

EXECUTIVE CABINET

25 January 2023

Commenced: 1.00pm

Terminated: 1 35pm

Present: Councillors Fairfoull (in the Chair), Choksi, Feeley, North, Taylor, Ward and Wills

In Attendance:

Sandra Stewart	Chief Executive
Stuart Fair	Interim Director of Finance
Alison Stathers-Tracey	Director of Children's Services
Julian Jackson	Director of Place
James Mallion	Assistant Director of Population Health
Ilys Cookson	Assistant Director, Exchequer Services
Tracey Harrison	Assistant Director, Adults Services
Caroline Barlow	Assistant Director of Finance

Apologies for absence: Councillors Cooney, Kitchen (ex officio) and Sweeton

101. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted by Cabinet Members.

102. MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE CABINET

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting of Executive Cabinet held on 14 December 2022 be approved as a correct record.

103. CONSOLIDATED 2022/23 REVENUE MONITORING STATEMENT AT 30 NOVEMBER 2022

Consideration was given to a report of the First Deputy, Finance, Resources and Transformation / Director of Finance, which reflected actual expenditure to 30 November 2022.

It was explained that, from a healthcare commissioning perspective the report looked at 9 months of expenditure based on indicative ICB plans (for the period 1 July 2022 to 31 March 2023). Month 8 was the fifth month in which the ICB had been operational. Locality delegated budgets were in the process of being formally signed off, but in the meantime the report presented indicative locality budgets. Plans for Tameside assumed delivery of a £595k surplus in 22/23. At Month 8 it was assumed that the plan would be delivered with a further surplus of £208k being forecast.

As highlighted previously, the Council was facing significant and growing inflationary pressures across a number of areas, combined with demand pressures in Adults and Children's services, resulting in a significant forecast overspend by 31 March 2023 of (£3,352k). This represented a small improvement of £197k since Month 7 due to an increase in the level of investment interest.

Significant work was still required to balance the financial position in 2022/23. Work was in progress to identify mitigating savings to reduce the forecast overspend on Council budgets, and address the forecast budget gap for 2023/24 and beyond. This was being done in the context of growing inflationary pressures, including significant energy cost and pay inflation.

Further details on the financial position were appended to the report.

Detailed monitoring reports at period 3 and 6 had reported planned and approved use of reserves during 2022/23. Appendix 2 to the report provided a summary of commitments from earmarked funds and reserves, and the forecast balances at 31 March 2023.

RESOLVED

That the forecast outturn position and associated risks for 2022/23 as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.

104. COUNCIL TAX BASE 2023/24

The First Deputy, Finance, Resources and Transformation / Assistant Director, Exchequer Services submitted a report, which explained that the law required that the calculation of the Council Tax Base for tax setting must be made between 1 December 2022 and 31 January 2023.

Members were advised that the calculated tax base was used to determine the level of Council Tax income that the Council could raise in the upcoming financial year, subject to agreement of the amount of Council Tax to be charged for each dwelling. Failure to set the Council Tax Base for 2023/24 would prevent the Council from setting its budget for the 2023/24 financial year.

The report summarised that the calculation of the authority Tax Base for Council Tax setting purposes gave an estimated Band D equivalent of 65,836.8 properties. There were no Ministry of Defence properties in Tameside. An estimated collection rate of 96.5% gave a Council Tax Base of 63,532.5 properties.

The calculation of the Mossley Parish Tax Base for Council Tax setting purposes gave an estimated Band D equivalent of 3,579.9 properties. There were no Ministry of Defence properties in Mossley. An estimated collection rate of 96.5% gives a Council Tax Base of 3,454.6 properties.

RESOLVED

It be agreed that, pursuant to the figures set out in the report of the Assistant Director, Exchequer Services and the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012:

- (i) The amount calculated by Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council as its Council Tax Base for the year 2023/2024 shall be 63,532.5 properties; and**
- (ii) The amount calculated by Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council as the Tax Base for the Town Council of Mossley for the Year 2023/2024 shall be 3454.6 properties.**

105. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2023/24

Consideration was given to a report of the First Deputy / Assistant Director, Exchequer Services, which set out the proposal for the continuation of the council tax reduction scheme for 2023/24 and recommended the approval of a hardship fund to be administered by Exchequer Services under the Section 13A policy.

