

COUNCIL

22 February 2022

Commenced: 5.00pm

Terminated: 7.50pm

Present: Councillors Affleck, Alam, Billington, Bowden, Bray, Cartey, Chadwick, Cooney, Cooper, Costello, Dickinson, Drennan, Fairfoull, Feeley, J Fitzpatrick, P Fitzpatrick, Glover, Gosling, Gwynne, A Holland, B Holland, J Homer, S Homer, Huntbach, Jackson, Jones, Kitchen (Chair), Lane, Lewis, McNally, Mills, Naylor, Newton, North, Owen, Patel, Patrick, Pearce, Quinn, Reid, Ricci, Robinson, Ryan, N Sharif, T Sharif, M Smith, T Smith, Sweeton, Taylor, Ward, Warrington, Welsh and Wills

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Bowerman, Boyle, Choksi and Martin

Councillor Kitchen, Chair of Council Business, in the Chair

52 MINUTES

RESOLVED

It was moved by Councillor Warrington and seconded by Councillor Fairfoull that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 7 December 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

53 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

DISPENSATION Item 8 – Council Budget 2022/23		
Councillors: Affleck, Alam, Billington, Bowden, Bray, Cartey, Chadwick, Cooney, Cooper, Costello, Dickinson, Drennan, Fairfoull, Feeley, J Fitzpatrick, P Fitzpatrick, Glover, Gosling, Gwynne, A Holland, B Holland, J Homer, S Homer, Huntbach, Jackson, Jones, Kitchen, Lane, Lewis, McNally, Mills, Naylor, Newton, North, Owen, Patel, Patrick, Pearce, Quinn, Reid, Ricci, Robinson, Ryan, N Sharif, T Sharif, M Smith, T Smith, Sweeton, Taylor, Ward, Warrington, Welsh and Wills.	Prejudicial – Section 33(2)(a) of the Localism Act 2011 – that without the dispensation the number of Members prohibited from participating in any particular business would be so great a proportion of the body transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business.	Beneficial interest in property in Tameside, namely residence with liability to council tax.

Name	Agenda Item	Personal Prejudicial /	Nature of Interest
Councillor J Homer	Agenda Item 16	Prejudicial	Relative is driving instructor
Councillor S Homer	Agenda Item 16	Prejudicial	Driving Instructor
Councillor Taylor	Agenda Item 16	Prejudicial	Relative works at driving test centre

54 CIVIC MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Civic Mayor began by congratulating three people from the borough who had been recognised by the Queen in the New Year honour's list.

The Mayor informed Council that, Georgia Taylor-Brown, who grew up in Droylsden, had been

awarded an MBE for her success at last year's Tokyo Olympics. Roy Bate, from Hyde received the British Empire Medal in recognition of his work with the Forget Me Not Buddies dementia charity and, Sharman Birtles, former High Sheriff of Greater Manchester, was awarded an MBE.

The Mayor reported that she had been extremely busy over the festive period and had attended a number of parties, including at the Grafton Centre in Hyde and with the Friends of Tameside Young Carers. In addition, the Mayor had participated in the civic carol service, visited the Carrbrook Community Garden's toy giveaway and joined the Dukinfield Festival of Christmas Music. All of the money raised at these events had been donated to the Mayor's Charity Fund.

Following the easing of coronavirus-related restrictions, the Mayor had been delighted to spend more time in the community. In recent weeks, the Mayor had visited the Cancer Warriors Art Exhibition at Astley Cheetham Gallery, joined Hyde Fundraisers at their Wallace and Gromit event in support of Ashton market and helped mark the 100th anniversary of the Royal British Legion's Ashton branch at St Michael's Church.

More recently, the Mayor had been to the St Peter's Partnership Volunteer Celebration in Ashton, a Burns Night dinner and community hero awards organised by the Rotary, helped to celebrate the Chinese New Year and attended a production of "When We Are Married" at Hyde Festival Theatre.

The Mayor had been able to recommence parlour visits following their postponement during the pandemic. Recent parlour visits had included volunteers from the Anthony Seddon Fund, who were awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, and Hattersley Air Cadets to thank them for their support to the local community during the pandemic.

