



# Council

Monday, 21st February,  
2022

## MINUTES

### Present:

Councillor Gareth Prosser (Mayor), Councillor Ann Isherwood (Deputy Mayor) and Councillors Salman Akbar, Karen Ashley, Tom Baker-Price, Joanne Beecham, Michael Chalk, Debbie Chance, Brandon Clayton, Luke Court, Matthew Dormer, Aled Evans, Peter Fleming, Andrew Fry, Julian Grubb, Wanda King, Anthony Lovell, Emma Marshall, Nyear Nazir, Timothy Pearman, Mike Rouse, David Thain, Craig Warhurst and Jennifer Wheeler

### Officers:

Kevin Dicks, Claire Felton and James Howse

### Principal Democratic Services Officer:

Jess Bayley-Hill

### 57. WELCOME

The Mayor welcomed all those present to the meeting and explained the measures that were in place designed to mitigate against the transmission of Covid-19.

### 58. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Juliet Brunner, Alex Fogg, Lucy Harrison and Gemma Monaco.

### 59. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 60. MINUTES

#### RESOLVED that

**the minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Mayor.**

Chair

**61. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The following announcements were made at the meeting:

a) The Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor confirmed that he had no announcements to make on this occasion.

b) The Leader's Announcements

The Leader explained that he had no announcements to make.

c) The Chief Executive's Announcements

The Chief Executive confirmed that he had no announcements to make on this occasion.

**62. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Sustainable Warmth Funding

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Change presented a report on the subject of Sustainable Warmth Funding. Members were advised that the funding was designed to help residents, in households with combined incomes below £30,000 per year, to upgrade the energy efficiency of their properties. In particular, the funding was due to be used to upgrade the energy efficiency of properties with Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ratings D – G.

During consideration of this item, it was noted that the report had been pre-scrutinised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Concerns had been raised that the funding would be distributed on a first come first served basis and that some eligible households might miss the opportunity to receive funding in this context. Questions were raised about how the funding would be promoted to ensure that eligible property owners were aware of the potential to apply for support through the scheme. Council was advised that communications would form an important part of the process for promoting the scheme and that the Council aimed to target particular properties where it was recognised that they would benefit from the funding.

Pay Policy Statement 2022/23

Council was advised that during the meeting of the Executive Committee held immediately before the Council meeting, Members had endorsed the Pay Policy Statement 2022/23. This was a report

that needed to be agreed by the Council on an annual basis and detailed staff pay scales.

2022/23 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2024/25 (Including the Capital Programme)

Members were advised that the 2022/23 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2022/23 to 2024/25 report had been considered at the meeting of the Executive Committee held immediately prior to the Council meeting, when the recommendations detailed in the report had been endorsed.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling presented the report for Members' consideration. Reference was made to the ways in which the content of the MTFP compared to proposals in the budget in previous years and Members were reminded that the Council had worked hard to address points raised in the Section 24 Notice that had been issued some years previously.

The 2022/23 Budget and MTFP 2022/23 to 2024/25 had been prepared at a time of significant uncertainty for local government finances. Further clarity was needed from the Government regarding long-term future funding arrangements for Councils. Due to the financial challenges faced by the Council, like other authorities, work would need to begin on the next budget as soon as the 2022/23 budget had been agreed.

After the presentation of the budget, Members discussed the following points in detail:

- The difficulties faced by local Councils trying to set a balanced budget in a context of increasing financial uncertainty for local government.
- The role of officers in delivering the proposals detailed in the budget and MTFP.
- The funding that had been allocated to expenditure in local wards.
- The potential move of the central library in Redditch to the Town Hall and the income that the Council would receive for this move. Members were advised that no decisions had been taken on the final location of the library and this matter would need to be determined by Worcestershire County Council.
- The figures in the 2022/23 budget, which would involve the Council setting a balanced budget.
- The Housing Revenue Account (HRA), which had also achieved a balanced position and the use of this funding to manage the Council's housing stock.
- The extent to which the proposals detailed in the budget would result in growth.

- The investments that had been incorporated into the budget, particularly with respect to ICT systems, and the potential savings that would be accrued from these investments in the long-term.
- The potential pressure that inflation would place on the budget and MTFP moving forward.
- The 6.648 per cent increase to the basic allowance paid to Members, which had been agreed at the previous Council meeting, and how this compared to the proposed increase in pay for staff.
- The decisions taken in previous years by Members not to increase the basic allowance for Councillors. It was noted that if allowances had been increased each year, the increases would actually have been by 2 per cent per annum on average.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 the 2022/23 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2024/25 was subject to a named vote.