As at the end of quarter two of 2022/2023 approximately 17,281 people claimed Council Tax Support. Of this number, there were approximately 7,254 (42%) people of pensionable age who would be guaranteed protection under the CTS scheme. Therefore approximately 10,027 (58%) claimants were of working age. Demand on the scheme was monitored on a quarterly basis and, the report gave details the decline in demand since the scheme was first introduced in April 2013.

The caseload continued to fall during 2022/2023 even though residents had more to pay in Council Tax due to the Council Tax rise in April 2022 and, despite the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic and the continuing impact of the Cost of Living increases; the decline appeared to follow the pattern from previous years.

The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) in their report of August 2019 to Local Authorities titled "Council Tax Reduction – Guidance for Practitioners" helped Local Authorities manage complex Council Tax reduction enquiries and complaints, and made a number of recommendations to all Local Authorities. It was considered best practice to recognise the recommendations by the LGO and provide clarity within the scheme. No recommendations had been received which may have an impact on the 2023/2024 scheme.

It was reported that the Hardship Fund for 2022/2023 was £50k and this would remain the same for 2023/2024. Hardship funding was identified from existing budgets and was administered by Exchequer Services under the Section 13A Policy which was detailed at Appendix 2 to the report.

As at 7 December 2022, one application for Hardship Relief had been successful in 2022/23 for the total sum of £199.64. The circumstances of the claim did not suggest that any one equalities group had been adversely affected.

Members were advised that Tameside had been progressive in moving from paper forms to electronic digital alternatives. The application process for Council Tax Support was an on-line form which could be commenced, saved and completed at a later date prior to submission. Tameside's Poverty Strategy and the Poverty Truth Commission work undertaken in 2022/2023 had been considered, and in particular the concerns that there were a plethora of forms to be completed to access different forms of financial support. The DWP notified the Council of a claim for Universal Credit via their digital system and such notifications were known as the Universal Credit Digital Service (UCDS). It was proposed that for Universal Credit claimants the notification of their claim from the DWP, via UCDS, would be taken as the application for Council Tax Support purposes. This meant that Universal Credit claimants would not have to complete a separate claim form for Council Tax Support.

The proposed change was considered beneficial and therefore there would be no adverse effect on existing or new claimants, the scheme itself remained unchanged and in cases of minor and beneficial changes, full consultation was not required. The actual wording in the Council Tax Support scheme would need to be amended to reflect that notice via UCDS would be considered to be a claim for Council Tax Support purposes.

The report concluded that, in setting a Council Tax Support scheme for 2023/2024 it had been important to consider the current operation of the scheme in terms of demand, costs, equalities, support and risks. The scheme was operating as expected and therefore no changes were proposed to the scheme other than a change of wording in respect of the way the scheme was administered, as detailed above and in the report. Appendix 3 to the report detailed Tameside's Council Tax Support Scheme for 2023/2024

RESOLVED

It be RECOMMENDED that Council:

- (i) continues the Council Tax Reduction Scheme adapted for 2022/2023, known as the Council Tax Support Scheme, as set out in Appendix 3 to the report; save for the following:**
 - the annual benefit upratings which are not yet released by DWP;**
 - further guidance which may be released from The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities; and**
 - the amendment to the wording in the scheme as detailed at section 4 of the report.**
- (ii) approves a £50,000 hardship fund be in place in order to assist severe cases of hardship funded from existing budgets, to be administered by Exchequer Services under the Section 13A Policy.**

106. JOINT CONTRACTS WITH OLDHAM MBC

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member, Adult Social Care, Homelessness and Inclusivity/ Director of Adult Services seeking agreement to collaborate with Oldham Council on the

procurement of a new contract for the supply and installation of Lifting and Hoisting Equipment, which Oldham Council would lead, and the procurement of a new Service and Maintenance Contract for old lifting and hoisting equipment, which Tameside MBC would lead.

It was explained that the maintenance contract would be for a period of 4 years, commencing 5 June 2023 until 4 June 2027, whilst Oldham Council had indicated they would procure the lifting and hoisting contract for 5 years (4 years with an option to extend by a further year), commencing 1 June 2023 until 31 May 2028.