The Mayor concluded by thanking her consort, Dennis, for his support during her mayoral term.

55 COMMUNICATIONS OR ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Executive Leader began by highlighting the Council's commitment to making 2022 a year of transformation as society emerged from the coronavirus pandemic. It was highlighted that it was necessary for this transformation to be built on a solid foundation of financial sustainability and the proposed budget recognised the realistic decisions that needed to be made if the borough wished to continue its proud record of delivery.

The Executive Leader reflected on the £200 million of cuts to the Council's budget over the past 12 years of austerity and how the challenge of these cuts had been exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic and the emerging cost of living crisis. Both of these events had also led to an increased demand in areas such as adult and children's social care.

The Executive Leader explained that the government had provided another one-year financial settlement for local government. Whilst some additional funding as part of this settlement was welcomed, it was explained that the growth in cost and demand pressures continued to significantly exceed the funding levels afforded to the Council.

Given the increased pressures, the Executive Leader informed Council that it was no longer an option to continue the same work with diminishing money and resources. The Council would therefore strive to invest in the development of preventative services that would provide better outcomes at a lower cost. Two examples were highlighted; in social care services, staff would be given the necessary support to work within communities to keep children out of care. In addition, elderly and vulnerable residents would be afforded every opportunity to live in their own homes in dignity and comfort.

It was recognised that this transformation programme was ambitious and would require some upfront investment but it was considered a necessary and important step to guarantee the financial sustainability of the Council's most vital services.

The Council was required by law to set a balanced budget, taking into account sound and sustainable assumptions about income and expenditure, the delivery of savings and the use of reserves. For this reason, it was advised that the Council's budget for 2022/23 had identified £8 million of new savings through the rescaling and remodelling of services. Once combined with existing savings proposals of £9 million last year, this resulted in a total spending reduction of £17 million over the past two years alone.

Despite these cuts, the Council still faced a budget shortfall of more than £3 million and Members were informed that the remaining gap would need to be closed with a 1.99 per cent increase in general council tax and 1 per cent in the ring-fenced Adult Social Care Precept. For a Band A property in Tameside, this equated to an increase of £31.97 a year or 61p per week. The Leader stressed that this was not a decision that had been taken lightly and acknowledged the impact that this would have upon households already facing squeezed budgets

Members were advised that the decision to raise council tax was one that had been taken by many other local authorities due to the Government's own funding plans. The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement assumed that every Council would raise their council tax by the maximum permitted amount without the need for a referendum.

Given that the burden had been transferred from Government to local authorities, the Executive Leader, along with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and the Local Government Association (LGA), had called for the publication of the long awaited Fair Funding Review for councils. It was warned that without an alternative funding formula, there would be a crisis for council budgets and this would severely affect the areas of children's social care and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).

The Executive Leader provided a number of areas where it was believed that the Government could do more to grapple with the end of the coronavirus pandemic and the beginning of the cost of living crisis. This included continuing to provide practical and financial support for individuals to be able to self-isolate after the end of March and clarity from the Government on some of the policies announced to help residents face the rising prices of essentials such as food and energy.

The Executive Leader welcomed the council tax rebate if implemented properly but expressed serious reservations about the recently announced energy bills rebate. There was concern that the scheme would force individuals to take on debt to pay for a crisis that they had no responsibility for creating.

Consideration was then given to the work of carers who had been on the front line during the coronavirus pandemic. The Executive Leader criticised the way in which carers had often been treated as second class workers; being overworked, underpaid and disregarded. It was explained that the Council aimed to transform the popular perception of caring from being a 'job' into a recognised and respected career path. This would allow the Council to retain experienced and dedicated workers, whilst also allowing those entering a caring role the chance to build their own skills and expertise. In doing so, the Council would be able to provide a quality service to those who needed it the most. The Executive Leader would meet all stakeholders so that this ambition could be turned into a reality in time for the Council's next budget at the very latest.

In a similar vein, it was reported that work would continue to reform and enhance the Council's health and social care services as a whole, particularly in regards to the new Integrated Care System and access to mental health support. A further update on progress would be brought to a meeting of Full Council at the earliest opportunity.

