

Meeting	Executive
Date	25 January 2024
Present	Councillors Douglas (Chair), Kilbane (Vice-Chair), Coles, Kent, Lomas, Pavlovic and Webb
In Attendance	Councillor Ayre
Officers in Attendance	Ian Floyd – Chief Operating Officer Bryn Roberts – Director of Governance Debbie Mitchell – Chief Finance Officer Martin Kelly - Corporate Director Children, Families and Education Danielle Johnson - Director of Safeguarding James Gilchrist - Director of Transport, Environment and Planning Ben Grabham - Head of Environmental Services
Apologies	Councillors Ravilious

PART A - MATTER DEALT WITH UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

71. Declarations of Interest (16:00)

Members were asked to declare at this point in the meeting any disclosable pecuniary interest or other registerable interest they might have in respect of business on the agenda, if they had not already done so in advance on the Register of Interests. None were declared.

72. Minutes (16:01)

Resolved: That the minutes of the Executive meeting held on 14 December 2023 be approved and then signed by the Chair as a correct record.

73. Public Participation (16:01)

It was reported that there had been 6 registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Gwen Swinburn raised concern at the lack of public consultation on the Council budget proposals. She asked which budget decisions would have equalities impact assessments. And raised a number of points wishing to see the budget treat inner and outer wards fairly.

Cllr Healey read a letter from a resident whose child attend Scarcroft Road Primary school. He noted that the parent had expected free schools meals to have been delivered immediately after the election and asked when this would be rolled out to all primary schools.

Cllr Hollyer noted his opposition to a charge for green bin collections. He questioned whether adequate weight had been given in the report to the potential damage to the environment and fly tipping. He stated that a public consultation should have been undertaken on the proposal.

Cllr Smalley stated that York residents were shocked by proposals to reduce York Explore's budget. He confirmed there was a petition to save York's libraries and that there should have been a public consultation on the proposal.

Cllr Fenton asked where potential bus network savings would be reported. He also asked whether schools would be required to cover the proposed cut to cycle training and whether there would be a reduction in training if this could not be done. Finally, he noted he would have expected more of a consultation process around the budget.

Cllr Widdowson stated that households could end up paying around £500 a year more from the budget proposals. She stated that Labour, during the local election promised to freeze Council Tax, but this was not proposed in the budget. She asked the Executive how the decisions in the budget meet their priorities.

The Executive Leader responded noting that the promise to freeze Council tax was subject to Labour winning a general election.

74. Forward Plan (16:19)

Members received and noted details of the items that were on the Forward Plan for the next two Executive meetings at the time the agenda was published.

75. Developing a Welcome Centre Approach for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (16:19)

The Corporate Director of Children, Families and Education introduced the report which proposed to develop a welcome centre approach to providing accommodation and support to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. The proposal sets out our plans to repurpose capital funding, which was agreed in 2019 to address placement sufficiency for children and young people in care.

The Executive Member Children, Young People and Education welcomed the report and noted that this approach would see the Council reduce its reliance of costly out of area placements and assist the Council taking care of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

Resolved:

- i. Approved the delivery model of developing a welcome centre approach for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children aged 16 and 17 years by a) committing a total spend of £275,000 from the existing capital budget for the development of a bespoke supported accommodation provision to accommodate 4 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (aged 16/17) and b) developing a second such provision in 2024/25 within available capital budget;
- ii. That delegated authority be granted to the Corporate Director of Children services and Education, in consultation with the Corporate Director of Place and the Director of Governance, to approve and effect any necessary appropriations of Council-owned properties from general housing stock (or from other existing use(s)) or any properties necessary to deliver the plans outlined in this Report;
- iii. That delegated authority be granted to the Corporate Director of Children's and Education, in consultation

- with the Director of Governance, to negotiate and conclude/enter into any legal documentation required for the freehold purchase and/or lease by the Council of any properties necessary to deliver the plans outlined in this Report for supported accommodation;
- iv. That delegated authority be granted to the Corporate Director of Children's and Education, in consultation with the Corporate Director of Place and the Director of Governance, to apply for and obtain any necessary planning permission(s) and/or building regulations approvals in respect of any change of use of and/or adaptations to said properties necessary to deliver the plans outlined in this Report for supported accommodation.

