

DECISION NOTICE

Cabinet Meeting - 30 January 2019

Present: Philip Atkins, OBE (Chairman), Mark Deaville, Helen Fisher, Gill Heath, Mike Sutherland, Mark Sutton, Alan White, Philip White and Mark Winnington.

Cabinet Support Member in attendance - Gill Burnett

Also in attendance - Susan Woodward and David Brookes

PART ONE

65. Decision notice of the meeting held on 16 January 2019

Decision – That the notes of the meeting held on 16 January 2019 be approved.

66. Strategic Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019 - 2024



“Faced with the unprecedented challenge of a £35m budget shortfall to close, the county council has taken both proactive and decisive action to ensure we can balance our books and still provide care for the rising numbers of vulnerable adults and children in the county.

In order to do this, we have had to consider some very difficult proposals on what non-statutory services we can continue to fund, including reluctantly the school crossing patrol service.

Although this was still only a proposal, we have listened to people about how much they value patrols and after receiving the full financial picture from Government, we have decided not to progress with this option.

We are continuing to lobby Government on the critical need for a long-term solution for the funding of care, but in the meantime, with less money to go around, we are being honest about what we can still fund.

While councils can no longer do or fund everything they once did, we remain hugely ambitious for the county and are committed to empowering communities to take a stronger role in delivering their own affordable solutions wherever possible.”

Philip Atkins, Leader of the Council



“This year we have found ourselves in uncharted financial territory with a forecasted £35m shortfall in our budget for 2019/20 and a soaring bill for care due to the rising numbers of vulnerable adults and children in care.

Despite the huge pressures and challenges, through hard work, tough decision making and by acting early, we are now in a position to deliver a balanced budget – whilst maintaining one of the lowest county council taxes in the country.

Together with our MPs and local authority colleagues across the country, we successfully pressed the Government hard for some immediate extra funding for care, which will help ease the transition for some organisations affected by the savings we must still make.

However, it is important that as a nation we find a long-term solution to funding care and we will continue to lobby Government on the urgency of this matter.

We will continue to work with the voluntary sector to support communities and a revised community fund will allow members to work with residents help them develop local support for their families, friends and neighbours.”

Mike Sutherland, Cabinet Member for Finance

Reasons for the Decision – To provide Cabinet with an update on the Strategic Plan which explains the Council’s vision of what it hopes to achieve for Staffordshire in the next four years and the ways the Authority will work with residents, communities, businesses and partners to make this a reality; and also the accompanying Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), which provides details of how the Council’s operations will be funded over the five year period 2019-2024.

Decision – (a) That, in respect of the Strategic Plan:

- (i) the progress made in the further refresh of the Strategic Plan 2019/24 be noted and that it be referred to the County Council for approval on 14th February 2019; and
- (ii) the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive be authorised to finalise the details of the Strategic Plan 2019/20 prior to final publication to ensure that it reflects any changes to the management and accountability structures of the County Council as part of the organisation’s transformation.

(b) That, in respect of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2019-24 and the 2019/20 revenue and capital budgets:

- (i) the updates to the MTFS, as set out in the report, be noted.

(ii) the comments of the Deputy Director of Finance on the adequacy of reserves and robustness of the budget be noted and that the County Council be asked to take note of these comments when considering the budget and council tax.

(iii) the comments and recommendations of the Corporate Review Committee, together with the Cabinet's response thereto, be noted.

(iv) that it be recommend to the County Council on 14th February 2019 that they consider and approve the following:

- a net revenue budget of £508.634m for 2019/20;
- the planning forecasts for 2020/21 to 2023/24 as set out in Appendix 11 to the report;
- a contingency provision of £4.000m for 2019/20;
- a net contribution to reserves and general balances of £2.284m for 2019/20;
- a budget requirement of £510.918m for 2019/20;
- a council tax requirement of £351.132m for 2019/20;
- a council tax at Band D of £1,246.23 for 2019/20 which is an increase of 2.95% when compared with 2018/19;
- this results in council tax for each category of dwelling as set out in the table below:

Category of Dwelling	Council Tax Rate £
Band A	830.82
Band B	969.29
Band C	1,107.76
Band D	1,246.23
Band E	1,523.17
Band F	1,800.11
Band G	2,077.05
Band H	2,492.46

- that the Deputy Director of Finance be authorised to sign precept notices on the billing authorities respectively liable for the total precept payable and that each notice state the total precept payable and the council tax in relation to each category of dwelling as calculated in accordance with statutory requirements;
- the Capital and Minimum Revenue Provision Strategy 2019/20, the Treasury Management Strategy 2019/20 and the (Non-Treasury) Commercial Investment Strategy 2019/20, as appended to the report;
- the Prudential Indicators included in the Capital and Minimum Revenue Provision Strategy 2019/20;
- the Financial Health Indicators set out in Appendix 10 to the report;

(v) That the Deputy Director of Finance be authorised to adjust the contingency provision to reflect any grant changes announced in the final 2019/20 Local Government Finance Settlement;

(vi) That the Cabinet Member for Finance and the Deputy Director of Finance be authorised to challenge Cabinet, the Senior Leadership Team and services to manage and deliver the current five year plans and to identify further cost reductions and income generation opportunities, as appropriate.

**Philip Atkins OBE
Leader of the Council**