

Meeting	Decision Session - Executive Member for Environment and Climate Change
Date	13 January 2020
Present	Councillors Widdowson (Executive Member for Environment and Climate Change), D'Agorne (Executive Member for Transport) and Waller (Executive Member for Economy & Strategic Planning)

15. 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 disclosable pecuniary interests they may have in respect of business on the agenda. None were declared.

16. Public Participation

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

All three speakers spoke on Agenda Item 3, Financial Strategy 2020/21 to 2024/25.

Janice Gray, a local resident, raised her concerns regarding the capital investment of £500K to improve the accessibility and sustainability of York Theatre Royal. She stated that the Theatre Royal had already received £6m in 2016 from various sources, including the Council, to fund a new roof and major improvements to access and she noted that other theatres within the city were self-funded. She also raised concerns regarding pot holes across the city and felt that the workmanship was poor that required better inspection and supervision of the contractors. She also felt that landlords of all student accommodation should pay council tax.

Brian Watson, a local resident, raised concerns regarding the budget consultation process. He questioned why the consultation papers made little reference to the process used

and highlighted some inconsistencies and questioned if any allowances had been made for the errors. He stated that the report also made no reference to the replies, 'slightly agree or disagree' and questioned the figures generated from the replies. He also queried why the Council were proposing to allocate £500k to York Theatre Royal.

Gwen Swinburn, a local resident, questioned why no budget cuts had been made to the departments within the three portfolio areas, especially when all other departments had received cuts. She felt that there were some inconsistencies on how the data had been presented and would have preferred a capital budget sheet for each portfolio area. She suggested that:

- Following the agreement at Full Council, all finalised budget proposals should then be presented at either Executive or a Decision Session.
- All key decisions relating to sums of £500k or more, including the budget proposed to York Theatre Royal, should be reported to and considered by Executive.
- Each growth proposal, within Annex 2 of the report, should be numbered.

She also felt that some proposals required further clarification, including the price contingency budget for Transport and Environment and Climate Change and the one off growth budget for Transport and Economy & Strategic Planning.

17. Financial Strategy 2020/21 to 2024/25

The Executive Members considered a report that provided background information for the overall Financial Strategy and presented the savings proposals and growth assumptions for Economy & Strategic Planning, Environment & Climate Change and Transport portfolios, for consideration by the Executive Members before finalisation of overall Financial Strategy, which would be presented to Executive on 13 February 2020.

The Finance Manager was in attendance to give an update. He highlighted the key assumptions for the overall Finance Strategy which were:

- A proposed basic council tax increase of 1.99 % in 2020/21. Any increase above this amount would require a referendum.

- In addition an increase of 2% in line with the government's social care precept, equating to additional income of £1.8m, which provides support for social care.
- Revenue savings of £4m in 2020/21.

He made reference to the specific examples of revenue investment and capital investment that supported the objectives outlined in the new Council Plan and the Executive Members noted that the revenue investment highlighted within paragraph 6 of the report, bullet point 7, should state £25k not £265k.

The Head of Finance confirmed that the price contingences within the portfolio areas for Transport and Environment and Climate Change were particularly related to the increases the Council were required to make to concessionary fares, street lighting, drainage levies and waste, including payments made to Yorwaste and in respect to Allerton Waste Recovery Park.

Each Executive Member considered the annexes to the report that highlighted the proposed growth and savings within their portfolio area and in answer to their questions it was confirmed that:

- The revenue and capital investment proposed to improve electric car charging within the city would support the maintenance of all charging points as usable and allow any faulty equipment to be replaced. It was confirmed that currently all charging points within the city were functioning.
- The Transport one off growth proposal, within Annex 2 of the report, should include a reference to other innovative trials, not just taxis or small vehicles.
- The additional staff resourced to clear a backlog of waiting lists for residents parking would be accommodated until March 2021 and the workload would be reviewed regularly.

The Executive Members thanked all Officers involved in producing the report and were delighted to see how committed City of York Council were to delivering the 2030 carbon neutral target. They agreed the budget proposals also showed commitment towards the Council Plan and to delivering what the residents were requesting.

Resolved:

- (i) That the feedback from consultation for Economy & Strategic Planning, Environment and Climate Change and Transport portfolios, as set out in Annex 3 to the report, be noted
- (ii) That the following be agreed for inclusion within the overall financial strategy to be presented to Executive on 13 February 2020:
 - a) The 2020/21 revenue savings proposals for Economy & Strategic Planning, Environment and Climate Change and Transport portfolios, as set out in Annex 1 to the report.
 - b) The 2020/21 revenue growth proposals for Economy & Strategic Planning, Environment and Climate Change and Transport portfolios, as set out in Annex 2 to the report, subject to the first point within the one off growth section being re-worded to read as follows:

To deliver a Transport Plan Refresh, including funding towards innovative trials such as the use of taxis and car share to enhance the York bus system.

Reason: To ensure that stakeholders have the opportunity to feed into the budget process in advance of the finalisations of the Financial Strategy 2020/21 to 2024/25.

Cllr Widdowson, Executive Member
[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 5.55 pm].