The Executive Leader took the opportunity to discuss the Government's push of the 'Levelling Up' agenda and what the Council believed needed to be done. Whilst the Leader welcomed the recent White Paper, concern was expressed that it did not go far enough and fell short in a number of areas. In particular, it was felt that the Government continued to massively underestimate the ambition and finance required to reverse decades of economic, political and social neglect in the north.

Members were advised that in the five years to 2019/20 alone, London received investment equivalent to £12,147 per person compared to just £8,125 per person of investment in the north. According to the Treasury's own data, this amounted to the north losing out on £61 billion of funding. It was highlighted that the White Paper made few commitments beyond those that were already made in the latest Spending Review, and that the £0.5 billion delivered through the Levelling Up fund so far amounted to less than £32 of additional funding per person.

The Executive Leader welcomed any additional funding but also called for local authorities and the Mayoralty of Greater Manchester to be given the full decision making powers for spending and investment. In doing so, it was believed that this would put real leadership into the hands of those with the knowledge and motivation to make every penny count in their local area.

Reflecting on plans locally, the Executive Leader highlighted that the Council was using the financial and political powers at its disposal to drive investment and improvement in the town centres of Tameside. Advisory groups had been established in Ashton, Hyde and Stalybridge to allow communities and businesses to have their say on the town centre improvement works.

Members were informed that Stalybridge had been nominated as Greater Manchester's Town of Culture for 2022. Welcoming the news, the Executive Leader explained that funding would be made available to commission activities such as artist-led walks and trails, community growing projects and outdoor events including theatre and storytelling. This would complement the existing work and events taking place in the town, including securing the continuation of the hugely successful monthly food event starting again in March, the creation of a Heritage Action Zone, and renovating and improving the town centre, market hall, shop fronts and western gateway.

In relation to the Godley Green Garden Village, it was highlighted that the promised economic benefits were already beginning to bear fruit. The GMCA had agreed to submit a business case to the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement Fund for the three schemes to support delivery of a London-style integrated transport network. This included £6 million for the A560 Stockport Road corridor, £5 million for the refurbishment and widening of the Hattersley viaduct, and a further £5 million for an access improvement package for Hattersley railway station.

In Ashton-under-Lyne, the Executive Cabinet had approved plans to establish a Greater Manchester Mayoral Development Zone encompassing Ashton Moss, St Petersfield and Ashton town centre. This would bring together a number of relevant organisations, both public and private, to create a joined-up approach to realise the full potential of the area. Members were advised that in practical terms, this would include office-led regeneration in St Petersfield, transforming Ashton Moss into a hub for high-wage high-quality employment and the use of levelling up investment to restore and repurpose Ashton town hall.

As well as work within the borough, Council was informed that a number of projects were taking place in Greater Manchester to progress levelling up on the regional stage that would also have significant benefits in Tameside.

The Executive Leader addressed concerns that the development of the High Speed 2 rail link between Crewe and Manchester could see the suspension of Metrolink services between the city centre and Ashton-under-Lyne. It was estimated that services could be suspended for up to two years and an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Council had been called for 21 March 2022. This would give Members the opportunity to present their views on the project and, if necessary, allow the Council to register formal opposition to the Bill as it stood.

An announcement was made that following recent discussions between the GMCA and the Government's Joint Air Quality Unit (JAQU), a decision had been reached to pause the implementation of the Clean Air Zone (CAZ) for a short period to further assess the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and global supply chain challenges.

The Executive Leader reiterated previous commitments to make sure that Tameside was, and

remained, a safe place to live, work and visit. Close working had been undertaken with the both the police and fire service, as well as other partners, to take swift and decisive action in tackling key issues of concern such as road safety, anti-social behaviour, violence against women and girls, burglary and knife crime.

Council were informed that as of February 2022, Tameside had the best arrest rates for burglary, robbery and vehicle crime of all the local authority areas in Greater Manchester. From October 2021 to January 2022, 467 more arrests were recorded compared to the same four-month period a year earlier. It was welcomed that recorded incidents of hate crime decreased by 25.4 per cent in December 2021 compared to December 2020. During the same period, there had also been a reduction of 89 cases of anti-social behaviour, equating to an 18.2 per cent drop in such incidents.

