

## FULL COUNCIL

7 FEBRUARY 2023

### REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES

#### 1. COUNCIL UPDATE REGARDING RESOURCES

##### 1.1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1.1 To advise Members of the decisions taken at my decision-making session held on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

##### 1.2 Background

- 1.2.1 This report highlights some of those decisions which have been made, but not all. Members wishing to view all decisions made can find these at <http://eservices.solihull.gov.uk/mgInternet/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1>

- 1.2.2 Attached to this report is a list of decisions made.

##### 1.3 Decisions – 10<sup>th</sup> January 2023

- 1.3.1 The council tax base represents the estimated number of houses eligible to pay council tax (“chargeable dwellings”) in the borough, expressed as a number of Band D equivalent properties.

- 1.3.2 The number of chargeable dwellings takes into account households where none of the occupants are required to pay council tax (e.g. those occupied only by students) and those where the occupants are entitled to discounts/reduced bills, for example because they live alone or because they receive support under the council tax reduction scheme. It is then converted to a number of Band D equivalent properties to represent the Council’s tax base, which is adjusted to take account of the estimated collection rate. Once approved, the net tax base is built into the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and determines the level of council tax funding available to the Council over this period.

- 1.3.3 The tax base must be calculated in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 2012 and must be determined between 1 December and 31 January for the following financial year.

- 1.3.4 A collection rate of 98.81% was assumed in both 2021/22 and 2022/23 based on combined collection rates of 80% for the element of the tax base relating to the Council tax reduction scheme and 99% for the remainder of the tax base. The collection rate for 2021/22 debt as at 30 November 2022 is 98.80%. On this basis, I approved that the assumed collection rate be maintained at 98.81% for 2023/24.

- 1.3.5 I approved the council tax base for Solihull as 79,168 Band D equivalent dwellings for the year 2023/24. I also approved the council tax base for each parish area.

##### 1.4 Issues of Interest

- 1.4.1 I recently had the pleasure of being on the judging panel for the Employee of the Year awards. Due to the Covid pandemic, it has been three years since we have been able to hold the awards. We received over 200 nominations under the categories of Team of the Year, Young Person of the Year and Outstanding Colleague. The judging panel selected a shortlist and the awards will take place on the evening of 16<sup>th</sup> February.

- 1.4.2 This month, we will go-live with phase two of Oracle-cloud which covers HR and payroll. This is the final stage of go-live and for obvious reasons, is something that affects every employee and councillor.
- 1.4.3 Our Income & Awards Team is making the final preparations for the annual council tax billing process which will take place immediately after Full Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> February. To help to offset any council tax increase, this year's billing process will include additional council tax support of up to £25 for residents in receipt of Local Council Tax Reduction. Further details are included in reports to this week's Full Cabinet meeting.
- 1.4.4 Trading Standards seized a number of cosmetics from a local trader last year. The cosmetics were sent for analysis and the results of the 11 samples tested were as follows.
- a) Three have been confirmed as containing hydroquinone, which is not a permitted ingredient for cosmetics. Hydroquinone is not declared on the ingredients list and has been linked with skin cancer.
- b) Six of the products do not comply with the labelling requirements and in addition one of them has an illegal ingredient declared on the ingredients list.

Following these results, we have analysed the ingredients list of some of the other products and found a further six, which according to the ingredients list, contain an illegal ingredient – Lilial - also known as butylphenyl methylpropional, which is considered carcinogenic.

Although it sounds counterintuitive to identify illegal ingredients on the ingredients list, it should be noted that cosmetics are not as strictly controlled in other parts of the world as they are in the UK and these products originate from overseas. Our officers are continuing to investigate this matter.

## **1.5 Future Decisions**

- 1.5.1 At future Resources decision sessions, reports will be presented on Revenue and Capital Monitoring, Bereavement Services Update, Debt Monitoring, Applications for Discretionary Rate Relief, Corporate Asset Strategy update and ICT Capital Project updates.