

COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Council on Wednesday, 6 March 2024 in the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall

Present: Councillors Abbott, Ball, Baker, Begg, Bevan, J. Bradshaw, Bramwell, Cargill, Carlin, Dennett, Dourley, Fry, Garner, Gilligan, Goodall, Harris, S. Hill, V. Hill, Hutchinson, Jones, Leck, M. Lloyd Jones, P. Lloyd Jones, C. Loftus, K. Loftus, Logan, A. Lowe, J. Lowe, A. McInerney, T. McInerney, Nelson, L. Nolan, Philbin, Polhill, C. Plumpton Walsh, N. Plumpton Walsh, Ratcliffe, Rowe, Ryan, Stockton, Stretch, Skinner, Teeling, Thompson, Thornton, Wainwright, Wall, Wallace, Wharton, Woolfall and Wright

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Davidson, McDermott and P. Nolan

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Reaney, S. Wallace-Bonner, S. Young, G. Ferguson and W. Rourke

Also in attendance: One member of the press and two members of the public

COU53 COUNCIL MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 6 December 2023 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

COU54 THE MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reported that she was pleased to announce that the recent Civic Ball had been a huge success and had helped to raise £2,487 towards the Mayor's Fund. The next fund-raising events would be an Easter Bingo on 27 March and a Grand National/afternoon tea on 13 April.

The Mayor also thanked all those, including the Mayoral Staff, who had helped and supported her during her mayoral year.

COU55 LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader made the following announcements:

- he acknowledged that this had been the most

Action

- challenging budget that the Council had to set;
- he provided an update on the recent Ofsted inspection of the SEND Services;
- on 1 April 2024 Halton Council would celebrate 50 years and to mark the occasion a year of events was planned; and
- the Executive Board at its February meeting had approved the new Halton Corporate Plan. The Plan represented a years' work and attracted the second highest public consultation response. The document captured Halton's priorities for the next five years.

N.B. Councillors A. Lowe and J. Lowe declared a Registrable Other Interest in the following item of business as they have a family member employed at St Lukes Care Home.

COU56 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Council considered the minutes of the Executive Board meetings on 7 December 2023, 18 January 2024 and 22 February 2024.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.

COU57 MINUTES OF THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

The Council considered the minutes of the Health and Wellbeing Board meeting on 17 January 2024.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.

COU58 QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 8

It was noted that no questions had been submitted under Standing Order No. 8.

N.B. Councillors A. Lowe and J. Lowe declared a Registrable Other Interest in the following item of business as they have a family member employed at St Lukes Care Home.

COU59 ST LUKE'S AND ST PATRICK'S DECARBONISATION PROJECTS (EXB82 REFERS)

The Council considered a report of the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, which sought approval in respect of capital funding to support the decarbonisation schemes at St Luke's and St Patrick's Care Homes following the submission of a bid to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the provision of £1.609m of capital funding over a 2 year period, subject to the PSDS bid being successful, or £2.98m if the bid is unsuccessful, be agreed, to enable the decarbonisation works to proceed at both St Luke's & St Patrick's Care Homes; and
- 2) Council approve this scheme for inclusion within the 2024/25 capital programme.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

COU60 THE CORPORATE PLAN (EXB84 REFERS)

The Council considered a report of the Corporate Director, Chief Executive's Delivery Unit, which sought approval of the new Council Corporate Plan which would take effect from 1 April 2024. A copy of the Plan, which outlined each of the Council's 6 key priorities, was attached to the report.

On behalf of the Council, the Leader thanked John Gallagher and his team, for their work in producing the new Council Corporate Plan.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted and the new Corporate Plan be approved; and
- 2) the Scrutiny Chairs' Group be requested to consider changing the titles of the Policy and Performance Boards to bring them in line with the new Corporate Plan 6 key priorities.

Corporate
Director - Chief
Executive's
Delivery Unit

COU61 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2024-2025 (EXB85 REFERS)

The Council considered a report of the Chief Executive, on the calendar of meetings for the 2024/25 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED: That the calendar of meetings for the 2024/25 Municipal Year, as appended to the report, be approved.

Chief Executive

COU62 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2024/25 (EXB86 REFERS)

The Council considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, on the Treasury Management Statement,

which incorporated the Annual Investment Strategy and the Minimum Revenue Provision Strategy for 2024/25.

Councillor Dennett, Corporate Services Portfolio holder, thanked all Officers within the Treasury Management Team for all their work in producing the strategy documents.

RESOLVED: That Council adopt the policies, strategies, statements, prudential and treasury indicators, outlined in the report.

Operational
Director - Finance

COU63 CAPITAL STRATEGY 2024/25 (EXB87 REFERS)

The Council considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, on the Council's Capital Strategy for 2024/25.

Members noted that the Capital Strategy should be read in conjunction with the Treasury Management Statement, also considered at this meeting. The successful delivery of the Capital Strategy would assist the Council in planning and funding its capital expenditure over the next three years.