Building on this work to reduce crime in the borough, the Council's Community Safety Strategy had been approved by Executive Council last month. The Strategy would support the growth of stronger communities, encouraging residents and visitors to make a positive contribution to the borough, and would bring the borough's diverse population together so everybody felt safe, included and supported by the Council and police.

The Executive Leader concluded by reiterating that the budget for 2022/23 represented one of the most in challenging living memory. Despite the challenges, opportunities still existed and the Council would continue to seize them, whilst also making the case for true 'levelling up'.

The Deputy Executive Leader welcomed the new Director of Children's Service to her role.

Members were informed that Children's Services had recently undergone two OFSTED inspections; these concerned the Tameside Youth Justice Service and services for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

The first of these two inspections had rated the Youth Justice Service as 'good' and commended the service for successfully adapting to the Covid-19 pandemic and continuing to provide good quality services throughout.

Members were informed that the second of these inspections was not graded but identified challenges for the SEND service to address and identified a series of improvement actions. The Deputy Leader was pleased to note that frontline staff had been commended within the report for their unwavering commitment to improve the experiences of children, young people and their families.

The Deputy Leader echoed the calls of the Executive Leader for Government to provide appropriate and fair funding to enable the Council to support the most vulnerable children as effectively as possible.

The Deputy Leader advised Council that a number of concerning allegations had been made by an elected Member concerning child sexual exploitation. It was made clear that the Executive Member for Children and Families would not tolerate any failure to identify and deal with this serious issue and expected a zero tolerance approach to anything that placed vulnerable young people at risk.

Members were implored to report any issues that they believed required investigation through the proper channels so that appropriate safeguarding activity could be undertaken. However, it was stressed that no evidence or information to substantiate the Member's claims had been brought to either the Council or police and individuals were urged not to share unproven allegations on social media.

The Executive Member for Housing, Planning and Employment rose to address Council in relation to the proposed Godley Green development. Members were informed that around 3,000 responses had been received to the consultation and this included ones both for and against. It was explained that preliminary site inspections would be undertaken but assured Members that no building work would take place.

As part of the proposed development, a new primary school and medical centre would be built, and the site would contain cycling, running and walking facilities.

Addressing environmental considerations, Members were assured that the proposed development would be low carbon and intensive work was being undertaken to improve public transport links in the area to avoid any possible future congestion. The site would raise approximately £10 million per year and the main beneficiary of this would be the wider Hyde area.

The Executive Member for Lifelong Learning, Equalities, Culture and Heritage addressed Council and announced that Mossley based Global Grooves would participate in the procession for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Pageant this June. Global Grooves would be the only creative contributor from northern England to produce a section of the procession. Members were informed that the pageant would feature participants from all corners of the Commonwealth and would be watched by a global audience of millions. It was an opportunity to showcase the best talent that Tameside had to offer and on behalf of Members, the Executive Member wished all those taking part the very best of luck.

The Executive Member explained that the Council was now undertaking its own discussions with Global Grooves to arrange an event in the borough and further information would be brought to a future meeting of Full Council once the discussions had been concluded.

56 COUNCIL BIG CONVERSATION

The Chair reported that in accordance with Standing Orders 31.12 and 31.13 a number of questions had been submitted by residents. Councillors Gwynne and Ryan, as the appropriate Executive Members, provided responses to the questions.

Question 1

"The Greater Manchester Combined Authority 5 Year Environment Plan set the following target for Local Authorities:

"Local authorities will complete a full assessment of the potential of their assets for renewable energy and develop these assets (where financially viable) by the end of 2021."

Please tell us, with a straightforward YES or NO, whether these assets have been fully assessed and developed; and if not could he update us on progress towards the target so far, backed up with figures as far as possible?"

Response from Councillor Oliver Ryan (Executive Member for Finance and Economic Growth)

Yes – the estate was reviewed in 2021 in partnership with GMCA and Burro Happold to develop a Building Energy Decarbonisation Plan. The output of which has been invaluable in developing strategies to prioritise resources to decarbonise buildings when funds become available.