Members voting FOR the 2022/23 Budget and MTFP 2022/23 to 2024/25:

Councillors Salman Akbar, Karen Ashley, Tom Baker-Price, Joanne Beecham, Michael Chalk, Brandon Clayton, Luke Court, Matthew Dormer, Aled Evans, Peter Fleming, Julian Grubb, Ann Isherwood, Anthony Lovell, Emma Marshall, Nyear Nazir, Timothy Pearman, Gareth Prosser, Mike Rouse, David Thain and Craig Warhurst (20)

Members voting AGAINST the 2022/23 Budget and MTFP 2022/23 to 2024/25:

None (0)

Members ABSTAINING in the vote on the 2022/23 Budget and MTFP 2022/23 to 2024/25:

Councillors Debbie Chance, Andrew Fry, Wanda King and Jenny Wheeler (4).

The vote on the 2022/23 Budget and MTFP 2022/23 to 2024/25 was therefore carried.

Council Tax Resolutions 2022/23

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling presented the Council Tax Resolutions 2022/23 for Members' consideration. Council was informed that this was a technical report that had to be

prepared each year. Officers were thanked for their hard work in preparing the report.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 the recommendations in respect of the Council Tax Resolutions were subject to a named vote.

Members voting FOR the Council Tax Resolutions:

Councillors Salman Akbar, Karen Ashley, Tom Baker-Price, Joanne Beecham, Michael Chalk, Debbie Chance, Brandon Clayton, Luke Court, Matthew Dormer, Aled Evans, Peter Fleming, Andrew Fry, Julian Grubb, Ann Isherwood, Wanda King, Anthony Lovell, Emma Marshall, Nyear Nazir, Timothy Pearman, Gareth Prosser, Mike Rouse, David Thain, Craig Warhurst and Jenny Wheeler. (24)

Members voting AGAINST the Council Tax Resolutions:

None (0)

Members ABSTAINING in the vote on the Council Tax Resolutions:

None (0)

The vote on the Council Tax Resolutions 2022/23 was therefore carried.

## RESOLVED

- 1) that the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2022 be received and all recommendations adopted;
- 2) that the Pay Policy Statement 2022/23 be approved;
- 3) to approve the overall net general fund revenue budgets of:

|          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 2022/23: | £10.520m |
| 2023/24: | £10.289m |
| 2024/25: | £10.428m |

- 4) to approve the unavoidable costs:

|          |         |
|----------|---------|
| 2022/23: | £0.427m |
| 2023/24: | £0.140m |
| 2024/25: | £0.134m |

- 5) to approve the Revenue Bids:
- |          |         |
|----------|---------|
| 2022/23: | £0.191m |
| 2023/24: | £0.150m |
| 2024/25: | £0.128m |
- 6) to approve the Identified Savings:
- |          |         |
|----------|---------|
| 2022/23: | £0.305m |
| 2023/24: | £0.327m |
| 2024/25: | £0.327m |
- 7) to approve an increase of the Council Tax per Band D equivalent of £5 for 2022/23;
- 8) to approve the transfer from General Fund Balances of £0.282m for 2022/23;
- 9) to approve the planned reallocation of £0.238m from Earmarked reserves to General Fund Balances;
- 10) to approve the General Fund capital programme of:
- |          |         |
|----------|---------|
| 2022/23: | £4.257m |
| 2023/24: | £2.407m |
| 2024/25: | £1.930m |
- 11) to approve the Housing Revenue Account Budget of:
- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 2022/23: | £25.390m |
| 2023/24: | £25.074m |
| 2024/25: | £25.545m |
- 12) to approve the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme of:
- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 2022/23: | £14.180m |
| 2023/24: | £12.580m |
| 2024/25: | £12.580m |
- 13) that the 2020/21 Capital Outturn be noted;
- 14) that the Chief Financial Officer's (CFO) Opinion on Estimates and Reserve Levels be noted;
- 15) that the calculation for the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2022-23 (excluding Parish precepts) be £6,746,772.92;

- 16) the following amounts be calculated for the year 2022-23 in accordance with sections 31 to 36 of the Act:
- (a) £46,984,027 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) of the Act (taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils) (*i.e.*, *Gross expenditure*);
  - (b) £40,222,255 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the Act. (*i.e.*, *Gross income*);
  - (c) £6,761,772 being the amount by which the aggregate of 1.2.2(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 1.2.2(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act);
  - (d) £254.71 being the amount at 1.2.2 (c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1.1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts);
  - (e) £15,000 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Feckenham Parish precept) referred to in Section 34 (1) of the Act;
  - (f) £254.15 being the amount at 1.2.2 (d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 1.2.2 (e) above by Item T (1.1 (a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34 (2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates;
  - (g) £294.20 being the amount given by adding to the amount at 1.2.2(f), the amount of the special item relating to the Parish of Feckenham 1.2.2(e), divided by the amount in 1.1(b) above;
  - (h) the amounts below given by multiplying the amounts at 1.2.2(f) and 1.2.2(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band, divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in Band D, calculated

by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwelling listed in different valuation bands.

