

FULL COUNCIL

4 APRIL 2022

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

1. COUNCIL UPDATE REGARDING CABINET

1.1 Purpose of Report

To advise Council of the main decisions taken at the Cabinet meetings on 10 February and 10 March 2022.

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 are the lists of decisions made.

1.3 Decisions – 10 February 2022

1.3.1 **Director Public Health Annual Report: Counting the Cost of Covid** – Cabinet was presented with the Director of Public Health’s statutory Annual Public Health Report, which covered the impact of and response to Covid-19 in Solihull.

1.3.2 **Chelmsley Wood Town Centre Public Consultation** – Members approved the commencement of a public consultation on the proposals for the redevelopment of Chelmsley Wood Town Centre.

1.3.3 **Solihull Holiday Activity and Food Programme 2022** – Cabinet was provided with the intended approach for delivering the Holiday Activity and Food Programme (HAFP) in 2022 and invited to report on the successes and learning from 2021. Cabinet accepted £997,220 from the Department for Education to deliver the government’s HAFP in Solihull during 2022/23.

1.3.4 Members agreed to delegate authority for decisions about the planning and delivery of the HAFP to the Assistant Director for Communities and Partnerships, in consultation with the interim Director of Children’s Services and Skills, Cabinet Member for Safer and Stronger Communities and Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills.

1.3.5 **Remuneration of Solihull Community Housing Board Members** – Members were provided with an update on the proposals to extend remuneration to all Solihull Community Housing (SCH) Board. Cabinet agreed the remuneration level of the Chair of the Board, the Chair of Audit and Risk Committee and independent and tenant/leaseholder members, but asked the Council’s Governance Committee to consider the level of remuneration for Council nominated SCH Board Members up to a level of £4,000.

1.3.6 **Business Rate Relief 2022/23** – Members approved both the Council’s Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Relief Scheme for 2022/23 and the Council’s Transitional Relief and Supporting Small Business Relief for 2022/23.

1.3.7 **Covid-19 Additional Relief Fund** – Cabinet approved the Covid-19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF) and authorised the Cabinet Member for Resources in conjunction with the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive to make any changes necessary to ensure all the funding is allocated within the specified time frame.

1.3.8 **Housing Revenue Account Estimates and Rent Increases 2022/23** – Cabinet was invited to consider the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget estimates for 2022/23, the Management Fee payable to Solihull Community Housing (SCH) and the proposed changes in dwelling and garage rents and leaseholder management fees for 2022/23.

- 1.3.9 The Housing Revenue Account budget and SCH Management Fee was approved, as well as the SCH Management Agreement for 2022/23 – 2026/27. Rent increases, as of 1 April 2022, for HRA Stock, SMBC Affordable Homes, Saxon Court and HRA shared ownership properties were approved, as were garage rent increases and an increase in Leaseholder Management Fees. Noted were the different rent increases for SCH Part Ownership properties and SCH owned Affordable Homes and the fees and charges approved by the SCH Board on 29 November 2021.
- 1.3.10 **Housing Capital Programme 2022/23** – Cabinet approved the Housing Capital Programme for 2022/23. Members noted the availability of additional resources through prudential borrowing, subject to required approvals. Cabinet approved an allocation of £1.200 million to SCH to meet statutory Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) demand.
- 1.3.11 **Medium Term Financial Strategy Update (incorporating the Period 9 Position) as at 31 December 2021** – Cabinet received and noted the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) latest financial position as at 31 December 2021 (Period 9), including the latest Covid-19 financial impact. Cabinet approved the use of the Budget Strategy Reserve to balance the budget shortfall in the Children, Education and Skills portfolio, as well as the creation of 3 new reserves. The budget adjustments up to Period 9 of 2021/22 were also approved.
- 1.3.12 **Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2022/23-2024/25** – Cabinet reviewed and recommended an increase of 1.99% in the level of general Council Tax in 2022/23 and an increase of 1.90% in the social care precept in 2022/23. Cabinet recommended a budget for 2022/23 of £163.967 million. A reduction in the 2024/25 funding gap would be reduced and covered by business rates windfall income anticipated in 2023/24, which had not been committed through the MTFS process.
- 1.3.13 **Property Investment Strategy** – Cabinet was provided with an update on the Council's performance against the Property Investment Strategy and it was approved to be continued in 2022/23. Members were advised that the recommended Strategy was based on the latest Statutory Guidance issued by Government and the further information provided by CIPFA both of which were summarised in the document.

1.4 Decisions – 10 March 2022

- 1.4.1 **Update on Applications to Funding Bodies that Support the Council's Priorities** - Cabinet approved two specific external funding submissions to support the delivery of the Council's priorities listed as Project A and Project B. Project A (Value £0.361m) is a per-capita allocation of the Government's City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) Capacity Fund, distributed via the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA). Project B (Value £1.485m) is an application to the Environment Agency's (EA) Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGiA) & Local Levy for flood mitigation schemes.
- 1.4.2 It was also agreed that the authority to sign contractual arrangements associated with Projects A and B would be delegated to the relevant Director, acting in conjunction with the relevant Cabinet Member.
- 1.4.3 **Kingshurst Village Centre Regeneration** – Cabinet was provided with an update on progress and invited to delegate approval, subject to planning consent for the use of Council reserves to progress to detailed design. Members were advised that the scheme was a once in a generation opportunity to create a high quality, community focussed new centre for Kingshurst. It was resolved that the use of Council reserves as set out in the report be approved to fund the detailed design, noting that these will be spent at risk until approval of the Full Business Case (FBC); delegated authority was also given to the Director of Economy and Infrastructure, in consultation with the Leader, to enter into a Pre-Construction Services Agreement with Wilmott Dixon for the next stage of detailed design, subject to planning consent be approved.