

150. ACTION LIST

The action list was discussed and updated.

151. PUBLIC CONTRIBUTIONS

There were no public contributions.

152. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Members were reminded that declarations of interest should be made as and when the specific agenda item to which they related was under discussion.

153. URGENT MATTERS BROUGHT FORWARD WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR

There were no urgent matters brought forward.

154. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA ITEMS PART I AND II

There were no Part II items.

155. BUDGET 2022/23, MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2022/23 - 2026/27

The Finance Manager (Section 151 Officer) introduced the report, the purpose of which was for Members to consider, formulate and recommend the Budget 2022/23 to Full Council. The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) indicates the possible extent of the budget and funding shortfall that the Council will face in the future. It is an aid in identifying the extent of service changes that the Council will need to make to achieve a balanced budget in each financial year up to 2026/27.

A detailed and informative slide presentation was given by the Finance Manager (S151 Officer) highlighting the salient points in the report.

The Finance Manager (S151 Officer) advised that a final settlement email had been received however he had not had the chance to view it in detail.

Councillor James joined the meeting at 10.24am.

Members were asked for any questions and the following discussions took place.

- In response to a query, the Finance Manager (S151 Officer) advised of the Central Government scheme to reduce Council Tax bills by £150 in response to the increase in energy bills. TDC would be compensated for the income forgone and the costs associated with administering the scheme; however, exact details were yet to be confirmed;
- the Finance Manager (S151 Officer) explained the meaning behind reducing the levels of service for mandatory services and examples were given by

both him and the Head of Communities & Place. The Chief Executive advised that, if a working group were to be established following recommendations from Community & Resources Committee to Full Council, then cost reduction could be looked at along with impact on the services. The aim of the working group would be to look at income generation as well as bringing the budgets back into balance;

- Councillor Hodson expressed her concern to the group on the settlement figure and advised that this had been queried with Sir Geoffrey Cox MP who had agreed to raise with Mr. Michael Gove MP, however a response had not yet been received;
- the Finance Manager (S151 Officer) advised he had enquired how the figure has been reached but had not had a response and did not expect any change in the settlement figure. He briefly explained two contributory factors, (reduced New Homes Bonus funding and changes to the Council Tax Base) to the decision but advised the methodology to the decision was very complex. Any changes to the figure would only occur if there were any errors within the calculations. The Chief Executive added that he did not think anymore could be done from Full Council and that it was very rare for any retrospective adjustments to be made to the settlement figures. He would chase Sir Geoffrey Cox MP's office;
- it was confirmed that the 100% retained from renewables was not new and had been this way since 2013/14;
- Councillor Pennington declared a personal interest as cabling from Morocco to Webbery would be running through his land. The Finance Manager (S151 Officer) advised energy from this would form part of the National Infrastructure and would not affect the business rates at TDC level;
- suggestion was made for TDC to consider promoting solar and wind energy. The Chief Executive advised this could be looked at if a working group were established at Full Council;
- the Finance Manager (S151 Officer) confirmed the Climate Change budget would remain at £10,000.00 and that external funding would probably be needed to deliver the Climate Change agenda;
- once the settlement bill had been approved in Parliament then it would be a public document;
- the Chief Executive advised that the Council Tax Support scheme had not been reviewed recently due to the impact of Covid-19 and it was agreed at Full Council to continue as it is for 2022/23. A group had been established to review the scheme for 2023/24;
- the Finance Manager (S151 Officer) explained how the precepts for Council Tax work and money that TDC receives;

It was proposed by Councillor Cottle-Hunkin, seconded by Councillor Langford that the Internal Overview & Scrutiny Committee register their concern that the CSP was unfairly low at 4% under inflation.

(Vote – For 4, Against 7)

Motion was lost.