We are working on a first round of decarbonisation projects and are developing a second round currently. The first round contains fourteen buildings and will eliminate in the region of six thousand tonnes of CO2. The second round plans to target a further six buildings currently and will eliminate a similar quantity of CO2 as phase one. Both schemes are only possible with support of central government funding (Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund).

It should be highlighted that due to resources and other practicalities, this decarbonisation process will not be immediate. Current rates of delivery are encouraging however, as the zero carbon target is 2038, and at the current rate the Tameside portfolio would have had interventions (if resources continue to be made available) across all of it by 2033.

Question 2

“Following the Council's declaration of a climate emergency two years ago at the Council meeting of 25 February 2020, the Climate Change and Environment Strategy was finally agreed at the Executive Cabinet of 15 December 2021. Can you please tell me when this document will be presented to a full Council meeting?”

Response from Councillor Allison Gwynne (Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, Community Safety and Environment)

Councillor Gwynne advised that the Climate Change and Environment Strategy had received Executive Cabinet approval on 15 December 2021 and did not therefore require Council resolution. However, Cabinet agreed that Council could still discuss the Strategy.

Question 3

“In the past three years at Jigsaw Homes Tameside board meetings, have you raised the importance of retrofitting homes to be more energy efficient to meet climate change targets? If so, can you please confirm the dates and any follow up actions?”

Response from Councillor Oliver Ryan (Executive Member for Finance and Economic Growth)

Jigsaw Homes Tameside has been striving to reduce fuel poverty for many years and has carried out energy efficiency initiatives through CESP/CERT/Affordable Warmth and the ERDF funding. We adopt a fabric first approach to energy efficiency which has included both loft and cavity insulation to over 7,000 properties.

Added to this, we have fitted high efficiency gas boilers to over 15,000 properties, which include many 'off gas' conversions.

We have fitted over 2,600 photovoltaic to domestic stock and also biomass and communal Air to Air source heat pumps as communal systems.

We recently underwent an energy efficiency review and the Board adopted the new Sustainability Strategy in March 2021 which sets out our commitment to bring all our properties to a minimum EPC SAP 'C' by 2030 and for the Group to be net zero carbon by 2050. Jigsaw Board reviewed progress of the Strategy in October 2021 and a further review is scheduled for the meeting in March.

In the last 12 months Jigsaw Tameside has converted over a 150 homes from EPC D to EPC C and carried out over 1,800 new EPC's with a view to putting programmes in place to convert all remaining EPC 'D' rated properties to a minimum of 'C' by 2030.

In 2020, we achieved a 'Gold Standard' rating through the Sustainable Homes Index for Tomorrow (SHIFT) rated against other peer housing provider members of the group.

We have undergone in-house climate change training for all staff through the CLASP initiative.

Energy efficiency and the reduction of fuel poverty for our residents continues to be at the front of future plans for Jigsaw Tameside and for the Group as a whole.

Question 4

“The Greater Manchester Combined Authority, in its 5 Year Environment Plan, recognises the need to:

"help residents to live in warm homes which are cheaper to run and healthier to live in and contribute to efforts to reduce fuel poverty in the city region. Achieving this will require owners of existing homes and buildings to make improvements to current levels of insulation to reduce heat loss through the building fabric well beyond the basic measures they might already have in place

(e.g. loft insulation, draught proofing)."

One of the plan's stated priorities is for "Retrofit measures to be installed at 61,000 homes per year." This figure is for Greater Manchester's 10 authorities (both social and private housing) which equates to approximately 6,000 homes per year in Tameside i.e. 18,000 homes in the past three years of the plan.

What contribution to this figure has been made by Jigsaw Homes in Tameside in the past three years?

Response from Councillor Oliver Ryan (Executive Member for Finance and Economic Growth)

Councillor Ryan referred to the answer given to the previous question concerning Jigsaw Homes Tameside.

