

COUNCIL

28 February 2023

Commenced: 5.00pm

Terminated: 6:30pm

Present: Councillors Affleck, Alam, Billington, Bowden, Bowerman, Boyle, Bray, Chadwick, Choksi, Colbourne, Cooney, Cooper, Costello, Dickinson, Drennan, Fairfoull, Feeley, Glover, Gwynne, A Holland, B Holland, J Homer, S Homer, Huntbach, Jackson, Jones, Kitchen, Lane, McNally, Naylor, Newton, North, Owen, Patel, Patrick, Pearce, Quinn, Reid, Ricci, Robinson, Roderick, Ryan, N Sharif, T Sharif, M Smith, T Smith, Sweeton, Taylor, Ward, Warrington and Welsh

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Cartey, Gosling, Martin, Mills, Turner and Wills.

67. MINUTES

RESOLVED

It was moved by Councillor Cooney and seconded by Councillor Fairfoull that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 6 December 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

68. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

DISPENSATION Item 8 – Council Budget 2023/24		
Councillors: Affleck, Alam, Billington, Bowden, Bowerman, Boyle, Bray, Chadwick, Choksi, Colbourne, Cooney, Cooper, Costello, Dickinson, Drennan, Fairfoull, Feeley, Glover, Gwynne, A Holland, B Holland, J Homer, S Homer, Huntbach, Jackson, Jones, Kitchen, Lane, McNally, Naylor, Newton, North, Owen, Patel, Patrick, Pearce, Quinn, Reid, Ricci, Robinson, Roderick, Ryan, T Sharif, M Smith, T Smith, Sweeton, Taylor, Ward, Warrington and Welsh	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.

69. CIVIC MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Civic Mayor began by paying tribute to Lord Pendry, former Member of Parliament for Stalybridge and Hyde who passed away at the age of 88 on 26 February 2023. Lord Pendry had first been elected as Member of Parliament for the constituency in 1970 and went on to serve for 31 years. In that time he served as a shadow and government minister and went on to become the constituency's longest serving MP.

It was highlighted that Lord Pendry's chief love had been sport, having been an amateur boxer, keen football fan and president of the Football Foundation, helping clubs at all levels including Hyde United and Stalybridge Celtic in the borough.

The Mayor extended his deepest sympathies and those of the Council to Lord Pendry's children and his wider family. A minute's silence was observed in his memory.

Following the first anniversary of Vladimir Putin's illegal and brutal attack on Ukraine, the Mayor had led the borough in observing the national one-minute's silence to reflect on what had happened over the last year. He paid tribute to the courage of the Ukrainian people who had suffered grievously as they fought to repel the Russian invasion.

The Mayor had been delighted to welcome Steve and Jacky Gooderson into the Mayor's Parlour, to thank them for raising £200,000 to find homes in the borough for 40 Ukrainian refugees.

Reflecting on a busy few months, including the festive period, the Mayor informed Council that he had attended a number of events, including:

- The Ukrainian Christmas concert;
- The civic carol service at St Michael's Church in Ashton-under-Lyne;
- The borough's Christmas light switch on events;
- The Willow Wood Hospice garden of a thousand lights; and
- Parties and lunches organised by Hattersley Hub.

Other events attended by the Mayor included the Alex Williams Charity Concert; a British Empire Medal investiture ceremony at Gorton Monastery, and birthday celebrations for Ivy Axon, who had reached the age of 104.

It was announced that, Chris Ashworth, Stamford Park Trust Estates Manager, was the borough's lone recipient in the King's New Year Honours. He was awarded the British Empire Medal for his dedicated work at Ashton Sixth Form College during the covid lockdowns.

In addition, the Mayor had attended Arts Award presentations; a graduation ceremony at Tameside College; the opening of the new library at Great Academy, Ashton; the Armchair Adventure Installation Extravaganza at Stalybridge Civic Hall; and a junior mayor assembly at Greenfield Academy, Hyde.

To mark Holocaust Memorial Day in January, the Mayor had visited the thought-provoking Anne Frank Art Installation created by the borough's six special schools in collaboration with the Council's arts team.

In the weeks before Christmas, the Mayor had joined his fellow Greater Manchester mayors at the National Football Museum in Manchester where they met an array of Lionesses, both past and present, at a women's football reception. The event was linked to the 'Crossing the Line' exhibition and England's success in winning last summer's Euro 2022 football championships.

The Mayor concluded by thanking those who had continued to support him in his role, including the Mayoress, the Deputy Mayor, the Mayor's Office and Members.

70. COMMUNICATIONS OR ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Executive Leader began by outlining the Council's plans and priorities for the new financial year to deliver for Tameside in 2023 and beyond. This included making good on a pledge to improve financial support for social care workers. It would be supplemented with a new Carer's Strategy for Tameside, ensuring that the Borough's many unpaid and informal carers were respected and included in any decision that affected them going forward.