RESOLVED

- (i) That approval be given to collaborate with Oldham Council for the procurement of a contract for lifting and hoisting equipment commencing 1 June 2023 until 31 May 2028;**
- (ii) That approval be given to procure a new service and maintenance contract in collaboration with Oldham Council where Tameside MBC will lead, commencing 5 June 2023 until 4 June 2027;**
- (iii) With regard to the lifting and hoisting equipment contract, to delegate authority to the Director of Adult Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Homelessness & Inclusivity, to enter into agreements with Oldham to allow Tameside to call off works on the Lifting and Hoisting Contract; and**
- (iv) With regard to the service and maintenance contract, to delegate authority to the Director of Adult Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Homelessness & Inclusivity, to approve the successful contractor.**

107. HS2 2B UPDATE

The Executive Leader / Chief Executive / Director of Place submitted a report providing an update on the objection of Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council (the Council) to the High Speed Rail (Crewe-Manchester) Bill.

Members were advised that, notwithstanding the Council's overall support for HS2, the Bill as currently drafted included provision for the full closure of the Metrolink Ashton Line for a circa two year period. The Council had therefore petitioned against the Bill and was seeking to secure the necessary changes to make appropriate provision of sustainable travel modes during the construction period.

It was explained that the Council's petition set out objections to the Bill for the following reasons. It was essential that the construction methodology for the HS2 infrastructure was focused on limiting disruption to Metrolink operations. The Bill, as currently drafted, included provision for the full closure of the Metrolink Ashton Line for a circa two year period. To address this, the Bill should be amended to enable the construction of a new depot at Ashton Moss to enable a tram shuttle service to operate between Ashton and New Islington instead of the full closure of the Ashton Line and the provision of ancillary works, to enable the Ashton Metrolink line to remain open throughout the construction of HS2 to avoid the economic impact that such closure would cause.

The Council required that the existing Metrolink Ashton Line should be kept connected to the remainder of the Metrolink network for as long as practicable during construction of the HS2 station and modified Metrolink infrastructure and, when the line had to be disconnected from Piccadilly, trams were able to operate as far into Manchester City Centre as possible, with bus services provided to bridge the gap. There would be a need for a number of enabling works to facilitate this approach, including a stabling and maintenance depot constructed on the Ashton Line, with a preferred location identified at Ashton Moss. In the Council's view, adequate provision had not yet been made for them within the Bill and it was essential that omissions were incorporated. It was the Council's position that any additional or modified powers needed to construct and operate the Metrolink enabling works must be obtained by HS2 Ltd. This meant that the Bill needed to be amended to include these powers.

In addition to the Council's petition, the three MPs representing Parliamentary Constituencies within Tameside petitioned against the Bill on the basis of the impacts on their constituents caused by the

severing of the Ashton Metrolink line.

In terms of next steps, it was reported that the objections within the Council petition would now be heard before a Select Committee of MPs, the membership of which was formally confirmed on 13 December 2022. Whilst formal confirmation on the programme and timescales for this stage was still awaited, it was considered likely that the Select Committee would start holding public meetings in/around mid-late January 2023. The Select Committee would then likely to be firming up its approach to preparing for evidence hearings (including potential site visits) and to taking evidence (including sequencing of different topics/issues) though January; challenge hearings may also be held from late January/early February 2023. The Council was continuing to work closely with GM Partners as part of the Select Committee stage; this would include provision of appropriate support to the Tameside MPs in respect of the challenges on their right to be heard.

To date expenditure in relation to the petition, including the relevant professional and technical advice, had been resourced through GMCA with no cost to the Council with the exception of £4,000 to date associated with Council specific legal advice. It was recommended that a further £46,000 of funding be allocated for Council specific legal advice in support of the Select Committee stage i.e. a total budget of up to £50,000. This would be financed via the Business Rates 100% retention reserve.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the progress in the Council's opposition to the High Speed Rail (Crewe to Manchester) Bill ("the Bill"), be noted; and**
- (ii) That a total budget be agreed of up to £50,000 to be allocated to support all related expenditure of the petition including any subsequent professional and technical advice that is required in advance of the Council's objection hearing before a select committee of MPs together with supporting any legal costs of any witnesses including advocacy and other costs required to support the case in favour of the council. The budget allocation will be financed via the Business Rates 100% retention reserve.**

108. ASHTON MOSS DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member, Inclusive Growth, Business and Employment / Director of Place providing an update on the preparation of the Development Framework for the Ashton Moss strategic employment site and the ongoing work to facilitate its future development as Ashton Moss Innovation Park.

