

**POLICY COMMITTEE
(Online)**

2 February 2021

Present – The Chairman, Councillor Foster and Councillors Barrett, Ireton, Lis, Madeley, Metcalfe, Morrell, Mulligan, Myers, Noland, Place, Rose, Shuttleworth (substitute for Heseltine) and Wheeler.

Also in Attendance: Councillor Handley and Councillor Brockbank.

Officers – Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer (S151 Officer), Strategic Manager for Planning and Regeneration, Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer, Accountancy Services Manager, Human Resources Manager, Strategic Housing Manager, Senior Democratic Services Officer and Democratic Services Manager.

Apology for Absence – An apology for absence was received from Councillor Heseltine.

Confirmation of Minutes – The minutes of the Policy Committee meeting held on 19 January 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.

Exclusion of the Public -

Resolved – That, in accordance with the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules, the public is excluded for the purposes of Minutes \$POL.1117 and \$POL.1118 below (marked \$) on the grounds that it is not in the public interest to disclose the Category 3 exempt information (relates to the financial or business affairs of any particular person).

Start: 6.33pm

Finish: 8.35pm

Councillor Morrell joined the meeting at 6.39pm.

The Chairman gave a brief statement referring to the recent deaths of Councillor Richard Welch, a long serving Councillor and Member of the Policy Committee and also to Captain Sir Tom Moore who had, during the pandemic raised over thirty million pounds for NHS charities. He had also visited Craven last year, seeing council staff, charity workers, volunteers and school children.

Minutes for Report

POL.1116

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION PEER
CHALLENGE – PLANNING SERVICE**

The Director of Services submitted a report setting out the progress made with the Council's response to the Planning Peer Challenge and seeking approval for the Improvement Action Plan. The planning service had faced significant challenges in recent times and the Local Government Association had undertaken a Peer Challenge looking at all aspects of the service and provided feedback which indicated a number of problems with the current delivery of the Service. The LGA set out a range of recommendations for improvement, not only about resources but about culture and efficiency.

A new Lead Member had been appointed and an Improvement Board had been established and it had met to shape and agree an improvement plan. The improvement plan was split into four main themes that would address all the key recommendations of the LGA. Progress had already been made on some of the actions in the plan and once approved, it would be circulated to parish councils and published on the Council's website for the users of the planning service.

To ensure delivery of the plan additional resources were being provided by the Democratic Services Manager and temporary person(s) experienced in planning management were also being sought. Additional costs would be incurred of approximately £40,000, of which £14,000 would fall within the 2020/21 budget funded by revenue underspends. Expenditure in 2021/22 would be funded from service budgets.

During the ensuing debate, Members were reassured that their input into improving the planning service would be sought and that regular progress reports would be provided. The Lead Member for Planning, Councillor Myers welcomed the views of all Members and was keen that they and officers embraced the challenge and all worked constructively together to achieve the objectives in the Improvement Action Plan.

Resolved – (1) That, the progress to date is noted and that the Improvement Action as now submitted is approved.

\$POL.1117 **UPDATE ON THE COUNCIL'S AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMME**

(A separate excluded full minute has been prepared for this item. It is published (on pink paper) in an Appendix to Committee Members, relevant officers and others who are entitled to all details.)

\$POL.1118 **SHARED OWNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT – COUNCIL OWNED SITES**

(A separate excluded full minute has been prepared for this item. It is published (on pink paper) in an Appendix to Committee Members, relevant officers and others who are entitled to all details.)

Minutes for Decision

POL.1119 **REVENUE BUDGET 2021/22 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN (MTFP) 2021/22 – 2024/25**

The Chief Finance Officer (S.151 Officer) submitted a report which identified a fully funded budget for 2021/22 together with a recommendation for a prudent level of general fund reserve balances for the financial year. The report also outlined the medium term financial plan (MTFP) to 2024/25.

As the final settlement had not been confirmed the 2021/22 budget was based on the provisional settlement announced in December 2020. Little or no change to the figures was expected. As part of that announcement, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government gave permission for councils to increase their council tax by 2.00% without triggering a referendum or £5 whichever was the greater. A £5 increase gave a council tax of £182.21 at band D.

In accordance with Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, the Chief Finance Officer (S.151 Officer) made a specific personal statement that the revenue budget was robust and delivered a balanced budget in 2021/22.

During the debate, Members thanked the Chief Finance Officer (S.151 Officer) and his team for all their hard work in producing a balanced budget.

RECOMMENDED – (1) That, the revenue budget assumptions as detailed in the report submitted are noted.

(2) That, the revenue budget for 2021/22 of £7,132.749 detailed in Appendix B to the report now submitted is approved.

(3) That, the schedule of growth bids of £77,348 as identified in Appendix C to the report now submitted is approved.

(4) That, the savings of £176,000 detailed in Appendix D to the report now submitted are incorporated into the budget.

(5) That, a net contribution from earmarked reserves of £137,000 is made to support the 2021/22 budget, subject to the realisation of the amber savings identified in Appendix D to the report now submitted.

- (6) That, the assessment of the robustness of the budget and adequacy of reserves as set out in Appendix F to the report now submitted is agreed that the Section 25 report is noted.
- (7) That, the estimated sum of £995,000 as identified as the general fund balance as at 31 March 2020 in paragraph 10 and Appendix F to the report now submitted, is approved.
- (8) That, Council Tax is increased at Band D by £5 to £182.21.
- (9) That, the revenue budget incorporates the net contributions to/(from) earmarked reserves as detailed in tables 1 and 2, appendix A and annex 1 to the report now submitted.
- (10) That,
- a) as part of the budget setting report to Council an update is provided on the estimated Craven District Council allocation of retained business rates; and
 - b) any significant variance to the figures included within the budget report, proposals are adjusted through contributions (to)/from the business rates equalisation reserve.
- (11) That, the funding sources identified in the report and appendices A and B to the report now submitted, are approved.
- (12) That, the attached Medium Term Financial Plan and the estimates of future years' budgets contained therein (annex 1) are noted.
- (13) That, the updated Capital Strategy included with the Medium Term Financial Plan (annex 1) is noted.

POL.1120

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021/22

The Chief Finance Officer (S.151 Officer) submitted a report seeking approval for the 2021/22 – 2024/25 capital programme, subject to their being capital resources. The rolling capital programme was aligned to the three years' medium term financial plan and the information for 2022/23 onwards was indicative only and would be subject to confirmation when project details became available. The proposed capital programme and its funding for 2021/22 was £2,220k were as detailed in Appendix A to the Chief Finance Officer's report including information about the continuing commitments of £10k from the 202/21 programme, giving a total of £2,230k.

- RECOMMENDED** – (1) That, £10,000 of continuing projects from the 2020/21 programme is noted and that no slippage has been confirmed at this stage.
- (2) That, the new capital programme projects of £2,219,893 are approved.
- (3) That, a total capital programme for 2021/22 of £2,229,893 is approved.
- (4) That, the final allocation of funding for the 2021/22 capital programme is confirmed once the outturn position of the 2020/21 revenue budget is finalised.

POL.1121

COUNCIL PLAN 2021/22

The Chief Finance Officer (S.151 Officer) submitted a report which presented the Craven District Council Plan 2021/22 and beyond for approval. The Plan set out the Council's agenda for improving service delivery to Craven's communities as well as organisation change. Last year the Council agreed a significantly revised plan including four new long term strategic priorities. The plan identified

the Council's vision and priorities for Craven and intended outcomes. It also included the delivery mechanisms and projects the Council would implement to achieve those outcomes.

RECOMMENDED – (1) That, the Council Plan 2021 and beyond is approved and delegated authority is given to the Chief Executive to:

- a) Make minor amendments including the revision of delivery mechanisms and amendments to timescales for delivery as necessary, in consultation with the Leader of the Council; and
- b) Agree performance indicators and associated targets that will be used to measure progress against the achievement of the priorities and objectives set out in the Plan now submitted.

POL.1122

2021/22 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY
STATEMENT, MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION
STATEMENT AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The Chief Finance Officer (S.151 Officer) submitted a report which presented for approval the proposed Treasury Management Strategy together with the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement, Prudential Indicators and the Annual Investment Strategy for 2021/22, as required by the Department of Communities and Local Government and CIPFA.

The Council was required to operate a balanced budget and part of treasury management was to ensure that cash flow was adequately planned with cash being available when needed. Surplus monies were invested in low risk counterparties with security capital and liquidity of funds being considered before investment return. The counterparty lending limits enabled the Council to take full advantage of investment opportunities whilst maintaining a sufficient level of security of capital.

The strategy ensured that the required funding sources were available to support the Council's capital spending plans and longer term cash flow planning was necessary to ensure capital spending obligations were met.

The strategy also determined the limits of borrowing and investments that officers would apply over the next 12 months in order to ensure the Council's capital investment plans were affordable, prudent and sustainable.

Members were advised that all local authorities were required to ensure that all elected members on the Council fully understood the overall long-term policy objectives and resultant capital strategy requirements, governance procedures and risk appetite.

RECOMMENDED – (1) That, the operational boundary for 2021/22 is set at £14m.

(2) That, the authorised limits for 2021/22 is set at £15m.

(3) That, delegated authority is given to the Chief Finance Officer (s.151 officer) to effect movement within the agreed operational boundary and authorised limits for long-term borrowing for 2021/22 onwards.

(4) That, the Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22, incorporating the Minimum Revenue Position Policy Statement and the Annual Investment Strategy, is approved.

(5) That, the prudential indicators for 2021/22, which reflect that the capital expenditure plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable, are approved.

POL. 1123

PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2021/22

Craven District Council

The Human Resources Manager submitted a report which sought approval to implement the Council's 2021/22 Pay Policy Statement in accordance with Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011. The statement outlined the Council's policy towards the pay of the workforce, particularly senior staff and the lowest paid employees.

RECOMMENDED – That, implementation of the Council's 2021/22 Pay Policy Statement is approved.

Date and Time of Next Meeting – Tuesday, 2nd March 2021 at 6.30pm.

Chairman