

Meeting	Joint Budget Decision Session - Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods and Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Communities
Date	16 December 2021
Present	Councillors Craghill (Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods) and Smalley (Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Communities)

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.

6. Declarations of Interest

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

7. Public Participation

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

Cllr Fenton spoke on Agenda Item 3, Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2026/27. He highlighted his support to the budget proposals, referencing the continued commitment to meet residents needs and the grant funding attracted to deliver energy efficiency improvements in Council housing, privately owned and rented housing in the city. He also welcomed the proposals outlined in the report to continue the Council's investment in York's libraries, leisure and cultural provision. He noted that ward grants had been well utilised throughout the pandemic and he welcomed the continued investment in communities, despite the significant pressures facing all Councils across the country.

8. Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2026/27

The Executive Members considered a report that provided background information for the overall Financial Strategy and presented the draft savings proposals, growth assumptions and capital schemes for the Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods and Culture, Leisure and Communities portfolios. The Decision Session also provided an opportunity for the Executive Members to obtain feedback in advance of the finalisation of the overall Financial Strategy which would be presented to Executive on 7 February 2022.

The Chief Finance Officer, the Finance Manager and the Director of Customer and Communities were in attendance to provide an update and answer any questions raised.

Officers informed the Executive Members that:

- The Council continued to face unprecedented financial challenges due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, which had generated an in-year financial pressure, as noted to Executive in the latest Financial and Performance Monitoring reports.
- The provisional local government finance settlement for 2022/23 was due to be announced imminently by written statement and officers were still not aware if this would be a one-year allocation or a multi-year package, which further added to uncertainty and made long-term financial planning more complex meaning the overall Financial Strategy may be altered depending on the outcome of that settlement.

The Executive Members were informed of the key assumptions highlighted within the report and the additional £30k to support the creation of an Access Officer post to support the Strategic Review of City Centre Access and associated Action Plan. The Executive Members also noted that the annexes to the report outlined the detailed proposals for their portfolios and also included a summary of the consultation responses received.

The Executive Members commended and thanked officers for the work undertaken to formulate the reports, despite the significant budget challenges and they each addressed the budget proposals that supported their portfolio areas.

The Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods noted the additional revenue funding to support children's and adult social care and she also welcomed the revenue to support the climate emergency, new skills and training, local communities, holiday hunger and the York Financial Assistance Scheme. Officers were also commended for organising the public consultation and the Executive Member thanked those that had been involved in the focus group that had allowed members of the public to take a more in-depth look into the Council's budgets.

Resolved:

- (i) That the feedback from consultation to date, as set out in Annex 3 to the report, be noted.
- (ii) That Option 1 be agreed and the following be retained for inclusion in the overall budget:
 - The 2022/23 revenue savings proposals for the Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods and Culture, Leisure and Communities portfolios, as set out in Annex 1 to the report;
 - The 2022/23 revenue growth proposals for the Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods and Culture, Leisure and Communities portfolios, as set out in Annex 2 to the report;
 - The new schemes for inclusion in the 2022/23 to 2026/27 Capital Programme, as set out in Annex 4 to the report.

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 Craghill, Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods

[The meeting started at 10.30 am and finished at 10.43 am].