It was explained that the Ashton Moss Development Framework (the Framework) (as appended to the report at Appendix 1) had been prepared to consider collectively the AME and AMW areas; the combined site was referred to as 'Ashton Moss Innovation Park'. The Framework considered the site's background, context, planning status and ownership. An analysis of current market forces and potential for employment generation had informed the site's constraints and identified opportunities. The Framework would be used as an economic and planning tool to guide and enable the future development and master-planning of the site, in accordance with existing and proposed planning policies.

The strategic objectives for the Ashton Moss Innovation Park were detailed as follows:

- A Connected Employment Hub that maximised its strategic location and accommodated a multitude of potential future uses;
- An Outward Facing Offer that responded positively to the landscape setting of the site;
- An Active Environment that connected into the local pedestrian and cycle movement networks promoting movement within and around the site;
- A Good Neighbour with development that appreciated sensitive green edges, residential amenity, and the industrial and commercial settings;
- A Natural Place that understands its existing environmental assets and minimises its impacts and its footprint overall; and

- Forward Looking maximising the potential to offer employment for existing and future populations and creating opportunities for businesses of various scales to build in flexibility.

Additional non-recurrent revenue budget of £575,000 was allocated to the Place Directorate in 2020/21 and 2021/22 to support the further development of Ashton Moss. In addition, the Council had been successfully awarded Evergreen 2 grant funding via GMCA of £275,000 that must be expended by 31 March 2023. This provided a total budget of £850,000. A summary of the budget expended to date and commitments to 31 March 2023 was set out in Appendix 2 to the report. All services had been procured via STaR procurement to ensure value for money.

There was an estimated remaining budget available at 1 April 2023 after budget expended to date and commitments of £184,000. It was recommended that this remaining budget be utilised in 2023/24 to progress the delivery strategy work as set out in the report.

RESOLVED

- (i) **That the draft Ashton Moss Development Framework that will form the basis for the progression of the delivery strategy and ongoing engagement with land owners, be approved;**
- (ii) **That the ongoing work to support new development and investment at Ashton Moss Innovation Park, including examination hearings regarding Places for Everyone (PfE), be noted; and**
- (iii) **It be approved that the estimated remaining non-recurrent Council reserve balance of £184,000 (Appendix 2 refers), previously allocated to the Place Directorate to support the further development of Ashton Moss, be utilised for this purpose in 2023/24 to progress the delivery strategy subject to further governance setting out exactly what will be delivered within this budget envelope.**

109. WHITE RIBBON ACCREDITATION

A report was submitted by the Executive Member, Population Health and Wellbeing / Director of Population Health in respect of White Ribbon Accreditation.

It was explained that White Ribbon Accreditation was a nationally recognised programme for organisations who were committed to improving their workplace culture, progress gender equality and end violence against women and girls. The report outlined the Accreditation Framework that organisations were required to implement in order to achieve accreditation status and begin to raise awareness, inspire culture change and ensure people were aware of how to access support.

RESOLVED

That it be agreed that Tameside Council seek White Ribbon Accreditation, including an annual accreditation fee funded from the existing ring-fenced Domestic Abuse Transformation fund; and undertake the required actions set out in the report in order to gain White Ribbon accreditation.

110. STAYING PUT POLICY – CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

The Deputy Executive Leader, Children and Families / Assistant Director, Children's Social Care submitted a report, which provided an overview of the outcome of a consultation in respect of a revised Staying Put Policy and recommended changes to the policy in response to the consultation and an equality impact assessment.

The consultation process was outlined and consultation feedback on the policy was analysed. The most significant feedback was given regarding the financial package on offer to carers, with over half of respondents feeling the offer was poor or very poor. In response to this consultation, the weekly

Staying Put allowance was revisited to ensure it was set appropriately. Additional analysis of Staying Put rates in other local authorities was undertaken and confirmed that Tameside's newly proposed rate was the median value out of the authorities assessed. It was concluded that the proposed increased rate of £231.74 was set appropriately.

All other aspects of the policy were not as strongly commented on. Most comments requested clarity for specific situations including but not limited to, young people at college and single person's council tax deductions. These queries had been clarified in more detail in the policy.

The final proposed policy amended as outlined was appended to the report at Appendix 3.

It was further explained that the policy, if approved, would be implemented from 1 February 2023 for all new Staying Put arrangements and on a phased basis for pre-existing arrangements.