- as the concern of the settlement figure had already been challenged with Sir Geoffrey Cox MP it was suggested that it be addressed again, expressing further concern from both the Community & Resources Committee and Internal Overview & Scrutiny Committee. It was agreed this would be the most effective way to progress;
- Councillor Hodson advised of all the hard work that had been carried out to increase TDC's status and profile. Once a response had been received from Sir Geoffrey Cox MP then it would be reported back to Internal Overview & Scrutiny;
- The Chair confirmed an email could be sent to Sir Geoffrey Cox MP to express the urgency for this matter to go to the Minister;

It was proposed by Councillor Inch, seconded by Councillor Newton and –

Resolved:

That Members recommend to Full Council

- a) Torridge's Band D Council Tax for 2022/23 be increased by £5 (2.90%) from £173.66 to £178.66 per year
- b) Torridge's Net Revenue Budget 2022/23 is £7.983m
- c) The contributions to the Council's reserves as outlined in paragraph 11.4 are approved.

That members note:

The Chief Finance Officer (s151 Officer) assurance of the robustness of the budget 2022//23 set out in section 13 of the report.

Note the assumptions and forecast applied to develop the MTFs outlined in section 8

Note the risks associated with the Budget 2022/23 and MTFs outlined in section 12

(Vote – For 10, Abstentions 1)

Councillor James advised he had received an email late the night before regarding the settlement and read out paragraphs from the email to the group.

156. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022/23 TO 2026/27

The Senior Capital Accountant & Deputy S151 Officer introduced the report, the purpose of which was for members to consider, formulate and recommend updates to the Capital Programme 2022/23 for Full Council. The Capital Programme includes authorised projects which require updating due to inflationary pressures, along with new PIDs (Project Initiation Documents) which require authorisation from members before inclusion.

A detailed and informative slide presentation was given by the Senior Capital Accountant & Deputy S151 Officer highlighting the salient points in the report.

A discussion followed with the following answers to questions/queries raised:

- leasing vehicles had been looked into in the past however long term this does not work out to be cost effective;
- further details of the leisure programme costings were given;
- the disability facilities grants are for homeowners and no external funding was available for the disabled access to Caddsdwn;
- the actual PID documents were not attached to the report and were shared at the Capital PID workshop held on 7th December 2021;
- the Head of Communities & Place explained the need for disabled parking bays at Caddsdwn and the need for safe access to the building from the bottom car park;
- the Chief Executive provided an explanation on the scoring system for the PIDs following the process and method adopted by the Internal Overview & Scrutiny Committee;
- following queries regarding electric vehicles the Head of Legal & Governance (Monitoring Officer) advised work on these had been carried out by Managers and Officers and currently they are not fit for purpose at any size;
- the Chief Executive responded to a query stating that keeping a blank spot for Members to bring forward ideas for PIDs would be difficult to decide which would take precedence;
- the Finance Officer (S151 Officer) explained the reasoning behind Officers putting forward the majority of Capital PIDs;

- the Chief Executive explained that specific work needs to be carried out to cost PIDs prior to them being presented and explained why this was required. Further details were also given on how the Play Strategy sits in the Strategic Plan which affected the Victoria Park PID;

It was proposed by Councillor Newton, seconded by Councillor Harding and –

Resolved:

That the recommendations in the report be taken en bloc.

(Vote – For 8, Against 3)

It was proposed by Councillor Newton, seconded by Councillor Harding and –

Resolved:

That Members recommend to Full Council

- d) The Capital Programme is updated for building cost inflation
- e) The Vehicle Programme is updated for inflation
- f) The Vehicle Programme is Balanced long term, by increasing the contributions from revenue.
- g) Recommend PIDs that meet the minimum recommended project score of 65, for inclusion in the Capital Programme:
 - C202 Core Server
 - C201 Grounds Maintenance
 - C200 Caddstown Disabled Access Pathways
 - C199 Revs & Bens Digitisation
 - C204 Sandymere Road

With the PIDs that fall below this score being referred back to officers for further work/refinement, and possible future consideration.

(Vote – For 8, Against 3)

157. CONSIDERATION OF THE FORWARD PLAN

The forward plan was discussed.

The Strategy, Performance & ICT Manager gave a verbal update on when the legislation for the new procurement rules would be issued and once issued how to progress.

Following a brief discussion, it was decided that the Strategy, Performance & ICT Manager would liaise with the Chair outside of the meeting to decide when Social Values would be entered onto the forward plan.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and closed at 12.11 pm

Chair:

Date: