

**COUNCIL**

A meeting of the Council was held on Friday 8 March 2024.

**PRESENT:** Councillors J Rostron (Chair), J Walker (Vice-Chair), J Banks, I Blades, D Branson, E Clynych, C Cooke - Elected Mayor, J Cooke, C Cooper, D Coupe, D Davison, S Dean, J Ewan, T Furness, P Gavigan, TA Grainge, S Hill, B Hubbard, L Hurst, N Hussain, D Jackson, D Jones, J Kabuye, L Lewis, T Livingstone, L Mason, D McCabe, M McClintock, J McConnell, I Morrish, J Nicholson, M Nugent, J Platt, S Platt, A Romaine, J Ryles, M Saunders, M Smiles, M Storey, P Storey, J Thompson, S Tranter, Z Uddin, N Walker, G Wilson and J Young

**OFFICERS:** C Benjamin, S Bonner, R Brown, A Davis, G Field, L Grabham, C Heaphy, A Humble, S Lightwing, D Middleton, M Nath, J Savage, T Whitehead, K Whitmore and A Wilson

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Councillor J McTigue

23/96 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received at this point in the meeting.

23/97 **ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded Members to use the microphones when speaking at the meeting and to clearly indicate when their voting intentions.

23/98 **COUNCIL PLAN 2024-2027**

The Mayor and the Chief Executive submitted a report, the purpose of which was to set out the Council Plan for 2024-2027.

The report sought Council approval on the Council Plan including its structure and content. The Plan set out how the Council would work with communities and take forward its shared priorities over the 2024 to 2027 period.

The Council Plan, formerly known as the Strategic Plan, was the Council's overarching business plan for the medium-term, and was refreshed on an annual basis, setting out the priorities of the Elected Mayor of Middlesbrough, the ambitions for Middlesbrough's communities and the ways in which it sought to achieve them.

**ORDERED** that the Council Plan 2024-27 and associated strategic priorities and outcomes to enable development of detailed, supporting delivery plans be approved.

23/99 **COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2024/25**

The Executive Member for Finance and Governance and the Director of Finance submitted a report, the purpose of which was to seek approval for the 2024/2025 Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

The Executive Member for Finance and Governance outlined the report and stated the reduction scheme was submitted to Council every year. The scheme could be a revised scheme or new scheme. The scheme submitted to Council was a revised scheme and had already been considered by the Executive.

Importantly the proposed scheme did not affect other statutory discounts people could apply for, such as student households and single person discounts.

Until 2013 Council Tax Benefit was determined by Government with Councils administering it. From 2013 onwards Councils were permitted to both set and administer their own scheme within legislative frameworks. This were two key revisions which related to care leavers, which was a technical adjustment, and the childcare cost element. In terms of the childcare cost

element, the revision to the scheme would mean payments received for childcare when claiming Universal Credit would not be considered for Council Tax Benefit.

The Executive Member invited questions. There were no questions from Members.

**ORDERED** that the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2024/2025 and its associated amendments be approved.

23/100

**2024/25 REVENUE BUDGET, MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN, COUNCIL TAX SETTING AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT**

The Elected Mayor of Middlesbrough and the Director of Finance submitted a report, the purpose of which was to seek approval of the Mayor's proposed budget and to enable the Council to set the Council Tax in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended by the Localism Act 2011, on or before 11 March 2024. Prior to setting the Council Tax, Members were required to consider and agree to accept Exceptional Financial Support of up to £13.4m offered 'in-principle' by DLUHC to enable the consideration and approval of the Mayor's proposed budget. Provided the Council accepted this Council was also asked to approve a 2024/25 revenue budget of £143.190 million and Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for the period 2024/25 to 2026/27 following the confirmation of the Local Government Finance Settlement and those matters found in paragraph 1.3 of the report.

The Mayor presented the report.

The Chair invited Members to comment on the report.

Following a discussion on the content of the report, the Chair invited the Monitoring Officer to conduct a vote on the recommendation found at paragraph 2.1 of the report in relation to in principle offer of Exceptional Financial Support totalling £13.4 million details of which were contained in Appendix A of the report.

**ORDERED** that Council accept the DLUHC 'in-principle' offer of Exceptional Financial Support of up to £13.4m and associated terms and conditions as set out in Appendix A of the report.

The Chair invited the Monitoring Officer to conduct a recorded vote on the recommendations contained in Appendix B and C of the report.

The result of the vote was as follows:

Votes for: (25)

Mr C Cooke (Elected Mayor) Councillors Banks, Blades, Branson, Clynych, J Cooke, Dean, Ewan, Furness, Gavigan, Hussain, Kabuye, Lewis, Nicholson, Nugent, Romaine, Rostron, Ryles, M Storey, P Storey, Thompson, Tranter, Uddin, JA Walker, N Walker.

Votes against: (16)

Councillors Cooper, Coupe, Hill, Hurst, Hubbard, Jackson, Jones, Livingstone, Mason, McCabe, Morrish, J Platt, S Platt, Saunders, Smiles, Wilson.

Abstentions: (5) Councillors Davison, Grainge, McClintock, McConnell, Young.

Following the vote, it was **ORDERED** that Council:

1. Accept the DLUHC 'in-principle' offer of Exceptional Financial Support the recommendations as submitted in the 2024/25 Revenue Budget, Medium Term Financial Plan, and Council Tax setting report to Executive on 28 February 2024 as set out in Appendix B paragraphs 2.1 to 2.7 be approved.
2. Approves the Prudential Indicators and limits for 2024/25 to 2026/27, Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25, and the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy for 2024/25, and the Approved Authorised Limit for External Debt of £372m for the 2024/25 financial year as shown in the separate Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25 report to Executive on 28 February 2024 as

set out at Appendix C paragraph 2 of the report.

3. Approve the Council Tax for the year 2024/25 in accordance with s30 to 38 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended as set out in paragraphs 4.17 to 4.24 of the report.
4. Delegate authority to the Director of Finance (s151 Officer) to adjust the Corporate Contingency Budget to account for any further variations that may arise in finalising technical calculations.

23/101

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION 2023/24 (PHASE TWO COUNCIL PROPOSAL)**

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report to Council the purpose of which was to seek approval of the Council's Phase Two submission to the Ward Boundary Commission.

The Monitoring Officer presented the report and explained the process that had been followed to that point, including the phase one submission which focussed on Councillor numbers. As a result of this the Boundary Commission suggested overall Councillor numbers remain as they are. It was explained that the phase two submission focussed on warding patterns. It was commented that engagement with Members had been productive and collaborative across the political spectrum.

A Member commented that information in part of the report was not current.

The Chair invited the Monitoring to conduct a vote.

**ORDERED** that Council approve the phase two ward boundary submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.