RESOLVED

- (i) That consultation feedback on the Staying Put Policy be noted;**
- (ii) That the new Staying Put Policy, as appended to the report, be agreed with effect from 1 February 2023;**
- (iii) It be agreed that a detailed implementation plan be developed to ensure the agreed Staying Put policy is implemented effectively;**
- (iv) It be agreed that improvements to the quality of data held about Staying Put carers and young people be implemented; and**
- (v) That Special Guardianship order policy be reviewed in 2023 with the intention of ensuring alignment with this policy.**

111. UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND (COMMUNITIES AND PLACE, TAMESIDE)

Consideration was given to the Executive Member, Inclusive Growth, Business and Employment /n Director of Place providing an update on the successful bid by the Council to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) for Tameside under the Communities and Place investment priority. Approval was sought to implement the programme of works, to formally accept the funding and to enter into the Grant Funding Agreement.

It was explained that the Council submitted bids in October 2022 of £1,979,141 and £1,700,000 for Tameside against the UKSPF Communities and Place and SME Workspace investment priorities. Both bids were designed to be an economic driver that delivered genuine levelling up opportunities across Tameside supporting national, GM and Tameside strategic policies.

In December 2022 GMCA received unconditional approval of the GM UKSPF Investment Plan and a draft MOU and grant determination letter. Following this approval, it had been confirmed that the Tameside Communities and Place submission had been successful and the associated funding would be awarded subject to a funding agreement.

Within the Communities and Place investment priority Tameside had been allocated £1,979,141 with set amounts to be utilised in specific timeframes, creating a challenging start and requiring projects that could be delivered without delay:

- 2022/23 : £542,613
- 2023/24 : £731,882
- 2024/25 : £704,646
- Total : £ 1,979,141

The communities and place funding would support the delivery of a range of borough wide projects against these interventions and a series of town centre specific projects focused on Stalybridge, Hyde and Ashton. The full scope of projects that would be supported by the UKSPF Communities and Place programme in Tameside, their associated costs and the timescales for delivery were set out in Appendix 1 to the report (the detail of projects within the programme remains subject to change as it

was developed further and formal agreements for receipt of funding were finalised).

In terms of next steps, Members were advised that the Council would need to agree and sign the grant funding agreement to enable the Council to deliver the UKSPF Communities and Place Programme for Tameside and drawdown associated funding.

Within the GM Investment Plan, funding had been made available to the Council to fully fund a UKSPF Project Manager on a 2.5 years Fixed Term Contract. The focus of the role would be to work closely with GMCA to implement and develop UKSPF across all Investment Priorities in Tameside during the delivery period from the start of 2023; this would include ensuring the delivery of outputs/outcomes and facilitating engagement with Members, representatives from partner organisations, and local stakeholders in the delivery programme. The role would evolve throughout the contract period to ensure that local priorities were represented and funding was well utilised locally, with demonstrable outputs/outcomes. The role would sit within the Place Directorate but would work cross Directorate throughout as required.

The delivery of the interventions supported by UKSPF would be progressed in alignment with the Council's wider Corporate Plan and Inclusive Growth Strategy and designed to deliver genuine levelling up opportunities supporting national, GM and Tameside strategic policies. Delivery would involve appropriate consultation and collaboration with partners to coordinate all interventions.

On-going performance and reporting would be provided via the appropriate governance routes, including the Strategic Planning and Capital Monitoring Panel where any interventions formed part of the Council's Capital Programme.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the successful bid by the Council to UKSPF be noted;**
- (ii) That delegation be given to the Director of Place, to approve entering into the formal agreements for the receipt of UKSPF funding subject to satisfactory approval by Legal and Finance for the projects set out in Appendix 1 to the report;**
- (iii) That approval be given for the Director of Place to manage the programme of works associated with the UKSPF Programme for Tameside and to drawdown and incur all UKSPF expenditure related to delivery;**
- (iv) That any variations to the programme be agreed by Councillor David Sweeton – Executive Member (Inclusive Growth, Business & Employment) in consultation with the First Deputy Finance, Resources and Transformation;**
- (v) Include the projects within the UKSPF Communities and Place programme for Tameside in the Council's Capital Programme to ensure quarterly monitoring by the Strategic Planning & Capital Monitoring Panel.**

112. URGENT ITEMS

The Chair reported that there were no urgent items for consideration at this meeting.

113. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED

It be noted that the next meeting (joint meeting with Executive Cabinet and Overview Panel) is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 8 February 2023.

CHAIR