Reason: To continue to develop the City of York's provision for children in care and ensure the Council meets its statutory sufficiency duty and its duty under Section 72(3) of the Immigration Act 2016 in respect of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

76. Waste Services – Service developments (16:26)

The Director of Transport, Environment and Planning introduced the report confirming that the Council's green waste collections were a discretionary service, which currently was not available to all residents. He noted that many other Local Authorities charged for a garden waste collection. It was confirmed that the proposed subscription fee was in line with the current charge by North Yorkshire County Council and that the Executive were asked to consider whether a 50% discount should be provided for those on Council Tax Support. Finally Executive was asked to approve the creation of a program to move homes from bags to bins and to go out to procurement for city centre collections currently ran by St Nick's.

The Executive Member for Environment and Climate Emergency welcomed the opportunity to move more households from bags to bin collections. She noted that optimisation of routes would also reduce the Council's emissions. The Executive Member stated that the garden waste subscription service was not a policy the Executive wished to undertake, however, they intended to prioritise spending on statutory services. It was noted that there was no evidence of additional bonfires or fly tipping in local authorities with charges

and that the Council would continue to encourage people to compost at home wherever possible. Finally, it was confirmed that any garden waste that went into general waste collections would be sorted out at Allerton Park and used for biofuel.

Resolved:

- i. Noted the report and agreed to introduce a garden waste subscription service at a fee of £46.50 per bin, and instruct officers to begin work so that the Council can introduce an annual fee for kerbside garden waste collections in York;
- ii. That the Council should offer a 50% discount on the subscription rate for the garden waste service for residents who may struggle to afford the service and use Council Tax Support as a way of applying this.

Reason: To determine how the garden waste collection service will be delivered in the future.

- iii. To delegate authority to the Director of Transport, Environment and Planning and in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, to use the Waste Reserve and take all steps necessary to procure, award and enter into contracts to deliver and effectively implement the new service;

Reason: To enable resources, capital investment, and contracts to be put in place in a timely manner to ensure the garden waste subscription service can be effectively delivered.

- iv. Approved, as a one-off, a free collection of garden waste bins from those households not wishing to subscribe to the garden waste collection service (it is likely residents will need to register for this collection).

Reason: This will facilitate the collection of any unwanted garden waste bins (green wheelie bins) which will be hard for residents to dispose of. The Council will make appropriate arrangements for these unwanted bins to be collected and recycled.

- v. To formally adopt the Waste Policy which is included as Annex A to the report with a view to implementing the Policy from April 2024;
- vi. To delegate authority to the Director of Environment Transport and Planning in consultation with the relevant Executive members to update the Waste Policy and prepare Terms and Conditions.

Reason: To ensure there is a formally adopted waste policy that is clear for waste teams, members and residents and it reflects any decisions e.g., a subscription scheme for garden waste collections.

- vii. To delegate authority to the Director of Environment, Transport and Planning to transfer properties from 'bags to bins', implementing the scheme in affected areas.

Reason: To enable residents to benefit from waste collections via wheeled bins as opposed to bags. This will help with waste containment, reduce windblown litter, increase recycling and have health and safety benefits for collection crews.

- viii. To note that the service does need to undertake a round optimisation exercise to ensure that collection rounds are efficient as the city continues to expand with additional households requiring waste collections. To delegate authority to the Director of Environment, Transport and Planning to implement an optimisation of collection rounds in consultation with the relevant Executive Members.

Reason: To ensure collection rounds are as efficient as possible and vehicle miles travelled are reduced (it should be noted that this will lead to a change of collection day for some residents at the point at which the new rounds are adopted).

- ix. To note that in parts of the city, waste and recycling collections are delivered by St Nick's under a contract for "Special Waste and Recycling Collection Arrangements for the City Centre". This contract is due to expire and tender prices are being sought.

Reason: To ensure properties in the city centre and that are hard to access, benefit from an option to have their waste and recycling collected effectively.

- x. To delegate authority to the Director of Environment, Transport and Planning, and in consultation with the Director of Governance and Chief Finance Officer, award the contract for “Special Waste and Recycling Collection Arrangements for the City Centre”.

Reason: To ensure collection rounds are as efficient as possible.

