the Head of Democratic Services / Democratic Services Lead be authorised to make amendments to the Calendar resulting from any constitutional changes that may be agreed, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.
- (c) That delegated authority be given to Leader of the Council and Chief Executive to make changes to the programme of meetings arising from the review of the scrutiny process and that any changes be reported to the meeting in April."

The recommendations were put to the vote and agreed unanimously.

Resolved -

- (a) That the Calendar of Meetings for the period May 2021 to May 2022, as set out in Appendix A of this report, be approved.
- (b) That the Head of Democratic Services / Democratic Services Lead be authorised to make amendments to the Calendar resulting from any constitutional changes that may be agreed, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.
- (c) That delegated authority be given to Leader of the Council and Chief Executive to make changes to the programme of meetings arising from the review of the scrutiny process and that any changes be reported to the meeting in April.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 7.00 pm and closed at 10.05 pm)