

## MINUTES OF COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

At a Meeting of the Council for the Borough of Slough held at the Council Chamber - Observatory House, 25 Windsor Road, SL1 2EL on Thursday, 9th March, 2023 at 7.00 pm

**Present:-** The Worshipful the Mayor (MayorPresentList), in the chair; Councillors Ajaib, Akbar, Akram, Ali, Anderson, Bains, Basra, M. Bedi, P. Bedi, Begum, Brooker, Carter, Cheema, J. Davis, Dar, Gahir, Gill, Grewal, Hulme, Kaur, Kelly, M. Malik, Mann, Matloob, Muvvala, Nazir, Pantelic, D. Parmar, S. Parmar, Qaseem, Sabah, Sandhu, Smith, Strutton, Swindlehurst and Wright

**Apologies for Absence:-** Councillors Bal, R. Davis, S. Malik and Mohammad

### 52. Declarations of Interest

None received.

### 53. Recommendation of the Employment and Appeals Committee from its meeting held on 22nd December 2022

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

“That the Pay Policy Statement 2023/24, as attached at Appendix A to the report, be approved for publication.”

The recommendation was put to the vote and carried with 34 votes for and 2 abstentions.

**Resolved** – That the Pay Policy Statement 2023/24, as attached at Appendix A to the report, be approved for publication.

### 54. Recommendations of the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee from its meeting held on 22nd February 2023

#### 2018/19 Accounts and Audit Update

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

- a) “That the 2018/19 accounts be approved.
- b) That the issues arising from the preparation and audit of the statement of accounts, as set out in sections 2.3 to 2.9, be noted in order to ensure that the findings are taken into account by Council when making decisions and that any recommendations made by the external auditors are addressed.”

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The recommendations were put to the vote and carried with 34 votes for and 2 abstentions.

### **Resolved -**

- a) That the 2018/19 accounts be approved.
- b) That the issues arising from the preparation and audit of the statement of accounts, as set out in sections 2.3 to 2.9, be noted in order to ensure that the findings are taken into account by Council when making decisions and that any recommendations made by the external auditors are addressed.

### Update on Objection to 2018/19 Accounts and issuing of Statutory Recommendations– Purchase of Observatory House

The Mayor reminded the meeting that these were statutory recommendations which the Council must consider and proposed that normal procedure rules be varied in so far as to allow Grant Thornton, the Council's External Auditors to address Council, following which they would take questions from Members.

The Council unanimously signified its consent to vary procedural rules as set out by the Mayor.

Mr Dosset and Ms Masci set out details of the report and outlined the statutory recommendations that were issued following an objection received to the 2018/19 accounts in relation to the purchase of Observatory House. Members asked a number of questions which were responded to, following which

It was moved by Councillor Kelly,  
Seconded by Councillor Ali,

- (a) "That the statutory recommendations be noted.
- (b) That the recommendations and the management response is accepted.
- (c) That the lessons learnt and proposed action as set out in the report are accepted."

The recommendations were put to the vote and carried with 35 votes for and 1 abstention.

### **Resolved -**

- (d) That the statutory recommendations be noted.
- (e) That the recommendations and the management response is accepted.
- (f) That the lessons learnt and proposed action as set out in the report are accepted.

## **55. Meeting Procedure**

A suggested procedure for the budget debate had been circulated to Members in the supplementary agenda.

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

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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 budget agenda items;
- Members of the Opposition speaking for up to 20 minutes in total on the same items;
- Independent Members speaking for up to 5 minutes in total.

The procedural motion was put and carried unanimously.

**Resolved** – That the proposed procedure for the budget debate be approved and adopted.

The Leader of the Council and Lead Members for Housing and Planning; Financial Oversight and Council Assets; Children’s Services, Lifelong Learning and Skills; Social Care and Public Health; Public Protection, Regulation and Enforcement; Customer Services, Procurement and Performance and Leisure, Culture and Community Empowerment provided details on the budget overview, savings, growth and pressures relating to each of their portfolios.

Members of the Conservative Group and Independent Members spoke on the budget agenda items, highlighting the seriousness of the financial challenge facing the Council.

### 56. Section 25 Report

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

“That Council has regard to the Section 25 Report report when making decisions about the calculation of council tax requirement.”

The recommendation was put to the vote and carried with 34 votes for and 2 abstentions.

**Resolved** – That Council has regard to the Section 25 report when making decisions about the calculation of council tax requirement.