77. Finance & performance monitor 3 (16:42)

The Chief Finance Officer confirmed that there were risks attached to the forecast overspend for the Council, and consequently Executive should look at savings proposals totalling £14.3m. She confirmed a correction at paragraph 23 of the report that the Director of Children and Education and Central Budgets 2023/24 budget should show a forecast overspend of £3,718,000 not £2,720,000.

The Executive Member for Finance, Performance, Major Projects and Equalities stated that, on average, the Council had had to reduce its spending by £8.6m each year since 2010. She outlined that austerity policies on a national level had negatively affected the Council. Finally, she also noted that previous Council budgets had set unachievable saving proposals and that the Executive would aim manage Council spending.

The Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care noted that demand for Adult Social Care services continued to rise. She highlighted that City of York Council was one of the lowest funded Councils in the country. She confirmed that policy changes would see less residents having to enter care, but that the cost of care would continue to rise.

Resolved:

- i. To note the finance and performance information.

Reason: To ensure expenditure is kept within the approved budget.

78. Capital Programme Update monitor 3 (16:51)

The Executive Member for Finance, Performance, Major Projects and Equalities confirmed that the Executive would reduce borrowing where they deemed it possible. She noted that borrowing to fund projects had placed pressures on the Council's revenue budget and was therefore deferred to allow more use of the revenue budget in year.

Recommended:

- i. That Council agree to adjustments resulting in a decrease in the 2023/24 budget of £16.013m as detailed in the report.

Resolved:

- ii. To note the 2023/24 revised budget of £119.723m as set out in paragraph 4 and Table 3;
- iii. To note the restated capital programme for 2023/24 – 2027/28 as set out in Annex A.

Reason: To enable the effective management and monitoring of the Council's capital programme.

79. Treasury Management Quarter 3 Prudential Indicators (16:55)

The Chief Finance Officer asked that the Executive note the treasury management activities and confirmed that its report would be taken to the Council's Audit and Governance Committee for consideration.

Resolved:

- i. To note the Treasury Management activities up to the third quarter date ending 30th November 2023;
- ii. To note the Prudential Indicators set out at Annex A and note the compliance with all indicators.

Reason: To ensure the continued effective operation and performance of the Council's Treasury Management function and ensure that all Council treasury activity

is prudent, affordable and sustainable and complies policies set.

It is a statutory duty for the Council to determine and keep under review the affordable borrowing limits. During the first three quarters of the year to 30th November 2023, the Council has operated within the treasury and prudential indicators set out in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2023/24.

There are no policy changes to the Treasury Management Strategy Statement for members to agree and approve; the details in this report update the Treasury Management position and Prudential Indicators in the light of the updated economic position and budgetary changes already approved.

80. Financial Strategy 2024/25 (16:57)

The Executive Leader outlined the financial challenge to Local Authorities and highlighted the number of Councils submitting section 114 notices. She noted that cuts to Council funding due to austerity and a rising cost in areas such as adult social care meant a new funding model was required to reverse the direction of Local Authority finances throughout the country.

The Chief Finance Officer introduced the Financial Strategy report which would deliver a balanced budget for 2024/25, with savings proposals totalling £14.3m, equivalent to 9% of the net budget.

The Executive Member for Finance, Performance, Major Projects and Equalities stated that the Council was required to submit a balanced budget. She noted that the Council was one of the lowest funded Local Authorities in the country. Following savings required to submit a balanced budget in 2024/25 she confirmed that the Council would be required to make an estimated £10m saving every year for the next 3 years and that it was important to put the Council on a strong on a good financial footing to meet these budget pressures.

The Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care addressed the proposal for a reduction in funding to York

Explore. She praised York Explore for the running of York's libraries but noted that the Council had in previous years not cut any funding to library services while other areas had had to make savings. She highlighted capital spend in previous years to improve York libraries and that while the Council would seek savings on funding to libraries to assist in continuing to meet statutory services, the Council were keen to work with York Explore to assist in increasing York Explore's revenue, to offset any required reductions.