It was highlighted that the Cost of Living Crisis was one of the most pressing issues that many individuals faced and the Executive Leader resolved to build on the already excellent work undertaken in Tameside to expand the ways in which residents could access support. This included face-to-face access points, refreshing the Council's website, expanding borough-wide free Wi-Fi and the helping hand schemes.

Early next month the Council would deliver its new comprehensive Tackling Poverty in Tameside Strategy, detailing how the authority in cooperation with its partners through the local Health and Wellbeing Board, would fight poverty, including its causes, in the years to come. As part of this, the Executive Leader explained that the Council would make the case to ministers and civil servants for

rolling back legislation that was unjust, damaging to residents and the country as a whole. This included permanently ending no-fault evictions; reinstating the £20 top-up of Universal Credit; abolishing the bedroom tax; the two-child limit for Child Benefit; and the benefit cap.

Concerning Children's Services, the Executive Leader informed Council that through collaboration with Ofsted and partners, the Council was proceeding with its agreed improvement plan. This included the delivery of Family Hubs and the Best Start for Life programme in each of the borough's four neighbourhoods. Early Intervention for young people with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) would be addressed through a new Adolescent Hub and the establishment of a new SEND school based at Hawthorns.

The Executive Leader outlined the Council's ambition to develop the Borough's town centres and wider public realm. The plans included the redevelopment of Ashton Town Hall; Ashton market square; Ashton Moss, St Peters Fields, the mayoral development zones, Stalybridge Civic Hall; and the development of the Denton, Droylsden and Hyde growth triangles. A parking review would be undertaken and a new cultural strategy would be devised to maximise footfall and engagement in town centres.

Working alongside the Mayor of Greater Manchester, Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) and neighbouring local authorities, the Council would support the delivery of the new bus franchising model whilst also supporting other plans to revolutionise public transport in and around Tameside, including the Rochdale, Oldham and Ashton bus corridor.

It was emphasised that supporting the local economy to drive sustainable investment and inclusive growth had become more important than ever. Consequently, a commitment had been made to maximise Council spending on Tameside based businesses, charities, voluntary organisations and community groups wherever possible. The Council would also work closely with suppliers to unlock the social value through volunteering work and apprenticeships as part of the procurement process. Residents would also be supported to access better-paid roles through schemes including Routes to Work and Kickstart.

Community Safety efforts would be strengthened by a new strategy to tackle anti-social behaviour by engaging with the Greater Manchester Mayor and police, to get more police onto the borough's streets. In addition, work to tackle potholes and fly-tippers would be undertaken as well as extending support to keep the streets clean.

As part of Tameside's commitment to ending violence against women and girls, the Council was actively seeking a White Ribbon Accreditation. Support would be provided to those who were victims of domestic violence through the 'Take Control' campaign.

The Executive Leader reflected on the difficult times that the country was currently experiencing but wanted to assure residents and businesses that the Council's ambition and aspirations for Tameside remained undimmed. The priorities highlighted combined with the solid foundations laid out in the budget would form a blue print to ensure that Tameside would continue to thrive.

Ahead of the local elections on 4 May, the Executive Leader thanked those Members who would not be standing for re-election for their hard work and contributions to the borough.

71. COUNCIL BIG CONVERSATION

The Chair reported that in accordance with Standing Orders 31.12 and 31.13 a question had been submitted by Trevor Clark to Councillor Cooney.

Question

"As a board member of Jigsaw Homes Group you will be aware that the group made a surplus (after tax etc.) of £17 million in the six months up to 30 September 2022. Given that, would you confirm that you will raise the issue of widening and speeding up Jigsaw Homes' programme of insulation retrofitting in its properties in Tameside at the next board meeting of Jigsaw Homes as this would

help residents feel warmer and healthier, reduce residents' energy bills and reduce CO2 emissions? Would he also report back to Full Council on the response to his intervention?"

Response from Councillor Gerald Cooney (Executive Leader of the Council)

The Executive Leader advised that he would email the question directly to the Chief Executive of Jigsaw Homes.

72. JOINT MEETING OF EXECUTIVE CABINET AND OVERVIEW PANEL

Consideration was given to the minutes of the Executive Cabinet held on 14 December 2022 and 25 January 2023 and the Joint Meeting of the Executive Cabinet and Overview Panel held on 8 February 2023.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Executive Cabinet held on 14 December 2022 and 25 January 2023 and the Joint Meeting of the Executive Cabinet and Overview Panel held on 8 February 2023, be received and the recommendations contained therein be approved.