### 57. Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28

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

“That the Capital Programme for 2023/24 to 2027/28 as set out in the report and Appendix A 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, Akbar, Akram, Ali, Anderson, Bains, Basra, M.Bedi, P.Bedi, Begum, Brooker, Carter, Cheema, J.Davis, Gahir, Gill, Grewal, Hulme, Kaur, Kelly, M.Malik, Mann, Matloob, Muvvala, Nazir, Pantelic, S.Parmar, Qaseem, Sabah, Sandhu, Smith, Strutton, Swindlehurst and Wright..... 34

There abstained from voting:

Councillor Dar and The Worshipful, The Mayor Councillor D.Parmar..... 2

**Resolved** – That the Capital Programme for 2023/24 to 2027/28 as set out in the report and Appendix A be approved.

**58. Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24**

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

“That the Treasury Management Strategy (TMS) for 2023/24 to 2027/28 be approved, including:

- i. Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement for 2023/24 (Appendix 1)
- ii. Annual Investment Strategy for 2023/24 (Appendix 2)
- iii. Approved Counterparty List (Appendix 3)
- iv. Approved Countries for Investments (Appendix 4)
- v. the Prudential Indicators for the period 2023/24 to 2025/26 (Section 4 of the TMS)”

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:-

There voted for the recommendation:-

Councillors Ajaib, Akbar, Akram, Ali, Anderson, Bains, Basra, Begum, Brooker, Carter, Cheema, J.Davis, Gahir, Gill, Grewal, Hulme, Kaur, M.Malik, Mann, Matloob, Nazir, Pantelic, S.Parmar, Qaseem, Sabah, Sandhu and Swindlehurst..... 27

There abstained from voting:

Councillors M.Bedi, P.Bedi Dar, Kelly, Smith, Strutton, Wright and The Worshipful, The Mayor Councillor D.Parmar..... 8

**Resolved** – That the Treasury Management Strategy (TMS) for 2023/24 to 2027/28 be approved, including:

- i. Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement for 2023/24 (Appendix 1)
- ii. Annual Investment Strategy for 2023/24 (Appendix 2)
- iii. Approved Counterparty List (Appendix 3)

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- iv. Approved Countries for Investments (Appendix 4)
- v. the Prudential Indicators for the period 2023/24 to 2025/26 (Section 4 of the TMS)

### **59. Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2023/24 and 30-Year Housing Investment Plan**

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

- a) "That the HRA revenue budget for 2023-24 (Table 1 & Appendix A) be approved.
- b) That the HRA 5-year revenue budgets for 2023-24 to 2027-28 (Table 1 & Appendix A) be noted.
- c) That the HRA 30-year revenue budgets for 2023-24 to 2052-53 (Appendix B) be noted.
- d) That the HRA 5-year Capital Programme for a total £52.714m (Table 3 & Appendix C) be approved.
- e) That the 30-year Capital Programme for 2023-24 to 2052-53 (Appendix D) be noted.
- f) That the draft HRA reserves and balances for the 5-year Business Plan (Appendix E) be noted."

The recommendations were put to the vote and carried with 33 votes for and 2 abstentions.

#### **Resolved –**

- a) That the HRA revenue budget for 2023-24 (Table 1 & Appendix A) be approved.
- b) That the HRA 5-year revenue budgets for 2023-24 to 2027-28 (Table 1 & Appendix A) be noted.
- c) That the HRA 30-year revenue budgets for 2023-24 to 2052-53 (Appendix B) be noted.
- d) That the HRA 5-year Capital Programme for a total £52.714m (Table 3 & Appendix C) be approved.
- e) That the 30-year Capital Programme for 2023-24 to 2052-53 (Appendix D) be noted.
- f) That the draft HRA reserves and balances for the 5-year Business Plan (Appendix E) be noted.

### **60. Update on Dedicated Schools Grant Management Plan**

It was moved by Councillor Anderson,  
Seconded by Councillor Hulme,

"That the Council note

- a) the forecast position for DSG spend in 2022/23 to 2026/27
- b) the overarching issues that have resulted in the DSG deficit and the actions taken to date to address these

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- c) the Council has been taking part in the 'safety valve' intervention programme with the DfE and has submitted its final proposal for addressing the deficit on the High Needs Block."

The recommendations were put to the vote and carried with 28 votes for and 7 abstentions.

**Resolved** - That the Council note

- a) the forecast position for DSG spend in 2022/23 to 2026/27
- b) the overarching issues that have resulted in the DSG deficit and the actions taken to date to address these
- c) the Council has been taking part in the 'safety valve' intervention programme with the DfE and has submitted its final proposal for addressing the deficit on the High Needs Block.

## **61. 2023/24 Budget**

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

1. "Approval of the 2023/24 budget to enable the Council Tax for 2023/24 to be set;
2. Approval of the Model Council Tax Resolution 2023/24 as set out in Appendix B;
3. Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial, to place a notice in the local press of the amounts set under recommendation 2 within a period of 21 days following the Council's decision;
4. Approve the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as based on the estimated financial deficit in the Capitalisation Direction and to be funded by capitalisation of:
  - a. £267.1m up to 2022/23
  - b. £31.6m for 2023/24
  - c. £58.4m for beyond 2023/24
5. Approve the overall General Fund revenue budget of £143.4m, to include:
  - a. growth for pressures of £12.2m
  - b. proposed savings by Directorates of £22.4m
6. Approve measures to control spending and improve the finances of the Council at Appendix D
7. Approves that time-limited funding for IT and Council-wide transformation projects budgeted in 2022/23 and set out in the capitalisation direction

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model shared with DLUHC in February 2023 will remain available in 2023/24 where not fully spent.

- 8. Approves that services will submit a formal business case to Finance by 30 June 2023 confirming their request and the amount for any underspends to be rolled forward from 2022/23 into 2023/24 and that these requests be subject to Cabinet and Finance Commissioner approval.
- 9. Approves that services may extend agency staff and contractors critical to the delivery and continuity of their service beyond 31 March 2023, subject to having available budget.

To note the following:

- 10 The balanced budget position for 2023/24 requiring savings of £22.4m and the projected financial deficit between 2024/25 to 2027/28
- 11 The intention to increase Council Tax by 7.99% in 2023/24
- 12 The intention to increase Council Tax by a further 2% in 2023/24 in respect of the Adult Social Care Precept
- 13 The assumed funding for the protection of social care 2023/24 through the Better Care Fund
- 14 That due regard has been had to the s.25 report by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial
- 15 The minutes from the 2023/24 Budget Scrutiny Sessions at Appendix G
- 16 Approve the process for access to contingency as set out in paragraphs 2.16.64 to 2.16.69”

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, Akbar, Akram, Ali, Anderson, Bains, Basra, Begum, Brooker, Carter, Cheema, Gahir, Gill, Grewal, Hulme, Kaur, M.Malik, Mann, Matloob, Nazir, Pantelic, S.Parmar, Qaseem, Sabah, Sandhu and Swindlehurst ..... 26

There voted against the recommendations:-

Councillors M.Bedi, P.Bedi, Kelly, Smith and Wright ..... 5

There abstained from voting:

Councillors Dar, Strutton and The Worshipful, The Mayor Councillor D.Parmar... 3

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### Resolved -

1. Approval of the 2023/24 budget to enable the Council Tax for 2023/24 to be set;
  2. Approval of the Model Council Tax Resolution 2023/24 as set out in Appendix B;
  3. Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial, to place a notice in the local press of the amounts set under recommendation 2 within a period of 21 days following the Council's decision;
  4. Approve the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as based on the estimated financial deficit in the Capitalisation Direction and to be funded by capitalisation of:
    - d. £267.1m up to 2022/23
    - e. £31.6m for 2023/24
    - f. £58.4m for beyond 2023/24
  5. Approve the overall General Fund revenue budget of £143.4m, to include:
    - c. growth for pressures of £12.2m
    - d. proposed savings by Directorates of £22.4m
  6. Approve measures to control spending and improve the finances of the Council at Appendix D
  7. Approves that time-limited funding for IT and Council-wide transformation projects budgeted in 2022/23 and set out in the capitalisation direction model shared with DLUHC in February 2023 will remain available in 2023/24 where not fully spent.
  8. Approves that services will submit a formal business case to Finance by 30 June 2023 confirming their request and the amount for any underspends to be rolled forward from 2022/23 into 2023/24 and that these requests be subject to Cabinet and Finance Commissioner approval.
  9. Approves that services may extend agency staff and contractors critical to the delivery and continuity of their service beyond 31 March 2023, subject to having available budget.
- To note the following:
- 10 The balanced budget position for 2023/24 requiring savings of £22.4m and the projected financial deficit between 2024/25 to 2027/28
  - 11 The intention to increase Council Tax by 7.99% in 2023/24



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- 12 The intention to increase Council Tax by a further 2% in 2023/24 in respect of the Adult Social Care Precept
- 13 The assumed funding for the protection of social care 2023/24 through the Better Care Fund
- 14 That due regard has been had to the s.25 report by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial
- 15 The minutes from the 2023/24 Budget Scrutiny Sessions at Appendix G
- 16 Approve the process for access to contingency as set out in paragraphs 2.16.64 to 2.16.69

## **62. Meeting Guillotine**

The Mayor moved that, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 8.2, the meeting continue beyond 10.30pm to complete all of the remainder of business. The Council signified its' agreement for the meeting to continue to conclude consideration of the remaining agenda items.

**Resolved** – That the meeting continue past 10.30pm to consider all remaining business.

## **63. Financial Action Plan Update**

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

“That the progress and issues arising from the continued work as set out in the report be noted.”

The recommendation was put to the vote and carried with 28 votes for and 3 abstentions.

**Resolved** - That the progress and issues arising from the continued work as set out in the report be noted.

## **64. Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2023/24**

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

(a) “That the council tax reduction scheme 2023/24 (appendix c) be adopted for the financial year 2023/24.

(b) Agree to allocate £0.040m into the council tax hardship fund and to use the remaining element of the council's allocation of the council tax support fund to protect the current levels of support provided to those taxpayers who would otherwise lose under the proposed scheme.”

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The recommendations were put to the vote and carried with 30 votes for and 2 abstentions.

**Resolved –**

- (a) That the council tax reduction scheme 2023/24 (appendix c) be adopted for the financial year 2023/24.
- (b) Agree to allocate £0.040m into the council tax hardship fund and to use the remaining element of the council's allocation of the council tax support fund to protect the current levels of support provided to those taxpayers who would otherwise lose under the proposed scheme.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 7.00 pm and closed at 10.45 pm)