57 JOINT MEETING OF EXECUTIVE CABINET AND OVERVIEW PANEL

Consideration was given to the minutes of the Executive Cabinet held on 15 December 2021 and 26 January 2022 and the Joint Meeting of the Executive Cabinet and Overview Panel held on 9 February 2022.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Executive Cabinet held on 15 December 2021 and 26 January 2022 and the Joint Meeting of the Executive Cabinet and Overview Panel held on 9 February 2022, be received.

58 COUNCIL BUDGET 2022/2023

The Executive Leader began by referencing her earlier comments in relation to the budget and thanked officers and the Executive Cabinet for all their efforts in compiling a balanced budget, particularly in the face of continued cuts and the coronavirus pandemic.

The Executive Member for Finance and Economic Growth addressed Members in support of the budget emphasising that the Council spent most of its money on Children and Adult's Services. This included paying for homes, nursing and home care, parental or care placements, health checks, home visits, transport, school support, early year's intervention, crisis intervention, family support, disability support and much more.

Concerning cuts to the Council's budget over recent years, it was highlighted that Tameside's overall spending power was 51 per cent lower in 2022 compared to 2010. Whilst acknowledging that the Government had made £7.2m of one off money available this year, the Council still had a significant deficit to plug. The Executive Member explained that the Council would also be clobbered with rising inflation and energy prices, the new National Insurance levy, as well as pay awards and all the demographic and legislative cost pressures that increased each year. Consequently, the Council was having to make significant savings whilst continuing to provide essential services.

Given that the Council had only received a one-year funding settlement from Government, it was advised that it would once again prove difficult to plan and fund services and invest for the long term. In addition, the 1.99 per cent increase in general council tax for 2022/23 would only raise just over £1 million, well short of the £22 million that the Council needed to find.

Despite the budgetary pressures, the Executive Member detailed a number of schemes that were transforming the borough's town centres, including:

- New funding for Ashton town centre, with improvement work led by local residents;
- Investment in Stalybridge's civic hall roof, bus station and work on key strategic housing sites being brought forward;
- Securing over £220k of funding to start work on Hyde library, as well bringing forward the Hyde High Street Task Force and Future High Streets Fund to the town; and
- Delivering a new library in Droylsden and recommencing development work at the marina.

The Executive Member concluded by explaining that the proposed budget reaffirmed the Council's commitment to providing good quality statutory services, protecting services required by the most vulnerable and investing in Adult and Children's Services to reflect the borough's demographic changes.

In accordance with the Constitution, the Chair of Council Business then afforded the Opposition Group the opportunity to present to the Council an alternative budget.

In response, Councillor Dickinson informed Members that the Opposition Group would not be proposing an alternative budget. Councillor Dickinson added that the Opposition Group did not support the proposed rise in council tax.

General discussion then ensued in relation to the proposed budget as outlined and responses made accordingly. The budget for 2022/23 set out in the previously circulated report, as amended by the tabled report and addendum, was moved by Councillor Warrington, seconded by Councillor Fairfoull and, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations, a named vote was taken on the Council Tax Motion as follows:

For the motion:

Councillors Affleck, Alam, Bowden, Bray, Cartey, Cooney, Cooper, Drennan, Fairfoull, Feeley, J Fitzpatrick, P Fitzpatrick, Glover, Gosling, Gwynne, A Holland, B Holland, J Homer, S Homer, Huntbach, Jackson, Jones, Kitchen, Lane, Lewis, McNally, Mills, Naylor, Newton, North, Owen, Patel, Pearce, Quinn, Reid, Ricci, Robinson, Ryan, N Sharif, T Sharif, M Smith, T Smith, Sweeton, Taylor, Ward, Warrington and Wills.

Against the motion:

Councillors Billington, Chadwick, Costello, Dickinson, Patrick and Welsh.

RESOLVED

- i. **That the significant financial challenges and risks set out in this report be noted;**
- ii. **That the budgeted net expenditure for the financial year 2022/23 of £208.609m as set out in section 3 and Appendix 1, be approved, noting the significant pressures outlined in Appendix 2;**
- iii. **That the proposed savings to be delivered by management outlined in section 3 and Appendix 3, be approved, noting the additional detail provided in Appendices 7 to 14;**
- iv. **That an uplift to fees and charges as set out in Appendix 21 be approved;**
- v. **That the proposed resourcing of the budget as set out in Appendix 4 be approved;**
- vi. **That a 2.99 per cent increase to Council Tax for Tameside MBC for 2022/23, consisting of a 1.99 per cent general increase and one per cent Adult Social Care precept, be approved;**
- vii. **That it be noted that the budget projections set out in section 6 assume a 1.99 per annum increase in general Council Tax through to 2026/27. The budget projections also assume that there is no reduction to current levels of Government funding;**
- viii. **That the Director of Finance's assessment of the robustness of the budget estimates and adequacy of reserves as set out in Appendix 5 be accepted. Following this, determine that the estimates are robust for the purpose of setting the budget and that the proposed minimum General Fund Balance is adequate;**
- ix. **That the proposed minimum General Fund Balance of £26m set out on Appendix 6 be approved;**
- x. **That the Reserves Strategy be approved and to note the projected reserves position as**

- set out in Appendix 6;
- xi. That the new Corporate Charging Policy set out in Appendix 17 be approved;
 - xii. That the position on the Capital Programme (Section 8 and Appendix 15) previously approved by Executive Cabinet, and the forecast future investment requirements, be noted;
 - xiii. That the Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23 as set out in section 9 and Appendix 18 be approved;
 - xiv. That the Treasury Management Strategy 2022/23 be approved, which includes the proposed borrowing strategy, Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy (Appendix 19);
 - xv. That the Capital Strategy 2022/23 (Appendix 20) be approved; and
 - xvi. That authority be delegated to the Directors (in consultation with the Section 151 officer) to agree any uplifts required to other contractual rates from 1 April 2022 which Directorates will manage within their approved budgets for 2022/23.

59 MEETING OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 14 December 2021.

It was moved by Councillor Kitchen and seconded by Councillor Ricci and it was:

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 14 December 2021 be received and that it be agreed that the Council adopts the final updated version of the Model Code of Conduct as appended to the minutes.

60 MEETING OF DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES WORKING GROUP

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the meeting of the Democratic Processes Working Group held on 21 February 2022.

It was moved by Councillor Cooney and seconded by Councillor Warrington that the Minutes of the Democratic Processes Working Group held on 21 February 2022 be received.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Democratic Processes Working Group held on 21 February 2022 be received.

61 MAYORALTY

It was moved by the Executive Leader and seconded by the Deputy Executive Leader that Councillor Mike Glover be nominated as Civic Mayor for the 2022/2023 Municipal Year and Councillor Tafheen Sharif be nominated for election as Deputy Mayor for the 2022/2023 Municipal Year at the Annual Meeting.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Mike Glover be nominated for election as Civic Mayor for the 2022/2023 Municipal Year and Councillor Tafheen Sharif be nominated for election as Deputy Mayor for the 2022/2023 Municipal Year.

62 ARRANGEMENTS FOR ANNUAL COUNCIL

It was noted that the Annual Meeting of Council (both Civic and Business) would commence at

5.00pm on Tuesday, 24 May 2022 and will be held at Dukinfield town hall.

63 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

The draft calendar of meetings for the 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 was circulated to Members for noting.

RESOLVED

That Members note the draft Calendar of Meetings for the 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 municipal years.

64 NOTICE OF EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

It was noted that an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council would be held at 5.00pm on Monday, 21 March 2022 at Dukinfield town hall, to consider possible opposition by the Council to the High Speed Rail (Crewe to Manchester) Bill.

65 QUESTIONS

Councillor Huntbach raised a question under Standing Order 17.2 as follows:-

“The planned Greater Manchester Clean Air Zone (CAZ), which was due to begin at the end of May, has now been postponed.

This Council’s Cabinet along with the other combined authorities, sanctioned the CAZ scheme which was intended to reduce illegal pollution levels and save lives.

Are we now expected to suffer a further two years of illegally high pollution, leading to premature deaths and permanent damage to the lungs of our young children and specifically, what contingencies are to be put in place to mitigate this lamentable failure?”

In response, Councillor Gwynne stated:-

The Government ordered clean air plan, due to start implementation in May has been paused at the 10 local authority’s request and permitted by Government. As is typical with this Tory government, it has passed the buck on actually dealing with dangerous levels of air pollution, causing approximately 1,200 premature deaths, from themselves onto local authorities without adequate finance to properly address the issues caused.

The difficulties that the pandemic has caused to small businesses, along with the difficulties it has also caused within the new and second-hand vehicle market means that it is right to re-examine the modelling work that was done previously to make sure it is still relevant. The Government need to look at supporting businesses in Greater Manchester through proper funding and also the issue with the availability of compliant vehicles.

But ultimately the 2024 and now 2026 dates have been set by ministers and Greater Manchester will be proactively working to achieve legal compliance.

66 URGENT ITEMS

The Chair reported that there was one urgent item for consideration which had been circulated to Members. The item was a motion received in accordance with Standing Order 16.1 concerning the proposed closure of Hyde driving test centre, which was moved by Councillor Alam and seconded by Councillor T Sharif:

That this Council notes:

- *The recent news that Hyde driving test centre is to close after decades of serving the learner drivers of Tameside and its surrounding areas.*
- *There is an extremely high demand in Tameside and Glossop for driving tests.*
- *The current waiting times are in excess of four months, and were under comparable pressure pre the Covid pandemic.*
- *Moving tests to Bredbury and Chadderton will not ease this problem, instead further exacerbating the pre-existing issues those centres already face with their own waiting lists.*
- *Furthermore, driving instructors were not consulted on the decision and many found out either through pupils or social media.*

This Council believes that:

- *This decision will make learning to drive prohibitively expensive for some learners especially those from poorer backgrounds, depriving them of a valuable life skill.*
- *While the DVSA asserts that to take a driving test, learners should be able to drive in any location with there being no need to visit test centre areas for practice. In reality, this is an unfair situation to bestow on learners. First time test takers already have a very low first-time pass rate of approximately 45% - this decision would further disadvantage such learners.*
- *Should the decision take place, learners from across Tameside will struggle to reach Chadderton or Bredbury to practice in the local areas. Learners would be forced to do at least two hour lessons, struggling to spend adequate time in either the Bredbury or Chadderton areas to become familiar with and understand the roads.*

This Council resolves to:

- *Back the current campaign by local driving instructors to retain a testing facility in Tameside.*
- *Ask the Executive Leader and Chief Executive to write to the DVSA - calling on them to work with local stakeholders and the Council to look for a suitable venue in the borough of Tameside, so a testing facility can continue to serve the learners of Tameside and its surrounding areas.*

RESOLVED

That this Council notes:

- **The recent news that Hyde driving test centre is to close after decades of serving the learner drivers of Tameside and its surrounding areas.**
- **There is an extremely high demand in Tameside and Glossop for driving tests.**
- **The current waiting times are in excess of four months, and were under comparable pressure pre the Covid pandemic.**
- **Moving tests to Bredbury and Chadderton will not ease this problem, instead further exacerbating the pre-existing issues those centres already face with their own waiting lists.**
- **Furthermore, driving instructors were not consulted on the decision and many found out either through pupils or social media.**

This Council believes that:

- **This decision will make learning to drive prohibitively expensive for some learners**

especially those from poorer backgrounds, depriving them of a valuable life skill.

- **While the DVSA asserts that to take a driving test, learners should be able to drive in any location with there being no need to visit test centre areas for practice. In reality, this is an unfair situation to bestow on learners. First time test takers already have a very low first-time pass rate of approximately 45% - this decision would further disadvantage such learners.**
- **Should the decision take place, learners from across Tameside will struggle to reach Chadderton or Bredbury to practice in the local areas. Learners would be forced to do at least two hour lessons, struggling to spend adequate time in either the Bredbury or Chadderton areas to become familiar with and understand the roads.**

This Council resolves to:

- **Back the current campaign by local driving instructors to retain a testing facility in Tameside.**
- **Ask the Executive Leader and Chief Executive to write to the DVSA - calling on them to work with local stakeholders and the Council to look for a suitable venue in the borough of Tameside, so a testing facility can continue to serve the learners of Tameside and its surrounding areas.**

CHAIR