
| | |
|---------|---|
| Meeting | Joint Budget Decision Session - Executive Members for Economy and Strategic Planning, Transport and Environment and Climate Change |
| Date | 15 December 2021 |
| Present | Councillors Waller (Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning, D'Agorne (Executive Member for Transport and Widdowson (Executive Member for Environment and Climate Change) |

In view of the changing circumstances around the Covid-19 pandemic, this meeting was held remotely. Any relevant decisions recorded in these minutes will be formally approved by the Chief Operating Officer, using his emergency delegated powers.

28. Declarations of Interest

The Executive Members were asked to declare, at this point in the meeting, any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests or any prejudicial or discloseable pecuniary interest that they might have in respect of the business on the agenda. None were declared.

29. Public Participation

It was reported that there were no registrations to speak under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

30. Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2026/27

The purpose of this report was to provide background information for the overall Financial Strategy and to present the draft savings proposals, growth assumptions and capital schemes for the Transport, Environment and Climate Change and Economy and Strategic Planning portfolios. This was to provide an opportunity for Executive Members to obtain feedback in advance of the finalisation of the overall Financial Strategy which was to be presented to Executive on 7 February 2022. The Chief Finance Officer and Head of Service Finance

were in attendance to present the report and respond to questions.

Key points raised during the presentation of the report included:

- That the report provided background for the overall Financial Strategy and presented the Executive Members with draft proposals for savings, growth and capital for their three portfolios.
- The proposals were prepared in the context of the ongoing economic effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, which had created an unprecedented financial challenge.
- Details of the individual council funding allocations were not to be announced until the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement was announced.
- It was still unclear whether a one year or multiyear settlement would be announced by Government, which had made medium term financial planning more complex and may require the overall strategy to change at a later date.
- A Council Tax increase of 1.99% was proposed, along with a further 1% ring-fenced to adult social care.
- There was a budget gap of over £7 million which had to be closed via budget savings.
- Officers had attempted to sustain a stable financial position while dealing with ongoing and increasing pressures in adults' and children's social care.
- The reports annexes outlined detailed proposals for each portfolio and a summary of consultation responses received up to 07/12/2021.

The Executive Member for Environment and Climate Change commented:

- That coronavirus had caused continuing difficulties for the operations in this portfolio, especially around waste collection, recycling and the public realm.
- That she was pleased that her area had continued to be supported, e.g. that green bin collection had gone from 36 weeks per year to 40 and that collection routes were being recalculated with new vehicles to ensure that they were more efficient.
- She thanked both officers and residents for their support throughout the pandemic.

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Transport commented:

- That he also wished to thank officers, especially front-line workers.
- That the current budget difficulties were shared by many other local authorities, but he was pleased that City of York Council had been able to continue providing its essential services.
- Highway maintenance had placed continued demand on scarce resources, however a Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan had recently been adopted, which aided in maximising cost-effectiveness while keeping people safe on roads, streets and cycleways.
- The majority of spending on transport was now dependant on external funding for infrastructure.
- The Carbon Reduction Strategy will help to set out a clear pathway for decarbonising transport, and will added to by the new Local Transport Plan.
- A Bus Service Improvement Plan had been submitted, however announcements on government funding were awaited to support post-Covid plans to promote public transport.

The Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning commented:

- That he thanked officers for their efforts in keeping the planning application efforts running throughout the changing regulations of the pandemic, emphasising the importance of keeping the economy moving and allowing construction to continue.
- That the Council had efficiently and effectively distributed money provided by the Government to local businesses, which had enabled York to qualify for an additional £1.4 million in Additional Restrictions Grants which would be distributed before March 2022.
- The inspection process for the Local Plan was expected in 2022, which would provide certainty for residents around land allocation in the city.
- He thanked officers for preparing the budget proposals earlier than usual to ensure a more transparent process before they were to be presented to Budget Council in February 2022.

Resolved:

That the following be agreed for inclusion within the overall Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2026/27:

- i. The 2022/23 revenue savings proposals for the Executive Member portfolios as set out in annex 1.
- ii. The 2022/23 revenue growth proposals for the Executive Member portfolios as set out in annex 2.
- iii. The feedback from consultation to date as set out in annex 3.
- iv. The new schemes for inclusion in the 2022/23 to 2026/27 Capital Programme as set out in annex 4.

Reason: To ensure that stakeholders have the opportunity to feed into the budget process in advance of the finalisation of the Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2026/27.

Cllr A Waller, Executive Member

[The meeting started at 4.30 pm and finished at 4.44 pm].