73. COUNCIL BUDGET 2023/2024

The First Deputy (Finance, Resources & Transformation) began by highlighting the enormous challenges faced by the Council with inflation running at its highest level in 40 years. The cost of living crisis had pushed many of the borough's residents to breaking point, placing increased demand upon the Council's services.

Members were informed that the largest component of a Council's budget was government support grants, and despite inflation being above 10%, the Council's net spending power from 2022/23 had only increased by 6.3%. Since 2010/11, the cumulative impact of austerity had slashed Tameside's real terms spending power by almost 24%. This equated to a £688 reduction in spending for every household in the borough.

It was estimated that due to the reduction in funding, the Council would have to manage an additional £40 million worth of service pressures during the next financial year. The First Deputy believed that the government was passing the burden for its catastrophic economic policies onto local taxpayers.

The First Deputy explained that government had failed to implement its Fair Funding Review for local government, failed to fund pay increases, failed to deal with adult social care and failed to properly implement their own levelling-up agenda. In the absence of proper and equitable government support, the only way the Council could plug the financial gap was through raising Council Tax and look at yet more innovative ways to deliver services at lower costs.

Council was advised that Tameside's budget for the next financial year would include a requirement to achieve a further £20 million worth of budget reductions and efficiencies, and a 4.99% increase in Council Tax and the Adult Social Care Precept for 2023/24. For a typical Band A property, which constituted the largest share of Tameside's housing stock, each household would pay an extra £1.06 in total. A larger Band D property would pay an extra £1.59 per week. It was expected that this increase would raise an extra £5 million in funding, which when combined with £15 million of funding from other sources, would deliver a legal and balanced budget.

It was stressed that no Council relished having to raise Council Tax during a cost of living crisis but it was considered necessary to deliver a balanced budget and enable the delivery of essential services to both residents and businesses.

The First Deputy called on Conservative and Green Party Members to join Labour Members in asking the government to move away from local authorities having to bid for investment from central government, for the implementation of the Fairer Funding Review, and an end to single year

financial settlements. This would allow the Council to make longer term, strategic financial choices on the design and delivery of services. The First Deputy would continue to make the case to government that supplying Tameside with the money it needed to fund services in full was not only the right thing to do, but also necessary. Continuing to pass the financial burden onto local taxpayers was not considered sustainable.

Tameside residents were right to expect a return on the money they gave to the Council and the First Deputy was confident that the budget to be presented would put the Council on a firm and sustainable footing moving forward. Cuts to frontline services would be minimal and any additional income raised would be reinvested in supporting those individuals who needed help the most.

A commitment to pay all carers who delivered Council Services, the real living wage of £10.90 per hour from April onwards was contained within the budget. This was considered not only the right thing to do but would also help to protect an increasingly fragile market.

In conclusion, the First Deputy recognised that weathering the current economic storm would require hard decisions but this would not be an excuse for despair or inaction and a commitment was made to support residents in their time of need.

The Chair of Council Business then afforded any other Member the opportunity to put an alternative budget that had been signed off by the Section 151 Officer.

In response, Councillor Billington proposed a number of amendments to the outlined budget although he did not have an alternative funded budget proposal:

- Agree to the non-frontline savings proposed;
- That the Council should not increase Council Tax by 2.99%;
- That the Growth department should be restructured to go back towards 2017 levels of spending;
- A reduction in spending on nanny state public health projects such as smoking cessation and telling people what they should and should not eat, and redirect that money towards providing spaces in women's refuges and tackling addiction;
- Commit to the 2% increase ring fenced for Adult Social Care;
- A 1% increase in Council Tax to fund additional resources for street cleansing, enforcement in licencing and planning, development of a new local plan to protect our environment and ensure responsible development that improved and regenerated our towns.

Councillor Dickinson seconded the amendments.

Councillor North queried if the financial viability of the amendments had been checked with the Section 151 Officer to confirm if the proposals added up. It was highlighted that since 2013 local government had received a grant from central government that had to be spent on delivering a range of public health services, such as interventions to tackle teenage pregnancy, child obesity, sexually transmitted infections and substance misuse. As the money was ring fenced, it could not be spent in other areas.

In relation to the proposed Council Tax increase, the First Deputy advised Members that the Council was expected to raise it by the maximum of 2.99% and the Adult Social Care Precept by 2%.

Concerning the Growth department, it was highlighted that all Council departments were subject to review but that its aims and ambitions were central to current government policy relating to levelling up. Whilst the Council had received £20 million in Levelling Up Funding, it did not necessarily follow that money would be freed up to spend elsewhere.

The First Deputy believed that the proposed amendment to increase Council Tax by only 1% misunderstood the budget given the funding constraints and emerging economic and social pressures, there was no growth within this overall 2023/24 budget for substantive service improvements. Consequently, redirecting money from one part of the budget to another would result in a substantive cut somewhere else.