RESOLVED: That Council approve the 2024/25 Capital Strategy, as presented in the Appendix attached to the report.

Operational
Director - Finance

COU64 BUDGET 2024/25 (EXB89 REFERS)

The Executive Board had considered a report setting out a recommendation to Council in respect of the revenue budget, capital programme and council tax for 2024/25.

The Executive Board had recommended that Council adopt the resolution set out in Appendix A of the report, which included setting the budget at £149.496m, the Council Tax requirement of £64.039m (before Parish, Police, Fire and LCR Combined Authority precepts) and the Band D Council Tax for Halton of £1,758.89.

Councillor Dennett thanked all the Officers involved for their support in producing this budget and wished to record his thanks to all Members for their contribution.

In accordance with Standing Order 16 (3), a recorded vote was taken.

The following Members voted FOR the motion:

Councillors Abbott, Ball, Baker, Begg, Bevan, J. Bradshaw, Bramwell, Cargill, Carlin, Dennett, Dourley, Fry, Garner, Gilligan, Goodall, Harris, S. Hill, V. Hill, Hutchinson, Jones, Leck, M. Lloyd Jones, P. Lloyd Jones, K. Loftus, C. Loftus, Logan, A. Lowe, J. Lowe, A. McInerney, T. McInerney, Nelson, L. Nolan, Philbin, N. Plumpton Walsh, Polhill, Ratcliffe, Rowe, Skinner, G. Stockton, T. Stretch, Teeling, Thompson, Thornton, Wainwright, Wall, Wallace, Wharton, Woolfall, and Wright.

There were no abstentions.

Councillor Carol Plumpton Walsh was not present when the recorded vote was taken.

RESOLVED: That Council:

- 1) adopt the resolution set out in Appendix A, which includes setting the budget at £149.496m, the Council Tax requirement of £64.039m (before Parish, Police, Fire and LCR Combined Authority precepts) and the Band D Council Tax for Halton of £1,758.89;
- 2) approve the capital programme set out in Appendix F;
- 3) approve the introduction of a Council Tax Premium of 100% to properties where there is no resident and which are substantially furnished (typically referred to as second homes) from 1 April 2025, subject to legislation being enacted; and
- 4) approve the Use of Capital Receipts Strategy as set out in Appendix H.

Operational
Director - Finance

COU65 2023/24 REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Council considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, which sought approval for a number of revisions to the Council's 2023/24 Capital Programme.

RESOLVED: That the revisions to the Council's 2023/24 Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 3.2 of the report, be approved.

Operational
Director - Finance

N.B. Councillor Ratcliffe declared a Registrable Other Interest in the following item of business as they have a family member employed by Halton Borough Council.

COU66 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2024 – 2025

The Council considered a report of the Corporate Director, Chief Executive's Delivery Unit, on the Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25.

The Localism Act 2011 required every local authority to prepare a Pay Policy Statement each year, which detailed the Council's approach to a range of issues relating to the pay of its employees, principally its senior staff (Chief Officers) and the Authority's lowest paid employees.

The purpose of the Statement was to provide transparency with regards to the Council's approach to setting the pay of its employees by identifying the following:-

- The methods by which salaries of all employees were determined;
- The details and level of remuneration of its most senior staff (i.e. its Chief Officers); and
- The Committee responsible for ensuring the provisions set out in the Statement were applied consistently throughout the Council and recommending any amendments to the Full Council.

The report also detailed the requirement from April 2018 for employers with more than 250 employees to report on the gender Pay Gap. The calculation was prescribed statutorily, based on a snapshot date of 31 March the previous year. Detailed information was published on the Council's web site.

The following information was included in the report:-

- Background to the Pay Structure;
- Senior Management Remuneration;
- Recruitment of Chief Officers;
- Additions to Salaries of Chief Officers;
- Pensions Contributions;
- Payments on Termination;
- Publication;
- Lowest Paid Employees; and
- Accountability and Decision Making.

RESOLVED: That the Pay Policy Statement for the Financial Year 2024/25 be adopted.

Corporate
Director - Chief
Executive's
Delivery Unit

COU67 MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARDS

The Council considered the reports of the following Boards in the period since the meeting of Council on 6 December 2023:-

- Children, Young People and Families;
- Employment, Learning and Skills and Community;
- Safer;
- Corporate Services

COU68 COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Council considered the reports of the following Committee in the period since the meeting of Council on 6 December 2023:-

- Development Management

COU69 RECOMMENDATION FROM MAYORAL COMMITTEE

The Mayoral Committee had considered a Part II item which made recommendations for the appointment of Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the 2024/25 Municipal Year.

Formal confirmation would be sought at the Annual meeting of Council.

RESOLVED: That Council note that

- 1) Councillor Kevan Wainwright be appointed as Mayor; and
- 2) Councillor Martha Lloyd Jones be appointed as Deputy Mayor.

Meeting ended at 7.35 p.m.