Resolved:

- i. That Council approve the budget proposals as outlined in this report. In particular;
 - a) The net revenue expenditure requirement of £149.268m;
 - b) A council tax requirement of £113.927m.
 - c) The revenue growth proposals as outlined in the body of the report.
 - d) The 2024/25 revenue savings proposals as outlined in annex 2.
 - e) The fees and charges proposals as outlined in annex 3.
 - f) The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 24/25 budget set out in annex 5.
 - g) The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) proposals outlined from paragraph 139.
- ii. That Council approve a 4.99% increase in the City of York element of the council tax, 2% of which would relate to the social care precept. It is intended that the total council tax increase including the parish, police and fire authority precepts;
- iii. That Council approve the 100% increase in council tax on second homes with effect from 1st April 2025 subject to the Levelling Up bill receive Royal Assent by 31st March 2024, as set out in paragraphs 75 to 77.

Reason: To ensure a legally balanced budget is set.

- iv. That Council approve the average rent increase of 7.7% to be applied to all rents for 2024/25.

Reason: To ensure the ongoing financial stability of the Housing Revenue Account and allow work on

improving the quality of the council's affordable housing to continue.

81. **Capital Budget 2024/25 to 2028/29**

The Chief Finance Officer introduced the report and confirmed that £56m had been added to the Capital Budget, this accounted for the additional year added to the Capital Budget Programme.

The Executive Member for Finance, Performance, Major Projects and Equalities thanked officers for reviewing the Capital Budget with the Executive to ensure the Council continues to support essential projects. She outlined that often programmes in the Capital Budget had specific funding provided to the Council for the work, therefore money from the Capital Budget could not be used to cover spending in the overall Council budget.

The Executive Member for Housing, Planning and Safer Communities noted that £69m had been removed from the Capital Budget as it doesn't reflect the Executive's move to building 100% affordable houses. He outlined that there was an £11m increase in housing repairs, £1.8m in mould and damp repairs, and there had been positive progress in reducing the number of void properties.

Resolved:

- i. That Council agree to the revised capital programme of £395.186m that reflects a net overall increase of £56.409m (as set out in table 2 and in Annex A). Key elements of this include:
 - a) New schemes funded by prudential borrowing totalling £3.353m as set out in table 3;
 - b) Extension of prudential borrowing funded Rolling Programme schemes totalling £25.025m as set out in table 4;
 - c) Extension of externally funded Rolling Programme schemes totalling £6.030m as set out in table 5;
 - d) New schemes funded by external grants totalling £3.844m as set out in table 5;

- e) An increase in HRA funded schemes totalling £18.157m funded from a combination HRA balances/capital receipts as set out in table 6;
- ii. That Council note the total increase in Council borrowing as a result of new schemes being recommended for approval is £28.378m the details of which are considered within this report and the financial strategy report;
- iii. That Council approve the full restated programme as summarised in Annex B totalling £395.186m covering financial years 2024/25 to 2028/29 as set out in table 12 and Annex B.

Reason: To ensure the Council finances its capital programme.

82. Capital & Investment Strategy (17:26)

The Chief Finance Officer introduced the report and noted that there were no significant changes to highlight from the previous year. She outlined a correction to Annex A of the report, that the Housing Revenue Account's structural maintenance of existing stock budget within its capital programme over the period 2024/25 to 2028/29 should be noted as £56.3m not £563m.

Resolved:

- i. That Council approve the capital and investment strategy at annex A.

Reason: To meet the Council's statutory obligation to comply with the Prudential Code 2017.

83. Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2024/25 - 2028/29 (17:29)

The Chief Finance Officer introduced the report and noted that there were no significant updates from the previous year. She also confirmed that the strategy would be considered by Audit and Governance Committee.

Resolved:

- i. That Council, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003 (revised), approve:
 - a) The proposed Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25 including the Annual Investment Strategy and the Minimum Revenue Provision policy statement;
 - b) The prudential indicators for 2024/25 to 2028/29 in the main body of the report;
 - c) The specified and non-specified investments schedule (Annex B);
 - d) The scheme of delegation and the role of the Section 151 officer (Annex D).

Reason: To ensure the continued effective operation and performance of the Council's Treasury Management function and ensure that all Council treasury activity is prudent, affordable and sustainable and complies with policies set.