General discussion then ensued in relation to the proposed budget and amendments as outlined and responses made accordingly.

The Chair of Council Business then called for a recorded vote on the proposed amendments, moved by Councillor Billington, and seconded by Councillor Dickinson as follows:

For the motion:

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

Against the motion:

Councillors Affleck, Alam, Bowden, Bowerman, Boyle, Bray, Choksi, Cooney, Cooper, Drennan, Fairfoull, Feeley, Glover, Gwynne, A Holland, B Holland, J Homer, S Homer, Huntbach, Jackson, Jones, Kitchen, Lane, McNally, Naylor, Newton, North, Owen, Patel, Pearce, Quinn, Ricci, Robinson, Roderick, Ryan, T Sharif, M Smith, T Smith, Sweeton, Taylor, Ward and Warrington.

No abstentions Reid had left the meeting at this point in time.

The budget for 2023/24 set out in the previously circulated report, and the amount of Council Tax for 2023/24 as set out in tabled supplementary report was moved by Councillor North, seconded by Councillor Cooney 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, Bowerman, Boyle, Bray, Choksi, Cooney, Cooper, Drennan, Fairfoull, Feeley, Glover, Gwynne, A Holland, B Holland, J Homer, S Homer, Jackson, Jones, Kitchen, Lane, McNally, Naylor, Newton, North, Owen, Patel, Pearce, Quinn, Reid, Ricci, Robinson, Roderick, Ryan, T Sharif, M Smith, T Smith, Sweeton, Taylor, Ward and Warrington.

Against the motion:

Councillors Billington, Chadwick, Colbourne, Costello, Dickinson, Huntbach, 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 2023/24 of £221.397m as set out in section 3 and Appendix 1, be approved, noting the significant pressures outlined in Appendix 2;**
- iii. That the proposed budget reductions to be delivered by management outlined in section 3 and Appendix 3 be approved;**
- iv. That the uplift to fees and charges as set out in Appendix 16 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 and an increase of 2 per cent in respect of the Adult Social Care Precept for 2023/24 be approved;**
- vii. That it be noted that the budget projections set out in section 6 assumed a 1.99 per cent per annum increase in general Council Tax from 2024/25 through to 2027/28. The budget projections also assumed that there was 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 was adequate;**
- ix. That the proposed minimum General Fund Balance of £27 million as set out in 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 School's Budget for 2023/24 as set out in section 3 and Appendix 15 be approved;**

- xii. That the Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24 be approved, which included the proposed borrowing strategy, Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy.
- xiii. That the position on the Capital Programme (section 9 and Appendix 19) previously approved by Executive Cabinet, and the forecast future investment requirements be noted.
- xiv. That the Capital Strategy 2023/24 (Appendix 20) be approved.
- xv. That the Pay Policy Statement for 2023/24 as set out in section 12 and Appendix 21 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 2023 which Directorates will manage within their approved budgets for 2023/24.

74. MEETING OF DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES WORKING GROUP

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting of the Democratic Processes Working Group held on 20 February 2023.

It was moved by Councillor Cooney and seconded by Councillor Fairfoull that the Minutes of the Democratic Processes Working Group held on 20 February 2023 be received.

It was noted that in the Minutes of Previous Meeting section, the meeting referred to the minutes of the Working Group held on 29 November 2023. It was advised that this should have stated 29 November 2022.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Democratic Processes Working Group be received with the amendment outlined above.

75. APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES (SECTION 151 OFFICER)

It was moved by Councillor Cooney and seconded by Councillor North and;

RESOLVED

That Members agree the appointment of Ashley Hughes as Director of Resources and the statutory Section 151 Officer with effect from 3 April 2023 and that it be noted that Stuart Fair would continue as Interim Director of Finance and the statutory Section 151 Officer until that date.

76. MAYORALTY

It was moved by the Executive Leader and seconded by the Deputy Executive Leader that Councillor Tafheen Sharif be nominated as Civic Mayor for the 2023/24 Municipal Year and Councillor Betty Affleck be nominated for election as Deputy Mayor for the 2023/24 Municipal Year at the Annual Meeting.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Tafheen Sharif be nominated as Civic Mayor for the 2023/24 Municipal Year and Councillor Betty Affleck be nominated for election as Deputy Mayor for the 2023/24 Municipal Year.

77. ARRANGEMENTS FOR ANNUAL COUNCIL

It was noted that the Annual Meeting of Council (both Civic and Business) would commence at 5.00pm on Tuesday, 23 May 2023 and would be held at Dukinfield town hall.

78. QUESTIONS

The Chair reported that no questions had been received in accordance with Standing Order 17.2.

79. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items of business for consideration at the meeting.

CHAIR