| Valuation Band | Proportion of Band D tax paid | Parish of Feckenham<br>£ | All other parts of the Council's area<br>£ |
|----------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| A              | 6/9                           | 196.13                   | 169.43                                     |
| B              | 7/9                           | 228.82                   | 197.67                                     |
| C              | 8/9                           | 261.51                   | 225.91                                     |
| D              | 1                             | 294.20                   | 254.15                                     |
| E              | 11/9                          | 359.58                   | 310.63                                     |
| F              | 13/9                          | 424.96                   | 367.11                                     |
| G              | 15/9                          | 490.33                   | 423.58                                     |
| H              | 18/9                          | 588.40                   | 508.30                                     |

- 17) that it be noted that for the year 2022-23, Worcestershire County Council, Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia and Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwelling in the Council's area as indicated below:

|   | Valuation Bands |          |          |                 |          |          |          |          |
|---|-----------------|----------|----------|-----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
|   | A               | B        | C        | D               | E        | F        | G        | H        |
|   | £               | £        | £        | £               | £        | £        | £        | £        |
| Worcestershire County Council                 | 931.19          | 1,086.38 | 1,241.58 | <b>1,396.78</b> | 1,707.18 | 2,017.57 | 2,327.97 | 2,793.56 |
| Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia | 166.44          | 194.18   | 221.92   | <b>249.66</b>   | 305.14   | 360.62   | 416.10   | 499.32   |
| Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority         | 59.60           | 69.53    | 79.47    | <b>89.40</b>    | 109.27   | 129.13   | 149.00   | 178.80   |

- 18) having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 1.2.2(h) and 1.2.3 above, that Redditch Borough Council in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 hereby sets the amounts shown below as the amounts of Council Tax for 2022-23. for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings:



| Valuation Band | Proportion of Band D tax paid | Parish of Feckenham<br>£ | All other parts of the Council's area<br>£ |
|----------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| A              | 6/9                           | 1,353.36                 | 1,326.66                                   |
| B              | 7/9                           | 1,578.91                 | 1,547.76                                   |
| C              | 8/9                           | 1,804.48                 | 1,768.88                                   |
| D              | 1                             | 2,030.04                 | 1,989.99                                   |
| E              | 11/9                          | 2,481.17                 | 2,432.22                                   |
| F              | 13/9                          | 2,932.28                 | 2,874.43                                   |
| G              | 15/9                          | 3,383.40                 | 3,316.65                                   |
| H              | 18/9                          | 4,060.08                 | 3,979.98                                   |

19) that the Executive Director Finance & Resources be authorised to make payments under Section 90(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 from the Collection Fund by ten equal instalments between April 2022 to March 2023 as detailed below:

|   | Precept<br>£  | Deficit on Collection Fund<br>£ | Total to pay<br>£ |
|---|---------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Worcestershire County Council                 | 37,079,802.00 | 970,233.00                      | 38,050,035.00     |
| Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia | 6,627,631.65  | 173,751.00                      | 6,801,382.65      |
| Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority           | 2,373,271.31  | 66,447.00                       | 2,439,718.31      |

20) that the Executive Director Finance & Resources be authorised to make transfers under Section 97 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 from the Collection Fund to the General Fund the sum of £6,941,602 being the Council's own demand on the Collection Fund (£6,746,773) and Parish Precept (£15,000) and the distribution of the surplus on the Collection Fund (£179,829);

21) that the Executive Director Finance & Resources be authorised to make payments from the General Fund to Feckenham Parish Council the sums listed above (£15,000) by instalment after 1 April 2022 in respect of the precept levied on the Council;

- 22) that the above resolutions to be signed by the Chief Executive for use in legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court for the recovery of unpaid Council Taxes;
- 23) that notices of the making of the said Council Taxes signed by the Chief Executive are given by advertisement in the local press under Section 38(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992; and
- 24) that authority be delegated to the Head of Finance and Customer Services (Interim S151) following consultation with the finance portfolio holder to amend the resolution should the Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority Service not approve the estimated figure that is being used in this report. This is due to the Fire service having their approval meeting after this resolution report has been brought to Council.

**63. REGULATORY COMMITTEES**

The Chair of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee presented a recommendation from the Committee on the subject of the appointment of external auditors for the Council. Members were advised that the Committee had opted to endorse the proposal to opt into the National Scheme for auditor appointments managed by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA), as it was felt that this would result in better value for money in the long-term.

During consideration of this item, the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee were thanked for their hard work reviewing the arrangements for external audit.

**RESOLVED that**

**the Public Sector Audit Appointments' invitation to opt into the sector-led option for the appointment of external auditors to principal local government and police bodies for a procurement period of five financial years from 1 April 2023 (that is to say from 2023/24 to 2027/28) be accepted.**

**64. URGENT BUSINESS - RECORD OF DECISIONS**

The Mayor advised that there had been no urgent decisions taken since the previous meeting of Council.

**65. URGENT BUSINESS - GENERAL (IF ANY)**

There was no urgent business for consideration on this occasion.

# Council Committee

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Monday, 21st February, 2022

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm  
and closed at 7.55 pm