PART B - MATTERS REFERRED TO COUNCIL

84. Capital Programme Update monitor 3 (16:51)

The Executive Member for Finance, Performance, Major Projects and Equalities confirmed that the Executive would reduce borrowing where they deemed it possible. She noted that borrowing to fund projects had pressures on the Council's revenue budget and was therefore deferred to allow more use of the revenue budget in year.

Recommended:

- i. That Council agree to adjustments resulting in a decrease in the 2023/24 budget of £16.013m as detailed in the report.

Reason: To enable the effective management and monitoring of the Council's capital programme.

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The Executive Leader outlined the financial challenge to Local Authorities and highlighted the number of Councils submitting section 114 notices. She noted that cuts to Council funding due to austerity and a rising cost in areas such as adult social care meant a new funding model was required to reverse the direction of Local Authority finances throughout the country.

The Chief Finance Officer introduced the Financial Strategy report which would deliver a balanced budget for 2024/25, with savings proposals totalling £14.3m, equivalent to 9% of the net budget.

The Executive Member for Finance, Performance, Major Projects and Equalities stated that the Council was required to submit a balanced budget. She noted that the Council was one of the lowest funded Local Authorities in the country. Following the savings required to submit a balanced budget in 2024/25 she confirmed that the Council would be required to make an estimated £10m saving every year for the next 3 years and that it was important to put the Council on a strong on a good financial footing to meet these budget pressures.

The Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care addressed the proposal for a reduction in funding to York Explore. She praised York Explore for the running of York's libraries but noted that the Council had in previous years not cut any funding to library services while other areas had had to make savings. She highlighted capital spend in previous years to improve York libraries and that while the Council would seek savings on funding to libraries to assist in continuing to meet statutory services, the Council were keen to work with York Explore to assist in increasing York Explore's revenue, to offset any required reductions.

Recommended:

- i. That Council approve the budget proposals as outlined in this report. In particular;
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 - i) A council tax requirement of £113.927m.
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Reason: To ensure a legally balanced budget is set.

- iv. That Council approve the average rent increase of 7.7% to be applied to all rents for 2024/25.

Reason: To ensure the ongoing financial stability of the Housing Revenue Account and allow work on improving the quality of the council's affordable housing to continue.

86. Capital Budget 2024/25 to 2028/29 (17:18)

The Chief Finance Officer introduced the report and confirmed that £56m had been added to the Capital Budget, this accounted for the additional year added to the Capital Budget Programme.

The Executive Member for Finance, Performance, Major Projects and Equalities thanked officers for reviewing the Capital Budget with the Executive to ensure the Council continues to support essential projects. She outlined that often programmes in the Capital Budget had specific funding provided to the Council for the work, therefore money from the Capital Budget could not be used to cover spending in the overall Council budget.

The Executive Member for Housing, Planning and Safer Communities noted that £69m had been removed from the Capital Budget as it doesn't reflect the Executive's move to building 100% affordable houses. He outlined that there was an £11m increase in housing repairs, £1.8m in mould and damp repairs, and there had been positive progress in reducing the number of void properties.

Recommended:

- i. That Council agree to the revised capital programme of £395.186m that reflects a net overall increase of £56.409m (as set out in table 2 and in Annex A). Key elements of this include:
 - f) New schemes funded by prudential borrowing totalling £3.353m as set out in table 3;
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- ii. That Council note the total increase in Council borrowing as a result of new schemes being recommended for approval is £28.378m the details of which are considered within this report and the financial strategy report;
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Reason: To ensure the Council finances its capital programme.

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Recommended:

- i. That Council approve the capital and investment strategy at annex A.

Reason: To meet the Council's statutory obligation to comply with the Prudential Code 2017.

88. Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2024/25 - 2028/29 (17:29)

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Recommended:

- i. That Council, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003 (revised), approve:
 - e) The proposed Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25 including the Annual Investment Strategy and the Minimum Revenue Provision policy statement;
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 - g) The specified and non-specified investments schedule (Annex B);
 - h) The scheme of delegation and the role of the Section 151 officer (Annex D).

Reason: To ensure the continued effective operation and performance of the Council's Treasury Management function and ensure that all Council treasury activity

is prudent, affordable and sustainable and complies with policies set.

Cllr Douglas, Chair

[The meeting started at 4.01 pm and finished at 5.34 pm].